

Matching funds offered

By MINDI LEDBETTER

Editor

Handicapped students may get a helping hand in the form of a \$34,000 grant from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) if the administration can come up with \$34,000 in matching funds.

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In a letter to President Dr. Wendell Nedderman, the TRC offered the funds "for the removal of architectural barriers," including construction of 12 ramps with handrails and 12 curb cuts which would make ground floors in all buildings on campus accessible by wheelchair.

Also included in the TRC recommendations were the remodeling of one restroom for each sex on the ground floor of all buildings.

Dudley Wetsel, vice president of business affairs, said the school's obligation would be fulfilled in part by money already set aside for handicapped improvements.

"I feel it will be approved," Wetsel said. "But there are some things we still have to work out with the TRC."

In addition to the improvements offered by the TRC, Preston and Ransom Halls already are scheduled to receive modifications for the handicapped when they undergo major renovations beginning in December. Improvements will include two elevators, modified restroom facilities and any renovations required by Senate Bill 111 which sets minimum standards for accessibility for handicapped persons.

Wayne Duke, dean of student life, said he was "pleased about the offer from the TRC which will allow us to continue the program we've already started toward making this a model campus.

"To my knowledge," he said, "this is the first campus to be provided with funds of this sort. I feel this will have a large impact on enrollment of the handicapped here."

The idea for the improvements originated two years ago when the Handicapped Students Association drew up a proposal for a "model campus" which would make UTA completely accessible to the handicapped.

The proposal was submitted to administrators last year with the idea that UTA could serve as a model for other four-year colleges in Texas.

The group was told last fall the plan had been temporarily shelved pending appointment of a permanent president. After his appointment, Nedderman invited the TRC to consider the plan, which requested funds ranging from \$200,000 to \$2.5 million for a totally equipped 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 elevators at 12 locations.

Wetsel said the proposed TRC construction would be done as much as possible by university personnel, but some would be contracted out.

If the money is received it will go into a special fund and all proposed improvements will first be submitted to the handicapped student's group, which sets priorities with approval of the administration.

Improvements completed this year with university funds include lowered telephones and drinking fountains, ramps, curb cuts and establishment of a parking lot directly southwest of Carlisle Hall reserved for handicapped students.