

Handicapped request funds

Students propose model university

By Mindi Ledbetter
Staff Writer

President Wendell Nedderman has sent a letter to Jess Irwin, commissioner of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) in Austin, saying he is "favorably impressed" with the model university plan submitted by the Handicapped Students Association (HSA) here.

Dr. Nedderman in his letter recommended allocation of funds for the plan.

Dr. Quinten Mathews, director of sponsored projects, said this week the letter suggested that the new Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides federal funds to improve facilities and services for handicapped persons, might be used as a source of funds.

The TRC is allotted federal funds according to a plan drawn up each year by an agency.

"We are waiting to hear from the TRC on this program," Mathews said, "especially in the light of the new monies being provided federally for handicapped persons' programs such as this."

The HSA last year submitted the model university plan, which the members drew up themselves, with the idea that UTA could serve as a model for other Texas schools.

The group was told last semester that the plan had been shelved during

the search for a permanent president but that it hadn't been forgotten.

Acting as administrative adviser to the HSA, Kris Kirkpatrick, assistant dean of student life, said the school has been trying to make as many changes as possible to make it physically easier for handicapped students.

"Money is tight right now, though, and we've had to set priorities," she said. "Some of the architectural barriers have been corrected and others we just don't have enough money for."

The HSA plan requests funds ranging from a minimum of \$200,000 up to \$2½ million for a totally equipped model campus.

The most expensive plan calls for a new housing area and renovation of existing dormitories. A half-way plan costing \$1,250,000 does not include complete housing areas but provides for elevators at 12 locations on campus.

Suggested improvements include a complete ramp system, special restroom facilities for most campus buildings, lower water fountains and telephones, expanded parking spaces and special access doors on major buildings.

Jim Hayes, an HSA spokesman, said university funds have been allocated on a small scale to convert four rooms in Brazos Hall for handicapped stu-

dents and some restroom facilities have been improved.

Hayes, who wrote a brochure to inform students of existing facilities, said the administration has "come a long way" in making it easier for handicapped students.

While many of the provisions in the model university plan deal speci-

fically with wheelchair students, there are also plans for helping the blind and deaf.

Plans include braille identification plates in hallways, warning devices on hazardous areas, extensions on handrails and the elimination of lipped stairways.



Shorthorn: Steve Fortner

Campus in transition