



EQUAL ACCESS AND DISABILITY
RIGHTS COMMISSION

FINAL REPORT

APRIL 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Our Mission	2
Our Vision	2
Our Goals	2
Methodology	3
Statement of Facts	6
Summary of Disability Legislation	7
Selected Student/Alumni Statements	9
Specific Legal Violations	40
Recommendations	
BYU Administration	51
University Accessibility Center	52
BYU Approved Housing	57
Counseling and Psychological Services	58
Implementation of Student-led Projects	58
Physical Campus	62
Testing Center	67
University Police	68
Campus Culture	69
Other	69
Commission's Note on Recommendations	70
Appendix 1: Statements	73

INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a final report of the research conducted on Brigham Young University's disability awareness by the Equal Access and Disability Rights Commission. This document is in response to many failed attempts to enact policies that would bring equal access to the university. We desire to bring truth and transparency to the violations that have occurred at this institution, and seek to provide reconciliation for BYU students and progress for the institution.

BYU has not complied with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Thus, knowingly or unknowingly, BYU has created a culture of ignorance and dismissal towards some of its most vulnerable students. Unfortunately, institutions can become conduits of social inequality if not properly monitored and improved. At BYU, the administration and staff help to create social values, which can either hurt or help the life of each student at BYU. The Equal Access and Disability Rights Commission thus intends to orient BYU on aspects of disability so the university can fulfill its mission to serve all its students. We desire to meet with BYU administration to discuss and enact our recommendations for change. This document will be distributed to the public and its recommendations will be made transparent for all.



OUR MISSION

To ensure that all students have equal access to education and a positive college experience.

OUR VISION

In the United States, many students benefit from higher education opportunities. However, many disabled individuals lack such opportunities, not because of their credentials, but because of their bodies. Despite being a significant part of the total population, disabled people attend college in low numbers because their accessibility rights are often left unmet. The ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Of 1973 were created to protect the accessibility rights of disabled people in all areas of life, including both public and private education. As a recipient of federal funding, BYU must comply with Section 504, but the research of this commission reveals serious shortcomings in this regard.

Without true accessibility, BYU is severely restricting the basic human right of education. It is a grave misinterpretation of human rights to assume that disabled students do not deserve equal opportunities in education. Disabled students want to attend BYU without being forced to give up their rights of equal access. Unfortunately, many disabled students are reluctant to advocate for themselves because they feel that they lack power and influence. This report is intended to give those students a voice. This report is not a condemnation nor contradiction of BYU or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but rather a tool for analysis and discussion. We believe that through constructive dialogue, BYU can become a model institution for treatment and accommodation of people with disabilities. Disabled individuals are truly an asset to society through their hard work and unique resilience. Equal access is not the end, it is only the beginning.

OUR GOALS

1. Change the physical environment to bring equal access to students with disabilities
2. Change cultural environment of BYU to be more accepting of students with disabilities
3. Change social environment of BYU organizations to address the needs of students with disabilities
4. Give disabled students voice, so they can be accurately represented as BYU contributors



METHODOLOGY

Statements

All statements were gathered over a period of 14 days. Statements were collected through many channels including: in-person interviews, audio recordings, e-mail, and social media. On social media, students were urged to contact the Commission if they identified as disabled, temporarily disabled, invisibly disabled, had disabled family members, a chronic illness, a mental illness, or were connected with disability in any way.

When students or alumni reached out to the Commission, they were asked to speak about their experience at BYU and if they had any solutions they felt would benefit BYU. Participants were advised to avoid demeaning the university. Other disabled students were contacted on campus by commissioners. Students voluntarily emailed their statement to the Commission or participated in an in-person interview. Interviews were

recorded and commissioners transcribed each recorded statement before emailing the transcription to the students for clarification. All participants were informed that their statements would be published. They were given the choice to remain anonymous or to have their name published with their statement. All statements consist of current BYU students and alumni.

Truth Commissions

This research and final report has been modeled after truth commissions, which are a widely-used method of reconciliation around the world. Truth Commissions seek to provide truth, justice, reconciliation, reparations, and non-recurrence. This Commission is dedicated to bringing truth, justice, and reconciliation to BYU. Non-recurrence is vital to the future of students and faculties rights. The Commission wants to help facilitate achieving equal access for future students and staff that come to BYU. Future individuals at the university will be ensured that BYU is passionate about equal access, and are continually trying to recognize measures to improve upon. Through implementing these recommendations, BYU will be held accountable to equal access and recurrence of issues will be less likely to occur. The Commission brings statements and experiences from many different individuals, but is far from comprehensive or all-



encompassing. These statements are the backbone of the Commission as they serve to shed light on the true experiences of students. While the Commission cannot enact policy, it advocates for the rights of others and encourages policy-makers to protect those rights. The Commission seeks to create dialogue concerning the disability community at BYU.

Language

Through implementing these Recommendations, BYU will be held accountable to equal access and recurrence of issues will be less likely to occur. The Commission brings statements and experiences from many different individuals, but is far from comprehensive or all-encompassing. These statements are the backbone of the Commission as they serve to shed light on the true experiences of students. While the Commission cannot enact policy, it advocates for the rights of others and encourages policy-makers to protect those rights. The Commission seeks to create dialogue concerning the disability community at BYU.

Throughout this document we will refer to students both as disabled or as students with disabilities. The National Center on Disability and Journalism recommends person-first language (i.e. student with a disability). This refers to seeing the person as a human individual before seeing the disability. Identify-first language (i.e. disabled student) is preferred by much of the disability community, as disability is a key part of one's identity. "Disabled" is characterized as a burdensome identity solely because society sees it so.

A disabled individual is only disabled by the inaccessibility around them. For example, if a building has a ramp to get inside, a disabled student has the same access as any other student. If not, the societal and physical structures have disabled them. When working with the disability community it is helpful to ask what language is important to them, as we have done in this document when needed. For example, those who consider their hearing loss a primarily medical condition may refer to themselves as disabled, while those who identify with Deaf culture and pride do not consider themselves to be disabled.

Acronyms

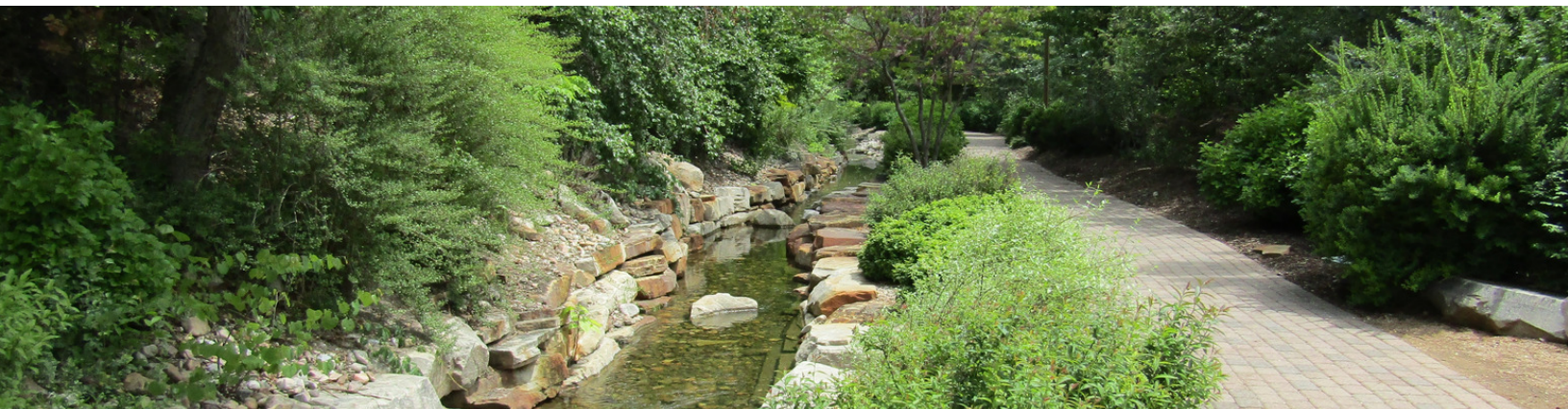
The University Accessibility Center is also known as the UAC or the Accessibility Center in all documents. Brigham Young University is shortened to BYU in all documents. The Equal Access and Disability Rights Commission is shorted to the Commission in many areas within this document. The Americans with Disabilities Act is shortened to the ADA. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is shortened to Section 504.

Reasons for Anonymity

In conducting interviews and gathering statements from individuals about accessibility at BYU, we ran across the issue of fear. Fear that speaking out and asking for equal access, a right they should already have, would lead to repercussions academically and socially, including being denied their accommodations. Fighting for equal rights should not be necessary, and fear about sharing one's experience should not exist. As a community, we need to examine the culture that exists and the policies that are in place that would deter a person from feeling comfortable sharing their experience with disabilities, and wanting equal rights and access. Part of our goal is to help make this a reality, we hope that our efforts will result in a future at BYU where students receive the access and accommodations they need without having to fight for them, and one where they feel safe existing as a disabled person at BYU.

Name of the Commission

The Equal Access and Disability Rights Commission is thus named to include all individuals who deserve the right of equal access. Disability cuts across all intersectionalities. Thus, the disabled community itself consists of people from all backgrounds and walks of life as well as allies who support the disability community's rights. This Commission consists of both allies and disabled individuals. Equal access refers to all intersectionalities, including: age, socioeconomic status, class, education, religion, political beliefs, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sex, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, and any other group who is discriminated against. When one minority group is discriminated against, everyone is hurt. We support other minority groups' quests for equality and equal access. This is why the Commission's name emphasizes equal access as its first initiative, and disability second. We are aware of the complex issues surrounding diversity and realize a holistic approach has often been neglected. The Commission seeks to empower all individuals under the care of the University.



Distribution

This report will be distributed to all entities that impact the disability community. As many administrators are far-removed from the issues that have taken place, communicating the experiences that individuals have had will help provide a deeper understanding. The Final Report will also be distributed through email to all stakeholders, as well as publically available on EqualAccessCommission.org. To fully emphasize the importance of the projects truth finding mission, we seek to be transparent in all of our documentation.

SUMMARY OF DISABILITY LEGISLATION

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA is a prominent, widely-recognized civil rights legislation that protects the rights of disabled individuals. Title I of the act relates to employment discrimination. Title II governs publicly-funded universities. Title III sets forth standards for privately-funded universities. Unfortunately, close examination of the practical application of ADA reveals many loopholes. Colleges and universities owned by religious organizations are not covered by the ADA Title III. Thus, because BYU is run by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it does not necessarily need to comply with Title III. However, the Commission feels that because BYU is considered a top-tier university and a beacon for the Latter-day Saint community, it should adhere strictly to this law which is universally obeyed at other universities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Of 1973

Section 504 is an anti-discrimination law protecting people with disabilities and was a precursor to the Americans with Disabilities Act. It has been amended several times since 1973 to clarify the specific regulations that apply to recipients of federal funding. As a recipient of federal funding, BYU is thus legally obligated to adhere to Section 504. Specific measures are outlined in the 2018 Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter I, Part 104, titled: "Nondiscrimination on the Basis Of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance." Statements from multiple students reveal that several clauses under the law have been violated by BYU's and the UAC's treatment of students with disabilities. This is accounting for the fact that Section 504 indicates that BYU must follow ADA Title I but is exempt from ADA Title III.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

- Statements taken from students and alumni point to the unequal treatment and unequal access for disabled students at BYU
- The University Accessibility Center at BYU has failed to act in good faith and provides questionable service to disabled students.
- In the eyes of many students, BYU is a perfectly-run institution, which makes many students feel afraid to point out institutional problems and shortcomings



VIOLATIONS OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS

- BYU is exempt from Title 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and unfortunately chooses to ignore these key guidelines that would benefit students
- BYU does not comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including the subsequent amendments to this law



SELECTED STUDENT/ALUMNI STATEMENTS

Important Note on Statements

It is important to recognize the strength and spirit of those sharing their experiences with the Commission. In conducting interviews and gathering statements, we often ran into the issue of fear. This was a fear that speaking out and asking for equal access—a right students should already have—would lead to academic and social repercussions, including having accommodations revoked. Therefore, several students have preferred to remain anonymous.

This is indicative of a culture that has been unwittingly created—a culture that says disabled students are a burden, that BYU is perfect institution, and that asking for improvement at BYU is unjustified. Many of us are familiar with Elder Jeffrey R.

"We often ran into the issue of fear. This was a fear that speaking out and asking for equal access—a right students should already have—would lead to academic and social repercussions, including having accommodations revoked"

Holland's statement that: "imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with," yet too often, the actions and policies of BYU and its employees are equated with the perfect teachings of Christ's gospel. This mistaken belief has profound effects on faithful students who see BYU as completely infallible because they have faith that Christ and his gospel are perfect. Thus, expressing a desire for change at BYU causes guilt for these students as they feel they are criticizing the gospel and the church.

Elder Holland has also said that the Church (and we would add BYU), is led by mortal men and women. Improvement is a vital part of gospel and improving BYU benefits all people who come to campus. The gospel of Christ is perfect, but people and organizations are part of a fallen world, and thus have many imperfections. Policies can be flawed and are not commanded by God. As a community, we need to examine the existing culture and policies that would make a person feel uncomfortable sharing their experience with disabilities and advocating for equal rights.

Part of the Commission's goal by sharing these statements is to transform BYU into a more loving environment. The statements help us see the specific issues that need to be addressed in order to assist BYU in giving more Christlike treatment to their disabled brothers and sisters. We seek to uplift by spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, and building character at BYU. We hope that our efforts will result in a BYU environment where disabled students feel safe participating because they receive the access and accommodations they need without having to fight for them.



Kendra Muller

Senior, Psychology Major

- UAC Accommodations

I had to have an emergency surgery in the middle of the Winter 2018 semester. It completely caught me off guard, and I could not have seen it coming. It was a very intensive surgery of my entire abdomen so I would be in the hospital for about 2 weeks, not able to attend class or work on homework.

I normally don't really use my accommodations but I thought, "this is why I have them," and went to the University Accessibility Center. Instead of helping me, the physical disabilities counselor said it was completely up to the professor whether they would grant me my accommodations or not. She told me there was nothing I or the UAC could do. Her best advice was to drop all of my classes.

This blunt, unhelpful answer while I was in physical pain and hoping to get some help made me tear up in frustration as I left the UAC. I was not about to drop all my class when I was more than halfway done with the semester for a few weeks of surgery. This led me to realize that the accessibility center gives out accommodation letters on paper, but when I really needed help, they wouldn't do anything for me.

They didn't advocate for me and offer helpful suggestions. They made me feel helpless. The accommodations turned out to just be a piece of paper. If a professor ever denied my accommodations, I couldn't get any help from the accessibility center. Luckily, I told my professors the story, and instead of the heartless, "there's nothing I can do," I got from the accessibility center, they were compassionate and helped me to get through that semester, despite my surgery.



"They didn't advocate for me...They made me feel helpless. The accommodations turned out to just be a piece of paper"

- Evacuation Chairs Research

One extremely frightening realization happened after I went to all 11 floors of KMBL building and asked if they knew where their evacuation chair was. Every single person I asked was ignorant of what the device was and where emergency devices were located. This means if I was on any of those floors in a fire, I would probably die. The building only has 1 evacuation chair on the top floor and nobody knows where it is. I searched for a good while to find it. If I was on any other floor someone would have to run upstairs to get the chair, & drag it down to my level, which no one would do in a fire. It probably would be unsafe to do so anyways. This has happened in other buildings as well. The HBLL had fire drills twice while I was there. I was on the fourth floor and everyone ran downstairs literally leaving me alone. Elevators shut down automatically. Obviously, both times I was fine because it was a drill, however it was nerve wracking and I don't want to think of what would happen in a real fire.

- Parking

Two years ago, I was in line to finally become independent and get a accessible van, so that I could drive. This van had all of the necessary equipment for me to drive and because of this specialized accessible equipment, it cost \$100,000. I lived in Heritage Halls at the time and had noticed for years that all the van accessible stalls were always full with other vehicles (many of which were driven by people who didn't seem to qualify for the disabled parking pass). These stalls were vital for me for two reasons: First, I use a ramp to get in and out of my car because I use a wheelchair. If I do not have the extra space that van accessible stalls provide, I cannot get out of my van. If somebody were to park next

"Every single person I asked was ignorant of what the device was and where the emergency devices were located. This means if I was on any of those floors in a fire, I would probably die"



to me in a normal stall, I would not be able to get back into my van. Second, because I use a wheelchair, if I parked far away in the regular student parking, I physically would not be able to get to campus. The hills are too steep and in bad weather, rain and snow make it impossible to roll for long distances.

I realized I would not be able to use my van at all without an accessible parking spot. I first asked if the Heritage Halls administrators would designate a spot for me to park. They understood the situation and said they would love to. They said to go to the Accessibility Center to get a parking pass or some sort of accommodation, and to make sure that the BYU Police knew. I went to BYU Police next and they were helpful, agreeing that this was an important issue. They said all I needed was a note from the UAC. When I went to the UAC they told me there was absolutely nothing they could do. They said it was against policy to have a designated parking stall. I left feeling very frustrated that I would not be able to ever use my van because I could not park it anywhere.

About a year later, I found out that the UAC's previous claims were incorrect. They do have 4 parking stalls on campus that are specifically reserved for students with disabilities. After I found this out I went back feeling hopeful, but I was met with disdain. I was told there were only 3 parking spots available and I most likely wouldn't be "disabled enough" to get one. There was no explanation of the methods that were used for choosing the students who needed stalls "the most". I feel like it was unethical that the UAC pitted disabled students against each other in a fight for 4 parking spots. If BYU had 5 students that really did need to use those parking spots, they should put in the effort to ensure all 5 have access. We should not have to fight about who is the most disabled.

In the end, I got a doctor's note specifying I needed a van accessible parking spot. I emailed them and I met with them twice about getting a parking spot. I was finally told I could have the reserved spot by the Clyde Building, but that I should "consider myself lucky" to have gotten it. I felt happy, but distressed that I took a parking spot from someone that also needed it. When I went to the reserved parking spot by the Clyde I found it was actually inaccessible for my van. It was only a normal stall without the extra space of a van accessible stall. My doctor specifically wrote that I needed a van accessible spot but the UAC completely ignored my need. I know other students in wheelchairs who have experienced this exact same treatment. I thought I was alone in this, but I am one of many.

"My doctor specifically wrote that I needed a van accessible spot but the UAC completely ignored my need"

Over the last year, I have become aware of about 10 designated parking stalls that are reserved for specific disabled parking permits, which completely contradicts the UAC's statement that reserving an accessible stall is illegal. I sent a YMessage to the physical disabilities counselor at the UAC asking if they supervise these designated handicapped stalls. They responded that they do not. Those stalls are overseen by the police department. The UAC oversees four stalls total (there are two by the Maeser, the one by the Clyde and the one by the Talmage).

I then sent an email to police department asking about the reserved handicap parking spots for specific permit numbers and who uses them. Rich Christianson responded that the reserved handicap parking spots are for a specific person, if the sign has the permit number posted. The BYU accessibility office assigns these parking stalls and there are only about 10 of them on campus.

Clearly, there is either a major communication disconnect between the UAC and the police department or someone was withholding the truth from me. This situation has negatively affected disabled students at BYU. Students do not have the option to use these stalls because the University Police believes the UAC is in charge of distributing them, and the UAC believes the University Police are in charge of distributing these stalls. Thus, these stalls are not being used and the potential benefit they could provide is being wasted.



- Testing Center

Last year, I went through a very smooth process to request LSAT accommodations with the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), but later had frustrating interactions with BYU. The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) received all the documentation and promptly granted me my accommodations. Unfortunately, I found out that I had to go through the BYU Testing Center to actually set up the accommodations. This process was the direct opposite of my experience with the LSAC.

I called the phone number the LSAC had given me and explained that I needed to schedule the test with the Testing Center. I explained that I needed to know about the set up in order to anticipate if the building and room were accessible for me. The woman I spoke with was very unprofessional and would not tell me where my test would be held. I explained that I don't normally take tests in the Testing Center because it the auditorium is completely inaccessible. She assumed I would take it in the large testing room used by most students. This was frustrating to me because my LSAC accommodations specifically stated that I needed a desk to roll under and I knew the large testing room was inaccessible for me. She demeaned me by saying I should be able to use the large room without complaining. I explained that the only time I had taken a test in the Testing Center was a very negative experience and that I hoped to avoid a similar experience by scouting out the location beforehand. I asked specifically about the new accessibility center office that had been placed in testing center earlier that year. I hadn't been yet but was wondering if my test would be in there since it was newly remodeled.



"The woman I spoke with was very unprofessional...My LSAC accommodations specifically stated that I needed a desk to roll under and I knew the large testing room was inaccessible for me"

She belittled me and completely disregarded everything I said. She again stated I was wrong in requesting an accessible room, insisting I should just use the regular testing room. Without any explanation, she denied my right to see the room I would be tested in. During the course of the call, I stated three times that I would want to see the place I would be testing at, while she tried to dismiss me. Then she switched gears and said I would probably test upstairs in a office room or in the reduced distraction room: two options I doubt would have worked. I calmly explained that I would go to talk to someone at the Testing Center. She finally relented reluctantly. This burdensome conversation led me to realize that I needed help, so I went to speak with GeriLynn Vorkink at the UAC. She was kind and explained that they had received previous reports of this employee being a problem, but the UAC had no jurisdiction over the testing center accessibility rooms or its employees. She could not do anything because she did not hire the employees at the Testing Center.

"They had received previous reports of this employee being a problem, but the UAC had no jurisdiction over the testing center accessibility rooms"

I felt confused that the UAC sends its clients to the accessible testing rooms in the Testing Center, but has no say in screening the employees there. It is concerning that disabled students must rely on employees who appear biased against us and who treat us with contempt. I should never be subject verbal harassment because of my accommodations, especially after they have already been granted. I was able to discuss things with the employee and reconcile, which was very beneficial when I had to go take the LSAT in their office later on. However, this experience could have been avoided entirely if the accessible testing center personnel received training on diversity and disability from the UAC.

"This experience could have been avoided entirely if the accessible testing center personnel received training on diversity and disability from the UAC"

- Accessibility Mapping Project

During my freshman year, I was involved in a project to create maps showing every elevator, accessible restroom, ramp, and other accessibility features. The project was given to the Student Advisory Council (SAC) and a group of four students on the Council worked on the mapping. The UAC supposedly requested this project, but I am personally unsure about its origins. The four of us researched all the ADA laws and started mapping the buildings. The UAC printed off maps and met with us occasionally but we were mostly on our own. We completed as much as we could and handed the project off to the UAC. We also presented the project to President Worthen, Jan Scharman and other high-ranking officials in BYU administration. We thought that because it was their idea and because we had already made a lot of progress, they would assemble a team to finish mapping and publish it on the BYU app. Unfortunately, this never happened.

"The University Accessibility Center told me several times that they were very busy and that it wasn't their job to make campus accessible. To that, I would ask: 'If it's not their job, whose job is it?'"

While I was called back to present this project to more administrators that summer, I know of nothing that the UAC did to support the project going forward. The next year, I advocated to complete the project, but again, the UAC gave it to four unpaid students with no mapping experience. These students were focused on multiple different disability issues and weren't able to make much progress on the mapping. My senior year, I went

back to the UAC because I was wondering why the map was still not published on the app. While it would benefit hundreds of students, faculty, and visitors to BYU, this project needed the support of the UAC and administration. Many other universities have this resource, but BYU appears to think it is unimportant. The University Accessibility Center told me several times that they were very busy and it wasn't their job to make campus accessible. To that, I would ask: "If it's not their job, whose job is it?"

As far I as could tell, the UAC director of physical disabilities and coordinator of the project, had done nothing and had pushed it to the back burner unless I pushed for meetings. It had been two years since the SAC had given this project to the UAC, but I was also told that the project was a SAC project and not a UAC project. She admitted she had done nothing for the project, other than assigning random students to work on it. After this disheartening conversation, I realized that I would have to take on this project with other students who cared about it. Thus, Jordan and myself have been mapping campus by ourselves for the last several months.

The UAC said the project was stalled because of Physical Facilities, so I went and spoke to the Vice President of Physical Facilities, Ole Smith. In the meeting we had a conference call with the Vice President of OIT. Both Kelly and Ole and were enthusiastic and willing to help, but were waiting on the UAC to send them the maps. Unfortunately, after this meeting with Ole, I was not contacted again and Ole never responded to my emails. I was trying to find out what in format they needed they needed the maps in order to easily switch from physical to digital maps. Later, when I asked the UAC director of physical disabilities to contact Ole Smith and OIT to ask what format they would want, she told me that about 15 different departments that would now have to approve putting the map of accessible restrooms on the BYU app. This occurred after Kelly Flanagan said that the OIT team was ready to go and just needed the maps. After pushing for UAC administration to contact all stakeholders, we have had a meeting, but no one wants to take responsibility for the project.

- Exclusion from Intramural Sports

My freshman year, I joined an intramural basketball team with some of my friends. My teammates and I thought nothing of it and had fun practicing for the first game. However, as we got to the game, the referees realized I was part of the team and refused to let me play. They told me they were afraid I would hurt myself and become a "liability." I felt offended, humiliated, and excluded. At the time, I didn't make any effort to protest their decision and accepted that it must just be the rules at BYU. I don't know if this is actually the case, but I think BYU should consider the example of many other universities that realize all students should have the opportunity to participate in sports. There are even 13 universities that let disabled people compete and train for the Olympics like any other student-athlete. Because of my experience with intramurals, I have never taken a dance or sports class because I have been afraid of the humiliation of being banned when I attended the first day of class.

"BYU should consider the example of many other universities that realize all students should have the opportunity to participate in sports"

Allison Barrett

Junior, Human Development

I wish could say I had a better freshman experience than I did. I was living in on-campus housing and was taking more credits than I should have. At first, I could handle the challenge. Then my anxiety started to creep in. I would have depressive episodes that lasted for days, skipping classes, sleeping in, not being able to eat. It was terrible! My grades and my mental health suffered greatly.

I noticed a shift in my roommate's attitudes towards me around this same time. I couldn't handle the mess our apartment was in and was tired of cleaning up after them. I took my kitchen utilities back into my bedroom so they would stay clean. I tried to take control of everything that I could, because I felt like my life was so out of control.

My roommates lashed out at me for "not serving them" and "taking everything so personally". They told me I was psycho and crazy and that they didn't respect me. They were upset that I wore earplugs to bed because my anxiety kept me awake and any small noise would disturb my sleep. They bullied me, and I couldn't escape it. I reached out to our RA to see if she could move me to another room after I had done everything to be nice to them and try to mend our friendships that took a terrible turn for reasons unknown.

My RA recommended a Roommate Mediation which did NOT work. My RA basically told me to suck it up, stop taking things so personally, and try not to assume that my roommates are thinking poorly of me. I was treated like the problem.

My RA neglected to refer me to CAPS or help in any other way. She was terribly unqualified to mediate the situation. I was blamed for being bullied. I moved home with my parents shortly after, almost a week before finals even started.

My parents finally accepted that I was dealing with something much more than just freshman adjustment. We discussed going to therapy but I pushed back. It took a year and a half for me to realize that this was something that would continue to be a problem unless I saw someone. I filled out paperwork to meet with a counselor at CAPS, only to discover that there would be over a month's wait to be seen. I couldn't wait that long. I literally felt like I wouldn't survive for that long if I didn't get immediate help.

I went to the Student Health Center and was prescribed an antidepressant that changed my life. I still haven't been able to get into CAPS, and probably never will. I still have hard days, and sometimes wish I had more resources to help me. The long process of applying for accommodations from the UAC is extremely intimidating for someone suffering from similar things as I am. I wish that BYU would be more accessible, vocal, and transparent about those accommodations, host exclusive therapy groups, offer mental health classes, better train RA's to recognize the signs of mental illness and not to victimize those who are suffering, but really get them help before it's too late.

Megan McLaws

Senior, Public Health

- UAC Accommodations

I have a hearing loss, vision problems, and facial birth defects that have resulted in roughly 36 surgeries during my lifetime, 3 of which while happened during my time at BYU. During my freshman year at BYU, my mom told me to go to the University Accessibility Center (UAC) and get accommodations for my hearing loss, something I felt fine about doing, but if she had not told me to go, I wouldn't have known it existed. I had used an FM system, which is a microphone that the teacher can speak into and their voice will go to my hearing aid. I used this in elementary, middle, and high school. I stopped using it my last two years of high school because the classes were all discussion based, I had students share notes with me from classes, I can't take notes and listen at the same time since I rely heavily on lip reading!

I went to the UAC to figure out how college was going to work. I brought every piece of documentation I thought needed including an audiogram, a list of accommodations I had in the past, and other documents. I gave all the documents to the UAC. They said someone would be in contact with me. I never got a call back. I went back in and said, "I left all my documentation and all the required information and you said you'd get back to me, but I haven't heard back from anyone." They told me, "Well, we need all your documentation again, do you have it?" and I said, "No, I gave you my only copies." The UAC then told me I wouldn't receive accommodations unless I provide the same documentation AGAIN.

They had not cared about my request and had lost all my important documents. These were the only copies I had in Utah and my family recently moved so it would be awhile until I could get their copies. I entrusted them to the UAC because I thought the UAC would be professional .

The UCA covered its mistake by saying I wouldn't qualify for accommodations. I asked them, "What can I do from here?" They said, there wasn't anything I could do. As getting copies and doctors notes are a long process, I asked them if I could get them and bring them back later in the semester. They replied that it would probably be too late by then. They only let me to talk with a secretary while all this was happening, I never got referred

"[The UAC] had not cared about my request and had lost all my important documents that I needed to get accommodations"

to anyone else. As a freshman, I didn't know what to do, so I just took their authority to be correct. As a super outgoing person, even I struggled to advocate for myself, so I can't even imagine how someone that was less vocal than me would ever get help. It baffles me.

Because of this one experience, my first few years at BYU were ROUGH. I went to an academic advisor because my grades had tanked to C's D's. She asked me if I had ever spoken to the UAC and I told her what had happened. She told me to go back. I went back and got some accommodations. My advisor in the UAC office has been amazing in making sure I get the accommodations I need, and contacting me regularly. My accommodations were supposed to include both transcribers and note takers, as stated in my accommodation letter. I have never received note takers which would have been helpful, but at this point, I am just glad to be getting accommodations at all. I also know its hard to get note-takers as they rely on students to take notes. I use the transcripts of class for notes and take some of my own. My grades, since I got the accommodations, have been better.

For the first 2.5 years at BYU, I was refused accommodations, so my overall GPA is terrible. I have talked to my professors about how my more recent grades have been better, but that before then I failed a couple classes and got horrible grades. I told them that because of my UAC experience I don't know if I can get into ANY grad schools. My professors have been super helpful. They have tried to help me be successful by offering to look over grad school applications and letters for me. They've been so great overall. My experience at BYU has either been fantastic or horrendous. The academics and professors have been great! The horrendous part has been the accessibility.

Amanda Chase

Alumnus

My experience as a disabled student at BYU was not one I was anticipating. I started BYU as a very excited, driven, all honors classes freshman in fall 2011. That semester was hard, but I survived. A couple days into Winter Semester 2012, January 7 to be exact, I woke up with a bad migraine. I took some Advil and went back to sleep—fully expecting the migraine to be gone when I woke up. Except that it wasn't.

"My experience at BYU has either been fantastic or horrendous .The academics and professors have been great! The horrendous part has been the accessibility."

I still have that pain more than seven years later. It's called migraine disease. Since January 7, I have had a 24/7 headache that often is at the migraine level pain. Despite my disease, I wanted and needed to finish school. My goal since I was very young was to attend BYU, and that is what I was going to do.

Until my last two semesters at BYU, I never took a complete class load. I was always half or $\frac{3}{4}$ time ... but generally half time. I went home from school the semester I first got my migraines and before, during and after my mission (I was only able to serve four months because of my disease). Other than that, I took classes all semesters and terms. Including my breaks, it took me seven years to graduate.

Mostly because of how long it took to graduate and a bit because of the LDS culture/dating experiences I had while at BYU, I honestly have a bit of mini PTSD surrounding Provo/BYU/campus/etc. I hate going back. I moved to Sugar House right before graduation and lived there for six months. I LOVED it. Unfortunately, I had to move back to Provo for a job. It was so difficult living back in a place I felt so trapped. I always felt like I would never graduate because of everything that was against me. I mean, my body was against me graduating.

I never felt that I fit in because of my migraine disease. And the hoops I had to jump through to finally graduate separated me further from the general student body. I knew that many other students were struggling with family things, money, faith issues, dating, school stuff, jobs, depression and anxiety, etc. Just like me. But I didn't know of any of them that had 24/7 physical pain in addition to those problems.

That first semester with the disease, the only option I (or my parents) could think of was dropping my classes. Thankfully it was before the add/drop deadline. I was in so much pain. I didn't know about the disability office at that time. I don't think my professors that I reached out to mentioned the office to me either. In hindsight, I wish I would've dropped a few classes and gone to the disability office. But I was a clueless freshman. I didn't know about my options. Dropping classes and going home should never be the first resort.

"I never felt that I fit in because of my migraine disease. And the hoops I had to jump through to finally graduate separated me further from the general student body"

I honestly don't remember when I first discovered the disability office. I'm willing to bet my mom discovered it online or by calling people. She's the best nurse I've ever had. She's my angel. I've had a great experience with the accessibility office. I like that they have online forms now. I don't like the location of the office, however. I hated walking through the smelly, crowded Cougarreat down a "secret" corridor to go to the office. It further alienates you. It's like BYU is ashamed of you. Maybe they're trying to make things private for the same reasons as the location of the counseling center? But it's hard to keep a disability private ... even an invisible one. I'm not "proud" of my disability but I'm certainly not ashamed of it. Or wanting to hide it.

"I've had a great experience with the accessibility office....I don't like the location of the office, however. I hated walking through the smelly, crowded Cougarreat down a "secret" corridor to go to the office. It further alienates you. It's like BYU is ashamed of you"

A lot of my problems with my disability really began once I started getting into smaller classes—when I couldn't hide. Thankfully, with bigger (and sometimes easier) classes I skipped class occasionally and no one needed to know. That's when attendance didn't affect your grade. When it did, sometimes I would email the professor and told them I had a migraine and sometimes I wouldn't. Occasionally there would be semesters that were so bad health-wise that after a while, it just got so embarrassing to email to professor that I just stopped. I felt so ashamed.

And then even when I did feel good, sometimes I couldn't get myself to go because it had been so long since I'd been to class. I was ashamed and embarrassed and afraid. My accommodations letter stated that the professor needed to be lenient with absences and that the student and teacher needed to decide on a specific number of absences that would be appropriate. However, when you have a disease that makes you so sick you are bound to your bed for hours, and sometimes days, you just can't pre-determine how many days that semester, for that specific class you're going to be healthy. That's just not how it works.

I can't tell you how many classes I accepted a less than perfect grade in because of this policy. I'm not bitter about it, but there should be a way for disabled students to attend good schools like BYU and have the option of getting good grades. I didn't have that option.

One specific story still irks me. I was in the prerequisite class for the public relations major. I believe it was Fall 2014 with Professor Ogden. Each day there was a quiz at the beginning of the class. I believe his policy was that he dropped everyone's lowest two quizzes. I talked to him at the beginning of the semester about my accommodation letter and explained that I very well might be missing more than two classes (and therefore two quizzes). He told me that he wouldn't let me make any of the quizzes up that I missed in order to make things fair for the other students. I knew I would never be able to get a good enough grade in his class to get into the PR program so I withdrew and took the class later on. I secretly roll my eyes whenever I see Ogden and still feel bitter.

Speaking of withdrawing from classes, I have SO MANY W's. I could never get into grad school even if I wanted to (I currently DO NOT WANT TO, to be clear), but I don't have that option. My GPA is also a hindrance. It does make me sad. I know without my disease and with better accommodations and understanding, my GPA would have been so much better. It's disappointing.

I was in disbelief again. I just don't understand how the accommodations paper can literally say one thing, and the professor can say "no."

The same thing that happened in Ogden's class happened in another class once I was in the major. Because I was in the major at that point and had to take that class that semester (the way the PR program is set up is so tricky), I couldn't withdraw. I was in disbelief again. I just don't understand how the accommodations paper can literally say one thing, and the professor can say "no." I knew enough about my accommodations and the office at this point that I could've had them contact this professor and fix things, but I knew this professor from my on-campus job (and worked with him daily) and didn't want to make things possibly hellish at work for me. So I decided to suck it up and get a B grade when I could've gotten an A. Lots of those stories.

Another story happened while I was in a class during a semester that was bad health-wise. I did the work and readings but didn't attend as much class as I could. Towards the end of the semester I was getting behind and asked the professor if I could do an Incomplete. He looked into the nitty gritty details of an incomplete and apparently, I did not qualify because I had not attended class for the amount of time I needed to to qualify for an incomplete. Previous professors have granted me incompletes in these situations but he would not. I ended up getting an E in that class. It was disappointing. Some

professors are willing to do things, and lots aren't. It's professor-roulette, really. Hard to deal with when you're sick and begging for some empathy.

Despite those stories and more, I have had some AMAZING professors who truly went above and beyond for me. They deserve a very, very big shout out. They know who they are. I have also had some wonderful, wonderful on-campus bosses who have allowed me to work which has been a huge, huge blessing. At the end of the day, I feel like the actual accommodations need adjustment, there needs to be more communication AND training between the accommodations office and professors and I would love to see students with disabilities—especially invisible ones—given more of a voice.

"I would love to see students with disabilities—especially invisible ones—given more of a voice"

Amy Chapman

Alumnus, Special Education

I have been able to go to many college campuses across the country and I have to say BYU is probably one of the least accessible campuses I have been on. It is also the one that I have been on the most often so I had more time to notice things that would have been helpful if available.

First of all, the UAC is in a place that is hard to find and difficult to get to using a wheelchair. I only went there one or two times the entire time I was at BYU because I never really needed accommodations. The majority of the accommodations offered by UAC I felt like were geared more towards people who need help with notes in class or extra time on assignments. Very few options were offered for physical access to buildings and getting around campus.

I rarely used a wheelchair on the main part of campus but when I did, it was very difficult to get around. The hardest part was getting from lower campus by the RB and IPF up to the main part of campus. There is no good way to get up the hill in a wheelchair unless you go to the far end of campus and pass through 3 different buildings.

"I have been able to go to many college campuses across the country and I have to say BYU is probably one of the least accessible campuses I have been on"

As far as housing, I never worried about my housing being wheelchair accessible but I know several people who have looked and there are only 1 or 2 options for accessible housing outside of on-campus housing which is geared almost solely to freshman and sophomores. The only existing options are very expensive and do not have any parking.

"There are only 1 or 2 options for accessible housing outside of on-campus housing...The only existing options are very expensive and do not have any parking"

Another huge problem that I had was parking which is a problem for every disabled student. Whenever I would try to park on campus near my classes, all of the handicap accessible spots would be taken. The closest ones that were available were usually on the opposite end of campus from where I needed to be. There were many times I drove around for 30-40

minutes trying to find an available spot and was late to class. Most days it wasn't a big deal for me to walk a lot but there were times that my prosthetics hurt or I would have to go up a lot of hills, which made parking a huge hassle and made getting to class very difficult. Many of the buttons to open handicap accessible doors are also broken and the doorways were not wide enough or barely wide enough to fit a wheelchair through.

I never really had my wheelchair on campus unless I was playing wheelchair basketball so I never really paid attention to the handicap accessible bathrooms but I can tell you that very few buildings had bathrooms that were wheelchair accessible. The ones that did they were in very weird places and difficult to find.

"Many of the buttons to open handicap accessible doors are also broken and the doorways were not wide enough or barely wide enough to fit a wheelchair through"

I was a swimmer and wheelchair basketball player before coming to BYU and competed at the national level in both sports. Before coming to BYU, I had communicated with the head swim coach and worked out a plan so that I could continue training and competing in swim once I came to campus. I came my freshman year expecting a lot of different things and none of them worked out. I was essentially kicked off the team because I couldn't keep up with the collegiate swimmers and was stuck training by myself. I had no options to train or continue athletics of any kind. I decided to stop swimming and after that I just swam recreationally and played wheelchair basketball on campus.

Based on what I have seen at other universities, the most accessible campuses all have an entire building dedicated to adaptive athletics. Now, these schools also have collegiate wheelchair basketball programs, rugby programs, and many different options for adaptive athletics. I don't know if that is the most practical thing for BYU. However, I encountered many problems trying to use the weight rooms and basketball courts. I very rarely had a court where I could go shoot with my wheelchair and not feel like I was in the way or putting someone else in danger. If I did find a court to play on, it would quickly be taken over by a bunch of guys trying to play a pickup game and I would get kicked off.

If the RB was full, I would go to the Smith Fieldhouse to shoot around and play, but on many occasions, the ramps to get onto the court were put up and prevented me from getting onto the court. I would have to ask people to help me get the ramp down or have to get out of my chair to get on to the basketball courts in my chair. That is definitely something that can easily be fixed. If the collegiate teams move the ramps, (which they shouldn't anyways) they need to put them back right away so it is accessible.

These experiences made it very difficult for me to do what I love. I was trying to get ready to try out for the U.S. national team and I really had nowhere to go while all of the other student-athletes had teams and designated places to train. I don't know if I have a good solution to propose. I think this might be an unusual thing that I had to deal with that a lot of other students with disabilities maybe didn't encounter. For a long time, BYU had adaptive intramural programs such as wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby. I talked to the intramural program extensively while I was at BYU and they refused to support those programs stating that they would not get enough support. However, I know lots of students that would have been interested in playing if the program was available.

Now the weight room. The weight room is completely inaccessible. Student with physical disabilities have no way to use the equipment. There are only ellipticals, treadmills, and things that are too high for someone in a wheelchair to reach. It would be very helpful to have some hand cycling machines and weight benches with more stability to allow students with balance issues to use the weights and exercise.

"These experiences made it very difficult for me to do what I love. I was trying to get ready to try out for the U.S. national team and I really had nowhere to go while all of the other student-athletes had teams and designated places to train"

Laura Tyler

Alumnus, Plant Biology

During winter break, 2007, my sister Elizabeth (“Biz”) was diagnosed with osteosarcoma; a large cancerous tumor was wrapped around of the base of her spine. Surgery and recovery involved the removal of several vertebrae and half of her pelvis. One leg was amputated and her salvaged femur bone from that limb was used to reconnect her remaining leg to the base of her spine. Recovery took nearly two years and was threatened as cancer spread to her lungs. She eventually returned to BYU as a newly disabled student in a manual wheelchair. I helped her get to classes and cleaned her apartment.

My sister's roommate was a graduate student in the math department with severe cystic fibrosis. They both landed in that apartment because it was one of the only wheelchair accessible places listed in BYU approved housing. Frankly, it wasn't remotely accessible and they had no able-bodied roommates. The owners claimed accessibility because it

was on the first floor and there was handicapped parking. I kept their place clean because neither could dishes or laundry. I drove my sister to and from campus since the only way up was via the south campus ramp by Brick Oven—impossible for a manual wheelchair. I don't think all the buses were accessible at that time.

"That apartment...was one of the only wheelchair accessible places listed in BYU approved housing. Frankly, it wasn't remotely accessible"

The campus parking situation was fine; you could park in any A spot with a handicapped placard. At one point, campus police ticketed our car for parking violations. Turns out a BYU student had taken a picture of my sister's placard, forged it, and used it to park in no parking zones. BYU police voided the parking fines, but didn't pursue the suspect.

It was difficult for my sister to come back to BYU as a newly disabled person. It's a big campus, and she was pretty weak. Most professors understood that it was difficult to attend class and allowed her to participate via Skype when necessary. She didn't have many friends—by the time she got back to BYU most of her friends had graduated. I was disappointed in her ward for not reaching out or trying to fellowship her. She had some interactions with the BYU accessibility center, but I don't remember any big adjustments

after meeting with them. She had requested a spot in their offices or a spot in the TA Offices at the KMBL where she could transfer to a softer chair for pain relief, but I don't think the UAC ever came through. She did find friends in Salt Lake through adaptive sports, but BYU didn't offer anything like that.

Frankly, BYU is not very accessible. I had mentioned the KMBL before. My sister had many classes and church in that building. The only place for truly accessible seating in the lecture hall is the back row. For classes, this was a pain because Biz was legally blind in one eye. For church, it was embarrassing that she sat alone on the back row. BYU shut down bus service by the Wilk for a time, so the only place she could get dropped off was at the Marriott School of Business. From there, she rode the elevator to main campus and pushed herself to classes. The first time she visited the UAC, she got stuck in an elevator in the Wilk; the facilities manager had to load her into the freight elevator so she could get to the accessibility office.

At one point, my sister's Bishop made a very thoughtless and hurtful comment: "Why do they put all the disabled students in our ward?" The answer is, as I said before, it was one of the only complexes advertised as accessible at the time. I also mentioned that my sister had to get out of her chair now and then. If she regularly spent more than two hours at a time in her chair, her skin

would start to break down. She would scout out bathrooms on campus with nursing stations to unload. She felt uncomfortable taking up space intended for mothers. Much of BYU's campus was built pre-ADA (1990), and my sister experienced that every day: stairs, steep ramps, split-level buildings, limited elevators, limited resting spots.

We graduated together and moved to Chicago where eventually she started a masters program in Disability Studies. She never finished, passing away June 2016. I know she'd have more to say. She loved BYU, and getting back there after surgery to graduate was a huge goal.

"At one point, my sister's Bishop made a very thoughtless and hurtful comment: "Why do they put all the disabled students in our ward?"

Much of BYU's campus was built pre-ADA (1990), and my sister experienced that every day: stairs, steep ramps, split-level buildings, limited elevators, limited resting spots.

Alex Malouf

Senior, English Major

- UAC Accommodations

I did not get connected with the UAC until after my mission. Most of the time I was at BYU, I did not know about the accessibility center. After my mission I had hip surgery. I went to accessibility center because I knew I needed help. I could not get across campus, was on crutches, and in severe pain. They said there was nothing they could do for me. I asked if they had anything, a golf cart maybe, to help me, because I had seen that BYU had many golf carts, and they just used them to bring people around for tours. I had also heard of many other universities that provided this service to their students. My surgeon told me most campuses have a system that they give students rides if they need them. I was shocked. BYU did not help me and I was forced to go on foot. My experience with the UAC has shown me they do not give any help at all to people with mobility issues.

My professors, on the other hand, have been very helpful. I had to withdraw from a lot of my classes and they've been really kind, saying that if I can't get things done when I need to, they'll work through things with me. The professors have been more helpful than the UAC. Looking back on my time at BYU, I would definitely put my professors way up there and the UAC lower. I am so grateful to them because they want me to succeed. I am not just a number in the system. The UAC might see you as a human for some of your needs, but not all of your needs. For example, if you have depression and anxiety, they see you as a person. But if you have any other problem, they say, "oh we can't help with that, we can't see that" and they cover their eyes.

An example of this happened when I went into the UAC about 5 weeks after my surgery. It was not even far enough into recovery that I should have even been walking that much. They just brushed it off and said "that's too bad." I had all of the paperwork that I was told to bring. I had my surgeon's notes that had specific info detailing what the university should provide for me. I also had medical documentation of what had happened. They just held onto it and didn't give it back, but also didn't give me accommodations. They took the records and didn't help me. They gave me other accommodations down the line for my mental health, and it felt like they were giving me some sort of pity accommodations to make up for the more important things they had ignored.

"If you have depression and anxiety, they see you as a person. But if you have any other problem, they say, 'Oh we can't help with that, we can't see that' and they cover their eyes"

- Campus Accessibility

Other issues for me are related to getting around campus. I'll often be walking behind someone into a building, but they don't see me there and drop the door on me. I don't have good balance and I don't weigh a lot so I just fall down. If I try to use the door buttons, they're usually very slow and some of them don't work. Some work for the first door and then the second door won't open. With the buildings I'm using, they're just too slow so as I'm standing there, a line of people forms behind me. I'm not strong enough to push the door open myself so I can't do anything about it.

Sometimes, when there's not a button, I just have to wait for someone else to come push the door open for me. It's really awkward.

The bathrooms are the heaviest doors. I'll try to use the bathroom on the second floor of the KMBL and I can hardly get it open. I'll push it enough for me to squeeze inside and then I'll just sit down and breathe cause I'm so tired from pushing the door open. I have to do the same thing to get and that's harder because I have to pull it. When I'm pushing I can push it and then shimmy inside, but if I have to pull it, I have to find a way to maneuver my body around.

Other things that I notice with bathrooms is they'll have a handicap stall, but sometimes the doors open in such a way that you can't actually get inside. It's big enough for you if you just had the wheelchair and the stall was your permanent residence, but getting in and out is ridiculously hard. It's also like that on crutches. There are some bathroom stalls that I can't even get in on crutches. Even if there is a stall I can get into, there's always only one and there is often someone in it who has no mobility issues. Standing there waiting is very difficult for my body.



"[The door buttons are] usually very slow and some of them don't work. Sometimes...I just have to wait for someone else to come push the door open for me"

Sometimes I'm so exhausted that I can't get to a bathroom. They're not clearly marked and when I'm dealing with a lot of pain and fatigue and I don't know where the bathroom is, I'm not going to go around the entire building looking for one I can actually use. Because then I just make things worse for myself cause I'm in more pain and more exhausted. I would really appreciate it if they had maps of where accessible bathrooms were on campus because there have been times that I've held it for 3 hours since that's easier than finding an accessible bathroom.

"There have been times that I've held it for 3 hours since that's easier than finding an accessible bathroom"

- Parking

Another huge issue for me is the lack of disabled parking stalls on campus. I have a handicap parking pass, but there aren't enough handicap parking spots. There are a few that are assigned by the UAC, but I don't have one of them. I'm stuck with whatever is left and oftentimes there isn't one left. My fiancé will have to park in various different locations where his parking pass is allowed and then I have to walk to wherever it is. A lot of the parking we can use is really far away from any of the buildings that I need to be at. I need to walk 20 more minutes than I should be walking just to get to my classes.

Sometimes we'll try to go past the security gates, so he can drop me off closer to my classes. The security people always say: "You're not supposed to go past there." They don't even consider the fact that some people need to walk less or can't walk as far. Some of them are nice and some are kind of snide. Even with the handicap pass, they still stop us. If we can get past, he'll drop me off at the JFSB and then he has to go park somewhere else. The whole situation is not very friendly to people with disabilities.

- Housing

The final issue for me is that BYU doesn't have hardly any accessible housing. My apartment has 3 flights of stairs to get to the top, where I live, so I have my fiancé help me get up and down every day. It's a bit impractical, but I don't have very many good options for better housing. As far as I'm aware, the only accessible housing is Heritage. I think BYU should make more of an effort to provide accessible housing for students. If BYU is going to make an effort to accept students with disabilities, they should have requirements that ensure those students get the accommodations they need.

Anonymous

I am a Senior in Political Science with an emphasis in political strategy and minor in communications. I have been diagnosed with a million things, but the latest is Major Depression Disorder, Severe Generalized Anxiety, Moderate social anxiety, and ADHD. I also have moderate scoliosis in my back and degenerative disc disease, I am also currently going through the process of being diagnosed with a neurological disorder. And I am replying to this, in hope of helping someone else. I also release all my words for publication.

*How BYU made it difficult

It felt like BYU didn't WANT to help me. Until my husband or I pushed for something, then BYU HAD to help me.

*Was it hard to get UAC give you accommodations?

I originally didn't know that there were accommodations for people with mental illness until my friend at BYU-I suggested it, because she got some for ADHD. I made an appointment, but it took me weeks to get in. By the time I got in my mental health was a wreck. I came in crying and hyperventilating with doctors' notes and he still tried to push me into having less accommodations. I was at a breaking point, and I finally got the accommodations that I so desperately needed.

*Was it hard to get into the counseling center?

Not at first, but as time went on yes. I initially saw an "intern", who tried to tell me it was in my head and wasn't following my health very well. Then I requested a change to an actual counselor, that's when things get tricky. At this point my health digressed and I was only able to get an appointment once a month or sometimes every other month. He also didn't seem to keep track of my progress, as I felt I had to constantly re-explain what was going on, and he very rarely got to the tools, or behavioral actions I use to help myself. Next, I tried Biofeedback and loved my one on one appointments! This was about once a week, until over the summer; it became months. This is when I finally turned to an outside counselor in Sandy, UT for help, because I didn't know what else to do. CAPS was not equipped to help those with long term serious illness, but more for seasonal depression, or test anxiety.

*Was it super hard to get BYU to recognize you? Professors? Students? Physical campus? Social aspects? Etc. etc.

With my diseases being invisible, it was difficult with some professors to get them to recognize my diseases. But in reality, I had the hardest time at BYUSA. I was an executive director in Clubs and seemed that my health was always completely dismissed. It got to a point where I was asking for extensions from professors because of my health, because my BYUSA executives wouldn't give me the support or help that I needed. BYUSA was the least understanding of every facet of BYU, of my invisible diseases.

I had some amazing professors though. All of them were hesitant, but once they saw I was a dedicated student who just needed a little help, they were happy too. Some of these professors were Michael Barber, Quin Monson, Tyler Griffin, Chris Karpowitz, and many more I thank God for. Some professors even went beyond the call of duty of the letter, in counseling me and being extra flexible with me.

Students really didn't know or understand. I was an actress for five years with a tough sister and mom; so I knew how to hide it. My husband was even shocked to discover the actual physical ramifications of my "invisible" disease. So, if someone discovered that the reason, I went to the bathroom was to get sick because of my anxiety; they were shocked to see how well I pulled it off. Students, especially members of the Church, looked at me as a weak link or liability especially in classes and group projects. I guess its because they didn't care if "I was sad today", or "if I just couldn't push through the pain", in the end it was about results and their grades.

Physical campus was very very hard on me. I couldn't walk because of back pain and chronic fatigue, so we would park and there was only parking at the RB after 9am. There were many days where I considered skipping class while standing at the bottom of those steps, because I just didn't know if I could do it. Some days my husband would half carry me up the steps, so I could just make it to class on time. Many days my husband had to convince the security guard at the Hinckley Center to let him drop me off because I was in so much pain. The pain of being on campus, made it that much more difficult for my brain to want to go to school at all.

Social aspects were minimal. Due to all the above reasons, I had very little social life on campus. It became physically, mentally, and emotionally scarring to be on campus; because it didn't feel safe. I had no safe haven on campus (except the UAC lab in the library towards the end of my time there). There was no room I could step into and study

in, to find relief from the anxiety. There wasn't always somewhere to sit, so I found myself sitting on the stairs or floor, to avoid passing out or pain. I didn't have a safe place on campus, it seemed like no matter where I was, I was being judged.

*An extra point I want to make that I am very passionate about. I had a professor who taught a GE class, and taught the class well. So well, that the school asked him to make it harder on the students and to make it more demanding. I also heard about this with religion classes, which in my mind were supposed to be there to help me grow spiritually, not academically. This made me weep, because I realized BYU wasn't there to help me learn, but to stay competitive. Here I was, pushing through everyday and there were departments that were being asked to make my life harder. They say enter to learn and go forth to serve, but I learned very little outside of fear while at BYU.

* Somedays the only reason I stayed at BYU was because of the devotionals, I absolutely loved them, and they made me feel safe and cared for. However, I didn't feel that way during forums and would have liked them all to be devotionals and forums be a separate time.

I came to a breaking point in October of 2018. I had dropped all extracurriculars and had just school and was barely full-time. However, in October I got so close to the edge of suicide that my husband and I decided to send me back home to regain a feeling of safety and health. After hearing about the suicide on campus, I cried for days because I knew how she felt, and I wish I could have gotten her somewhere safe and I thanked God for my family who protected me from that. I still cannot work on school for longer than an hour without severe repercussions, because of the trauma I experienced at BYU. However, I have had certain friends stand by me and some wonderful teachers who are allowing me to finish school from home, not pushing. I also know that some of this is part of my illnesses, but I also know that something had to trigger these reactions. I love BYU, but if a friend of mine with a disability asked if they should go, my answer would be a resounding, no.

*I did have amazing experiences at BYU though. I met my husband and some of the most loyal friends. I was able to travel to DC for a weekend to network on scholarship. I was able to serve those who needed it. I was also able to feel the Spirit so strongly sometimes.

"I love BYU, but if a friend of mine with a disability asked if they should go, my answer would be a resounding, no"

Jonathan Phelps

Freshman, Pre-Management Major

- Parking

I have a parking pass for a reserved stall right by the Maeser building. I have a car with a ramp in it so I park in the van-accessible stall. However, the ramp area does not have a wheelchair accessible curb. The parking stalls back right up to the street, so to get to the sidewalk you have to go into the street (on the oncoming traffic side). Getting from my car to the sidewalk is fine because I can easily see oncoming traffic but getting from the sidewalk to my car is where I run into a problem. Since I am at a lower level than a standing person while sitting in my wheelchair I can't see through the window of my car so there is no easy way to see if there is any traffic coming. It took me almost getting hit once to realize how dangerous it was. It's not too difficult to navigate once you know what to look out for, but I am worried other people might not realize how close the street is.

- Restroom Accessibility

Finding a wheelchair accessible stall in the restrooms can be difficult. During the busy hours on campus, it is not uncommon that I have to go to multiple different bathrooms just to find an empty wheelchair stall. Additionally, sometimes I will find the wheelchair stall occupied even though many regular stalls are available. Everyone has a right to use the wheelchair accessible stall, but I just wish there was some type of sign encouraging people to use the regular stalls if possible.

Many wheelchair accessible bathrooms on campus have a double door system. The first outside door leads to a tiny hallway with the door to the actual bathroom at the end. The hallway is extremely narrow despite being a wheelchair accessible bathroom. There is no way to open the door by yourself unless you are right in front of the door. If anyone opens the door they end up hitting you. In addition, it is even difficult to have someone open the door for you. Since the hallway is so narrow unless they open it in a very specific way (which most of the time they don't) there is hardly any room for the wheelchair user to go through. It makes things unnecessarily difficult and awkward.

- Building Accessibility

The doors are terrible. The buttons to automatically open doors are so hit or miss. A lot of them don't work and are extremely slow. Also, lots of sets of double doors have two

"The doors are terrible. The buttons to automatically open doors are so hit or miss. A lot of them don't work and are extremely slow"

separate buttons. One for the first door and one for the second (similar to the situation I described for the restrooms but for building entrances). Not once have I ever wanted only one of the doors to open. Luckily, I am able to open doors in my wheelchair without any assistance so most of the time I don't even mess with the buttons.

A lot of buildings—especially the older ones—only have one elevator. So if it breaks down you are out of luck. This has only happened to me once, but I thought I would mention it just to acknowledge that the problem exists and it would be cool if BYU tries to make sure this isn't an issue for the new buildings.

Angela Walser

Alumnus, Biology

- UAC Accommodations

I was a freshman at BYU in 2010. One day during my first semester, I was riding my bike home to Wyview Park on University Parkway. A car cut into the bike lane and I was unable to stop, I hit the back of the car and flew over it, landing in the street. The car drove off, but luckily the farmer's market that takes place in the stadium parking lot was in full swing and some good Samaritans came out and directed traffic around me and helped me and my bike over to the sidewalk.

I got out of the whole scenario largely unscathed. I had some road rash and a bruise on my forehead, but the greatest impact on my life was from two severely sprained wrists with small ligament tears. No breaks, but I was advised by a doctor to wear wrist braces for about 6 weeks. Gripping things was very hard, even taking off the braces to try and pinch something caused sharp pain. So, as you might expect, the doctor told me not to do so. I'm stubborn, so I kept trying, but eventually learned that if I didn't want to break all of my dishes I should probably ask for help.

One form of help I asked for was from the University Accessibility Center. I requested a notetaker for my classes, as I was unable to type or hold a pencil. I explained that I needed the help starting ASAP but would only need it for six weeks while my wrists healed. I was under the impression that they would be fully able to meet this need.

I was never contacted by anyone and apart from a few friends I had made and some begging, I did not get any help with note taking. At about 5 weeks into my recovery, when

my wrists were just about healed, I received a number of emails telling me that there was someone in my classes in need of a note taker. I toyed with the idea of responding that, once my braces were off in a week, I would be happy to volunteer! Then I suddenly realized that the emails were for each and every one of my classes, and that the student needing notes was me.

"It was baffling to me that it took 5 weeks for them to process my request and send out an email, I would think the process could easily be done within a day or at least a week of my request"

I requested that the University Accessibility Center rescind the request, because at 5 weeks, it was far too late to be helpful. It was baffling to me that it took 5 weeks for them to process my request and send out an email, I would think the process could easily be done within a day or at least a week of my request. I doubt it would be that hard to write a program that would automatically send out a basic form

mail for notetakers. I'm pretty sure that type of program could be written in a couple of days, and it shouldn't take more than a day or so to process that request. It was pretty crazy to not receive any help for so long.

The other great struggle that stuck with me was the testing center. I only needed to take one test during this 6 week ordeal, and I had asked for help from my professor to communicate to the testing center my need for an aide to fill in the bubbles on the test or for another means of reporting my answers. I was happy to do all of my own thinking and work, all I needed was to be able to say or type "The answer to number 5 is C" and have someone else do the pencil gripping and precise, fine-motor-skill-needing task of filling in the bubble.

The testing center set me up alone in a room with a computer. I asked if this computer was able to report answers on the test for me, if I was somehow able to submit my answers on it through typing. Nope. It was just a computer. I re-clarified my need with the employee—I didn't need help understanding or processing the test material. I just needed someone to fill in the bubbles. He said they couldn't do that.

I answered the 20-or-less questions by typing them out on the computer in the Notepad app. It probably took me 45 minutes or so to answer the questions. It took me the remaining time limit of the test (probably 1 hr 15 minutes) to painstakingly fill in the

bubbles, taking breaks often to massage my wrists and praying that I wasn't damaging them and setting myself back in recovery. It hurt! The biggest perk of having a room to myself was that I didn't disrupt others with my wincing and hissing through it.

I don't know how well the university accessibility center helps students with long-term disabilities, but for short-term needs like mine, I was left high and dry.

"I don't know how well the [UAC] helps students with long-term disabilities, but for short-terms needs like mine, I was left high and dry"

Amy Muller

Alumnus, Zoology

My daughter, Kendra Muller, and I had a very difficult time working with the BYU Accessibility Center. We were surprised in the lack of willingness to work with us to give accommodations for her. We went to several other state universities and were given much more personal attention and willingness to work with us on different needs for her accessibility. This was ironic considering the fact that BYU's mission centers around Christlike love and service. When we arrived to visit BYU and its Accessibility Center, we were told that we could not receive any information until Kendra started school, while every other university was happy to sit down with us and discuss Kendra's wellbeing. Providing cordial and welcoming treatment would really go a long way.

One of the strained situations included the insensitivity of the students who staffed the office for the Accessibility Center. Also, we struggled in getting her books to be processed to be eBooks for her accessibility. We could have had more help from the Accessibility Center. Thirdly, figuring out her ceiling track system that allows her to get in and out of bed independently was an almost impossible task. After a heated debate with the Accessibility Center and the BYU On-Campus Housing Office, we were eventually able to get approved, but only by coming up with our own solution: a freestanding frame. This required us to pay an extra \$2,500 on top of the \$8,000 already spent on the device.

"After a heated debate with the [UAC] and the BYU On-Campus Housing Office, we were eventually able to get approved, but only by coming up with our own solution...This required us to pay an extra \$2,500 on top of the \$8,000 already spent on the device"

Kendra also had to pay \$775 more for than other students simply because she needed her more space for to accommodate the turning radius of her wheelchair. There is not room in Heritage Halls' accessible rooms for a manual wheelchair to be turned easily with two beds/desks in the room. Because of this, she had to have a room usually occupied by two. Also, the accessible room's bathroom has a roll in shower that is actually very difficult use in a wheelchair. The showers should have a rubber bumper to prevent water from going out of the shower instead of a large tile line that is difficult to get over.

Another difficulty was the fact that Kendra was forced to move to another building after her freshman year. It was very difficult to have to move all her equipment to another building. Accessibility office should check with a student with high accessibility needs, before assigning a them new room. Moving a hospital bed, ceiling track system, and all her equipment should not be done unless the student requests. This caused extra stress on our daughter. These are just a few of the difficulties on campus that we have experienced. We hope that BYU will make experience easier for future students who find themselves with similar needs.

SPECIFIC LEGAL VIOLATIONS

Note: The following list is not comprehensive of all legal violations. Updates can be found on the Commission's website.

Violation: General discrimination against disabled students
Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B,
Chapter 1, §104.4

§104.4 Discrimination prohibited.

(a) General. No qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives Federal financial assistance.

(b) Discriminatory actions prohibited.

(1) A recipient, in providing any aid, benefit, or service, may not, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, on the basis of handicap:

(i) Deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, or service;

- (ii) Afford a qualified handicapped person an opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, or service that is not equal to that afforded others;
- (iii) Provide a qualified handicapped person with an aid, benefit, or service that is not as effective as that provided to others;
- (iv) Provide different or separate aid, benefits, or services to handicapped persons or to any class of handicapped persons unless such action is necessary to provide qualified handicapped persons with aid, benefits, or services that are as effective as those provided to others;
- (v) Aid or perpetuate discrimination against a qualified handicapped person by providing significant assistance to an agency, organization, or person that discriminates on the basis of handicap in providing any aid, benefit, or service to beneficiaries of the recipients program or activity;
- (vi) Deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards; or
- (vii) Otherwise limit a qualified handicapped person in the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity enjoyed by others receiving an aid, benefit, or service.

(2) For purposes of this part, aids, benefits, and services, to be equally effective, are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for handicapped and nonhandicapped persons, but must afford handicapped persons equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.

(3) Despite the existence of separate or different aid, benefits, or services provided in accordance with this part, a recipient may not deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate in such aid, benefits, or services that are not separate or different.

(4) A recipient may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or methods of administration (i) that have the effect of subjecting qualified handicapped persons to discrimination on the basis of handicap, (ii) that have the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the recipient's program or activity with respect to handicapped persons, or (iii) that perpetuate the discrimination of another recipient if both recipients are subject to common administrative control or are agencies of the same State.

(5) In determining the site or location of a facility, an applicant for assistance or a recipient may not make selections (i) that have the effect of excluding handicapped persons from, denying them the benefits of, or otherwise subjecting them to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance or (ii) that have the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the program or activity with respect to handicapped persons.

(6) As used in this section, the aid, benefit, or service provided under a program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance includes any aid, benefit, or service provided in or through a facility that has been constructed, expanded, altered, leased or rented, or otherwise acquired, in whole or in part, with Federal financial assistance.

(c) Aid, benefits, or services limited by Federal law. The exclusion of nonhandicapped persons from aid, benefits, or services limited by Federal statute or executive order to handicapped persons or the exclusion of a specific class of handicapped persons from aid, benefits, or services limited by Federal statute or executive order to a different class of handicapped persons is not prohibited by this part.

Violation: Students denied equal participation in intramurals, gyms, athletic activities

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.43 & §104.47

§104.47 Nonacademic services.

(a) Physical education and athletics. (1) In providing physical education courses and athletics and similar aid, benefits, or services to any of its students, a recipient to which this subpart applies may not discriminate on the basis of handicap. A recipient that offers physical education courses or that operates or sponsors intercollegiate, club, or intramural athletics shall provide to qualified handicapped students an equal opportunity for participation in these activities.

(2) A recipient may offer to handicapped students physical education and athletic activities that are separate or different only if separation or differentiation is consistent with the requirements of §104.43(d) and only if no qualified handicapped student is denied the opportunity to compete for teams or to participate in courses that are not separate or different.

§104.43 Treatment of students; general.

(a) No qualified handicapped student shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any academic, research, occupational training, housing, health insurance, counseling, financial aid, physical education, athletics, recreation, transportation, other extracurricular, or other postsecondary education aid, benefits, or services to which this subpart applies.

(b) A recipient to which this subpart applies that considers participation by students in education programs or activities not operated wholly by the recipient as part of, or equivalent to, and education program or activity operated by the recipient shall assure itself that the other education program or activity, as a whole, provides an equal opportunity for the participation of qualified handicapped persons.

(c) A recipient to which this subpart applies may not, on the basis of handicap, exclude any qualified handicapped student from any course, course of study, or other part of its education program or activity.

(d) A recipient to which this subpart applies shall operate its program or activity in the most integrated setting appropriate.

Violation: Students denied testing accommodations (e.g. using an iPad due to limited dexterity)

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.44

§104.44 Academic adjustments.

(c) Course examinations. In its course examinations or other procedures for evaluating students' academic achievement, a recipient to which this subpart applies shall provide such methods for evaluating the achievement of students who have a handicap that impairs sensory, manual, or speaking skills as will best ensure that the results of the evaluation represents the student's achievement in the course, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (except where such skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

Violation: Students denied accommodations to enable full participation in classes

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.44

§104.44 Academic adjustments.

(d) Auxiliary aids.

(1) A recipient to which this subpart applies shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no handicapped student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

(2) Auxiliary aids may include taped texts, interpreters or other effective methods of making orally delivered materials available to students with hearing impairments, readers in libraries for students with visual impairments, classroom equipment adapted for use by students with manual impairments, and other similar services and actions. Recipients need not provide attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

Violation: BYU fails to provide equal housing opportunities for disabled students

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.45

§104.45 Housing

(a) Housing provided by the recipient. A recipient that provides housing to its nonhandicapped students shall provide comparable, convenient, and accessible housing to handicapped students at the same cost as to others. At the end of the transition period provided for in subpart C, such housing shall be available in sufficient quantity and variety so that the scope of handicapped students' choice of living accommodations is, as a whole, comparable to that of nonhandicapped students.

(b) Other housing. A recipient that assists any agency, organization, or person in making housing available to any of its students shall take such action as may be necessary to assure itself that such housing is, as a whole, made available in a manner that does not result in discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Violation: BYU has refused to move the location of classes to accommodate disabled students

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.12

§104.12 Reasonable accommodation.

(a) A recipient shall make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified handicapped applicant or employee unless the recipient can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program or activity.

(b) Reasonable accommodation may include:

(1) Making facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons, and

(2) Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, the provision of readers or interpreters, and other similar actions.

(c) In determining pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section whether an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of a recipient's program or activity, factors to be considered include:

(1) The overall size of the recipient's program or activity with respect to number of employees, number and type of facilities, and size of budget;

(2) The type of the recipient's operation, including the composition and structure of the recipient's workforce; and

(3) The nature and cost of the accommodation needed.

(d) A recipient may not deny any employment opportunity to a qualified handicapped employee or applicant if the basis for the denial is the need to make reasonable accommodation to the physical or mental limitations of the employee or applicant.

In determining the site or location of a facility, an applicant for assistance or a recipient may not make selections

(i) that have the effect of excluding handicapped persons from, denying them the benefits of, or otherwise subjecting them to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance or

(ii) that have the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the program or activity with respect to handicapped persons.

Violation: BYU has ignored its required assurances as a recipient of federal funding

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.5

§104.5 Assurances required.

(a) Assurances. An applicant for Federal financial assistance to which this part applies shall submit an assurance, on a form specified by the Assistant Secretary, that the program or activity will be operated in compliance with this part. An applicant may incorporate these assurances by reference in subsequent applications to the Department.

(b) Duration of obligation. (1) In the case of Federal financial assistance extended in the form of real property or to provide real property or structures on the property, the assurance will obligate the recipient or, in the case of a subsequent transfer, the transferee, for the period during which the real property or structures are used for the purpose for which Federal financial assistance is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits.

(2) In the case of Federal financial assistance extended to provide personal property, the assurance will obligate the recipient for the period during which it retains ownership or possession of the property.

(3) In all other cases the assurance will obligate the recipient for the period during which Federal financial assistance is extended.

(c) Covenants. (1) Where Federal financial assistance is provided in the form of real property or interest in the property from the Department, the instrument effecting or recording this transfer shall contain a covenant running with the land to assure nondiscrimination for the period during which the real property is used for a purpose for which the Federal financial assistance is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits.

(2) Where no transfer of property is involved but property is purchased or improved with Federal financial assistance, the recipient shall agree to include the covenant described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section in the instrument effecting or recording any subsequent transfer of the property.

(3) Where Federal financial assistance is provided in the form of real property or interest in the property from the Department, the covenant shall also include a condition

coupled with a right to be reserved by the Department to revert title to the property in the event of a breach of the covenant. If a transferee of real property proposes to mortgage or otherwise encumber the real property as security for financing construction of new, or improvement of existing, facilities on the property for the purposes for which the property was transferred, the Assistant Secretary may, upon request of the transferee and if necessary to accomplish such financing and upon such conditions as he or she deems appropriate, agree to forbear the exercise of such right to revert title for so long as the lien of such mortgage or other encumbrance remains effective.

Violation: BYU has failed to adequately consult disabled individuals regarding accessibility issues and has inadequate evaluation procedures for accessibility

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.6

§104.6 Remedial action, voluntary action, and self-evaluation.

(a) Remedial action. (1) If the Assistant Secretary finds that a recipient has discriminated against persons on the basis of handicap in violation of section 504 or this part, the recipient shall take such remedial action as the Assistant Secretary deems necessary to overcome the effects of the discrimination.

(2) Where a recipient is found to have discriminated against persons on the basis of handicap in violation of section 504 or this part and where another recipient exercises control over the recipient that has discriminated, the Assistant Secretary, where appropriate, may require either or both recipients to take remedial action.

(3) The Assistant Secretary may, where necessary to overcome the effects of discrimination in violation of section 504 or this part, require a recipient to take remedial action (i) with respect to handicapped persons who are no longer participants in the recipient's program or activity but who were participants in the program or activity when such discrimination occurred or (ii) with respect to handicapped persons who would have been participants in the program or activity had the discrimination not occurred.

b) Voluntary action. A recipient may take steps, in addition to any action that is required by this part, to overcome the effects of conditions that resulted in limited participation in the recipient's program or activity by qualified handicapped persons.

- (c) Self-evaluation. (1) A recipient shall, within one year of the effective date of this part:
- (i) Evaluate, with the assistance of interested persons, including handicapped persons or organizations representing handicapped persons, its current policies and practices and the effects thereof that do not or may not meet the requirements of this part;
 - (ii) Modify, after consultation with interested persons, including handicapped persons or organizations representing handicapped persons, any policies and practices that do not meet the requirements of this part; and
 - (iii) Take, after consultation with interested persons, including handicapped persons or organizations representing handicapped persons, appropriate remedial steps to eliminate the effects of any discrimination that resulted from adherence to these policies and practices.
- (2) A recipient that employs fifteen or more persons shall, for at least three years following completion of the evaluation required under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, maintain on file, make available for public inspection, and provide to the Assistant Secretary upon request:
- (i) A list of the interested persons consulted,
 - (ii) A description of areas examined and any problems identified, and
 - (iii) A description of any modifications made and of any remedial steps taken.

Violation: BYU does not take steps to notify students and faculty of accessibility other than course syllabi, which is inadequate

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.8

104.8 Notice.

- (a) A recipient that employs fifteen or more persons shall take appropriate initial and continuing steps to notify participants, beneficiaries, applicants, and employees, including those with impaired vision or hearing, and unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient that it does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in violation of section 504 and this part. The notification shall state, where appropriate, that the recipient does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its program or activity. The notification shall also include an identification of the responsible employee designated

pursuant to §104.7(a). A recipient shall make the initial notification required by this paragraph within 90 days of the effective date of this part. Methods of initial and continuing notification may include the posting of notices, publication in newspapers and magazines, placement of notices in recipients' publication, and distribution of memoranda or other written communications.

(b) If a recipient publishes or uses recruitment materials or publications containing general information that it makes available to participants, beneficiaries, applicants, or employees, it shall include in those materials or publications a statement of the policy described in paragraph (a) of this section. A recipient may meet the requirement of this paragraph either by including appropriate inserts in existing materials and publications or by revising and reprinting the materials and publications.

Violation: BYU does not take steps to notify students and faculty of accessibility other than course syllabi, which is inadequate

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.12

104.8 Notice.

(a) A recipient that employs fifteen or more persons shall take appropriate initial and continuing steps to notify participants, beneficiaries, applicants, and employees, including those with impaired vision or hearing, and unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient that it does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in violation of section 504 and this part. The notification shall state, where appropriate, that the recipient does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its program or activity. The notification shall also include an identification of the responsible employee designated

Violation: Currently no formal transition plan exists for improving accessibility. Any planning that has happened has largely excluded handicapped persons. If completed, the transition plan has not been made public. Various

organizations at BYU have avoided responsibility for related projects, leaving nobody in charge.

Law: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter 1, §104.22

§104.22 Existing facilities.

(d) Time period. A recipient shall comply with the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section within sixty days of the effective date of this part except that where structural changes in facilities are necessary, such changes shall be made within three years of the effective date of this part, but in any event as expeditiously as possible.

(e) Transition plan. In the event that structural changes to facilities are necessary to meet the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section, a recipient shall develop, within six months of the effective date of this part, a transition plan setting forth the steps necessary to complete such changes. The plan shall be developed with the assistance of interested persons, including handicapped persons or organizations representing handicapped persons. A copy of the transition plan shall be made available for public inspection. The plan shall, at a minimum:

(1) Identify physical obstacles in the recipient's facilities that limit the accessibility of its program or activity to handicapped persons;

(2) Describe in detail the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible;

(3) Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve full accessibility in order to comply with paragraph (a) of this section and, if the time period of the transition plan is longer than one year, identify the steps of that will be taken during each year of the transition period; and

(4) Indicate the person responsible for implementation of the plan.

(f) Notice. The recipient shall adopt and implement procedures to ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information as to the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons.

Commissioners' Note: Section 504 is much older than the ADA act, hence the language of "handicapped" instead of "disabled."

RECOMMENDATIONS

BYU Administration

1. We strongly recommend BYU administration including President Kevin J. Worthen, Vice President of Student Life Jan Scharman; Physical Facilities Vice President Ole Smith; Director of Accessibility Gerilynn Vorkink; Conley Hubert, Construction Management; Gary Hone, Accessibility and Architecture; and all other needed administration to discuss the culture and implement the recommendations contained in this document. This meeting will discuss which stakeholders will accomplish various recommendations. BYU students with disabilities, and the Commission should be included in these discussions. The Commission is happy to assist administration in finding several students who would be willing to participate. Follow-up meetings should be held and discussed within the respective departments and with their employees. Each department should make a implementation timeline for the recommendations that they oversee. Students with disabilities should be consulted throughout this process because they are the key stakeholders. It will be impossible to make the necessary changes to improve BYU's environment without communication between all involved groups.

2. Recognizing that a culture of discrimination and bias has occurred, the Commission recommends meetings for all facilities on campus to be visited by a disabled student to discuss diversity training for administration, faculty, and staff. By executing an open environment of learning administration, faculty, and staff can then be aware of students needs and create an environment of inclusion as they work in their specific spaces. Every college and department will need this training in order to effectively change the culture surrounding disability. The Commission stands by its commitment to excellence in universal access. At any time a student with a disability could use any of BYU's facilities. Disabled students should not be exempt or assumed to only use certain services. Thus, all services, departments, and organizations should be physically and socially inclusive.

3. We strongly recommend BYU look closely at Section 504 and the section of the ADA Act to which is is bound to, and acknowledge that is has not been accurately following this law. We urge BYU to realize that accessibility is not a aftersight, but a fundamental right for its students. BYU should submit a letter of apology to all persons affected at the negligence of the law and take a comprehensive approach in putting its students, not policy, at the center of its efforts.

4. The rule of law is a critical factor in an organization's commitment to civil rights. Although BYU may not be legally required to follow all of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which protects the human rights of disabled individuals, we recommend that BYU releases a public statement acknowledge the violations found and reaffirm its commitment to complying with all Federal and State ADA and Section 504 requirements. This will enable BYU to better live up to its commitment to Christlike service by having a written document stating it's changes to provide equal access to all students and faculty at BYU

5. We recommend that BYU listen to its students and commit to advocating for them. As shown by the student statements in this report, there have been many times when BYU and its employees have made disabled students feel unwelcome, burdensome, and excluded. BYU and its employees need to receive disabled students with open arms by extending the Christlike love and service described in BYU's mission statement.

6. If BYU chooses to admit disabled students, it must give them the same opportunities as any other admitted student, through accommodations.

7. We recommend that every department at BYU read the statements collected on our website to better understand the students they serve.

8. Professors and faculty should receive training on how to respect disabled individuals and realize their accommodations are a right.

University Accessibility Center

1. Internal processes: The UAC serves many clients. They can serve many more by streamlining some parts of their accommodation process. Some cases are complicated and should be handled by full-time employees at the UAC. However, some cases are simple: a student provides a clinical diagnosis of depression, or some other disability. These cases warrant little scrutiny and could be handled quickly by part-time employees or even through an automatic process.

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simple: a student provides a clinical diagnosis of depression, or some other disability. These cases warrant little scrutiny and could be handled quickly by part-time employees or even through an automatic process.

3. Visibility: Very few people know that the UAC exists, and it is notoriously hard to find. Some people feel that it is symbolically “trying to keep people with disabilities hidden”. The UAC needs to be more publicly advertised.

4. The UAC should monitor and follow up on accessibility issues across campus. This includes wheelchair accessible doors and buttons, elevators, ramps, exercise equipment used by disabled students (e.g. the hydraulic lift at the swimming pool), and any issue that students bring to its attention. It should help students feel comfortable asking for improvements by treating each one with respect. It should maintain students’ trust and confidence by responding to these issues quickly and cordially. This type of behavior is commonplace at other reputable institutions such as the University of Utah and Utah Valley University. The UAC is responsible for the accessibility of the university, even if physical jobs are given to other organization. The UAC must continue to personally improve the university and enhance communication between themselves and any other outside entities used to repair physical facilities.

5. We recommend a non-biased entity audit the UAC annually in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by the various state and federal disability laws.

6. The UAC must be ultimately held responsible for any accessibility feature or disability related issue on campus. For instance, while maintenance staff will actually fix broken doors, the UAC is held responsible for the door getting fixed. If the door is not fixed within a day, the UAC needs to follow up with maintenance as they are held responsible for the unequal access.

7. We recommend transparency in the UAC. The UAC must be transparent in how they use their funds, their methodology in how they decide who deserves accommodations, including a checklist of what automatically qualifies a student to receive these accommodations according to the ADA law and Section 504, and how the UAC processes requests for fixing physical accessible features.

8. We recommend that BYU direct more resources and funding to the UAC. The funding

should be allocated equally to support all types of disabilities. The distribution of this funding should be transparent. The accessibility center at Utah Valley University, which has an excellent reputation, receives approximately \$2 million per year. We recommend that the UAC receive a similar amount in order to boost BYU's reputation as a university that is welcoming to disabled students. If BYU already receives this amount, it should better allocate its expenses towards the disabled students needs following UVU's pattern of spending.

9. This funding should also help in commuting to hiring disabled counselors, to increase both response times and empathy. In previous years, counselors have been disabled and better trained to meet students needs. Currently, the UAC does not house any employee with a physical disability. (The Commission is aware there may be invisible disabilities among counselors that cannot be known).

10. The UAC does not have the jurisdiction to turn students away that have proper documentation of disability. This is against the law. The UAC must promptly acknowledge each student's documentation the day they receive it and schedule an appointment with the student within the next work week.

11. Students should never be shamed or pushed to use less accommodations. There is no circumstance under which the UAC is justified in withholding accommodations from a student who qualifies for them.

12. The Accessibility Center faculty and student staff should undergo training to better help students with disabilities. Both the faculty and staff have become lax in their awareness of all types of disabilities, catering to one, but not the other. We recommend a unbiased third party conduct this training.

13. The UAC should get overriding authority to implement accommodations for students. The professor should be a partner in this, but if a professor is unwilling, the UAC should retain the power to communicate Section 504 to the professor as a last measure to provide the rights of the students. Too many statements we heard from students were ones whose professors refused accommodations. This should not happen if accommodations are given by the UAC and are reasonable. The UAC and professors should have a open, trusting relationship, engaging in communication to best serve the needs of the student. It is not the responsibility of the student to educate the professor

on the law, this is the UAC's responsibility.

14. The UAC should recalibrate its Accessibility Week for all students and include all disabilities whether they be physical, temporary, invisible, and mental illnesses in their awareness. They should create an inclusive environment this week, using holistic awareness to provide true acceptance for all disabilities.

15. Actual accommodations may need to be adjusted to better serve the students of BYU. Accommodations should be tailored to each individual. If someone comes needing an accommodation that has not been done before, the accommodation should be researched to make the best possible decision. Every effort should be given by the UAC to provide a reasonable accommodation. The UAC needs to realize the medical issues of students may not be planned for and adjust accordingly to doctors and medical advice.

16. Temporary disabilities happen and many students may need temporary accommodations. The UAC should help provide these accommodations. A student who needs help, even for a short period of time, should be lovingly and promptly provided for. Students should feel welcomed if they need accommodations.

17. Transcription services from individuals paid to do so should be better trained, and made to understand the purpose of transcription. The Commission recommendation is to try to automate the process through new technology available for transcribing, including experimenting with the BYU student led project, Speech Cloud.

18. The UAC needs to have a electronic record of all individuals who use their services and proudly display the total number of students who use their facilities. This numbers should be updated to reflect each semester accurately.

19. The UAC should be publicly advertised through official BYU websites, flyers, posters, table-top flyers, A-frames, videos on the Marriott Center Jumbotron and other television screens around campus. This advertising should not focus on celebrities or other irrelevant issues. The advertising should be focused on real students and provide positive experiences so that students feel safe and empowered to attend the UAC.

20. The UAC should hold jurisdiction in regards to the testing center. These two entities need to have in-depth communication and open conversation so students are given the

service they deserve.

21. The Commission recommends the UAC use accessible design in their own communication. They should have other ways of contact besides phone hours and include an answering machine. They should include ways of online meetings if the meeting does not require a in-person act.

22. The UAC should place high priority on prompt and consistent communication with their clients. This should extend to communication with outside departments that will assure the well-being of the student in each university facility they engage with. If a process requires the participation of several parties, it is the UAC's responsibility to coordinate between all entities to provide efficient service.

23. The UAC should prepare a mission statement of responsibilities for their office as many other universities have implemented. These responsibilities should be made public and include statements that it is the UAC's responsibility to insure the student receives accommodations, assistance with off campus and on campus accessibility, accomplish service in a timely manner, and to facilitate disputes between professors.

24. Training is needed for how to properly handle confidential information, such as medical documentation. Many statements of students have shared that the UAC has forgotten about them or lost vital paperwork. The UAC needs to organize its processes to make sure each student is being properly taken care of.

25. The UAC, from the funding diverted to it from these recommendations, will implement new tools to help students. This includes making options for software to help with learning disabilities more readily available outside the office, offering accessible equipment like iPads and emergency medical devices.

26. The UAC should communicate with the students it serves more frequently, and create an environment of inclusion so students feel safe in telling them ways to improve.

27. The UAC should remove barriers to communicate with students by getting an answering machine, allowing students to set up appointments online or by email, and allowing for remote appointments through FaceTime or on the phone, as an alternative to in-person appointments.

28. The UAC website should be consistently monitored and updated to include the most accurate information to those who visit it. The terminology which refers to specific diagnosis, and disabilities in general, should be that which is accepted by the disability community as dignified. The website should include extensive information on the importance of accessibility and how to respectfully interact with individuals who have disabilities. It should celebrate diversity, rather than including messages which imply that providing service to students with disabilities is a burden.

29. The UAC should have a formal means of submitting grievances, which will be promptly reviewed and addressed by both the UAC and unbiased entity. The UAC should respond within one business week of the submission.

BYU Approved Housing

1. On-campus housing should have increased communication with the UAC. BYU on-campus housing has an obligation to provide safe and accessible housing for its students. Students' safety should be put higher than the aesthetics of the apartment.

2. BYU campus housing needs to upgrade its physical facilities for married students, in accordance with Section 504. Currently the accessible apartments offered are not truly accessible.

3. BYU should make every effort to gather a list of resources for off campus accessible housing.

4. Off-campus accessible housing should be contacted by BYU, if BYU-approved, to make sure there are several options available for disabled students.

5. If a student requires an aid to help with activities of daily living, this should be granted easily and smoothly. Aides and personal care assistants are essential assets to those with these needs and should not be seen as a safety hazard or a burden on campus housing. The UAC should help in the process for finding personal attendants and implementing them in housing.

6. BYU should have more rigorous application process for those who claim accessible housing. BYU make sure when choosing approved housing that one of the criteria is not discriminating against disabled individuals. This can be found by asking the housing

complex their stance on accessible features/service dogs/wheelchair.

7. On-campus housing should actively provide service to individual students with disabilities. For instance, if there are several competing disabilities in a floor, housing should proactively look for structural barriers and research solutions.

Counseling and Psychological Services

1. The BYU Counseling and Psychological Services Center should adjust to realize the need for increased help during midterms and finals, which are known for times of high volume. CAPS should be increasingly aware of these times and prepare accordingly. Temporary counselors can be implemented.

2. Resident Assistants, faculty, staff, student employees, and administrators should be better trained to recognize the signs of mental illness and report to CAPS.

3. CAPS should host more inclusive group therapy sessions.

4. BYU should offer mental health courses. This is a project that has been done in the past by students, and in the past, has garnered much support for both faculty and students.

Implementation of Student-Led Projects

1. We recommend that BYU promptly implement the Accessibility Map started in 2015. This map is vital to students, faculty, staff, and visitors, but has been stalled for many years. While most buildings have been mapped by student volunteers, there should be an access team hired and trained to implement the project by April 25th, 2019. Their work would include marking down wheelchair accessible bathrooms on the BYU app, as well as creating a section on the App for accessibility features. The app already has a map of vending machines and their contents. Thus, BYU has the capacity to implement this feature that has been sought after by hundreds of students. This project should be a top priority in both the GIS department and the BYU App management department so the map can be completed and promptly posted online and in the app. Collaboration should begin with the main responsibility for collecting data with paid individuals at the UAC. Student volunteers are not an acceptable form of responsible parties. The UAC is already responsible for the overall project, but must do more to gather data themselves or hire competent individuals with direct knowledge of the ADA. The UAC is also

responsible for updating of the data as time goes by. All other parties will be responsible for receiving the data and uploading it to the website and map.

2. We recommend that BYU implement the Student Advisory Council's Student Voice Devotional Project. Devotional access has been a student-led project for many years, but has yet to be implemented. Amanda Fronk, who represents the BYU Devotional Committee on the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC), must work closely with this group to prepare a shuttle or other form of transportation system that transports disabled students to and from devotional. In prior research, students with disabilities and those without were asked what stopped them from attending devotionals at the Marriott Center. 69 out of 194 students responded that the Marriott Center is too far away. Increasing attendance at devotionals has been a goal of BYU administration because of lower attendance in recent years. Students with disabilities want to be able to participate in these events, but end up feeling ostracized. There are zero accessible pathways to the Marriott Center. All ramps exceed the maximum slope of 1:12 (5 degrees of incline) required by the ADA. This is unacceptable and should be seen as a great disservice to students.

a. One group of students has researched a shuttle system such as RYDE, which would run from south campus to the Marriott Center and then back after the devotional ended. The cost would be approximately \$100/hour per shuttle for the University. This should be brought to the attention of the parties involved and implemented, unless another solution is found promptly.

b. A temporary option until the shuttle system can be implemented is something used at other colleges: a golf cart system. A few examples of the system can be found at other Utah colleges including Dixie State University, as well as across the nation in Baylor University, Berkeley University, and Stanford University. This is not a complete list, many other colleges have long ensured that disabled students have equal access to all areas of campus.

3. BYU should provide closed captioning for forums and devotionals in order to accommodate d/Deaf and hard of hearing students. The ASL interpretation which is provided is a good start, but some d/Deaf and hard of hearing students do not know ASL and thus cannot understand the interpreters. If the student does not attend the devotional in person, they also do not get the opportunity to have ASL interpretation. The viewings of devotional shown in buildings like the JSB and JFSB do not offer closed

captioning or any other accessibility. Closed captioning would ensure that all students are able to receive the great benefit from each of the inspirational messages given at devotionals and forums.

4. We recommend that BYU implement the BYU Gender-Neutral Map. BYU must work with Caleb Stewart, the creator of the map, to determine the best plan of action for executing the distribution of the map through both the BYU App, MyBYU, and the BYU Campus map. The map is an outstanding achievement that surpasses many current mapping systems BYU has and could fulfill a vital need for disabled students, LGBTQ students, families, elderly, and visitors. This should be completed by April 25th, 2019. Nathan Hatch, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology is responsible for the BYU App, and should meet with Commissioner Caleb Stewart to discuss the best implementation.

5. We recommend BYU discuss its system for doors. Many students cannot use the buttons, lacking the physical strength, motor control or full range of mobility to do so. Other buttons are placed in inconvenient locations, and have barriers blocking them. Even though ADA standards exist to provide greater access, the requirements 1) do not consider or include the physical abilities of every single person and 2) are generalized and implemented with the hope to be a happy medium for everyone, yet fail to actually serve the vast majority of people with disabilities. Buttons are installed too high or low to meet needs. Buttons also break down frequently, eliminating the access which students have the right to have. After interviewing 479 people with disabilities, 84% said that accessible door buttons are not truly accessible. We recommend BYU promptly acknowledge a more comprehensive approach of handling accessible doors. Many students have been left outside when these doors are broken. Students must navigate the stress of performing well academically, but must also stress about navigating physical facilities that do not provide equal access to get into classrooms. We seek to improve accessibility by targeting this one issue that many overlook. BYU should actively seek ways to help its students by implementing different doors systems that students have specified. This includes Portal Entryways, or fob controlled doors, installed at Heritage Halls. If these were to be installed, they should be installed in all accessible doors. Disabled students should have complete access in the entirety of the facilities, just as abled-bodied students do. This door system should allow for better communication when doors break down, as well as allow a student to go through as many doors as needed throughout the day.

6. BYU should implement all disability-related projects started by student volunteers, who have labored to create a more accessible environment. These include: putting accessible features on the BYU app, helping disabled students get to devotional, constructional changes, ensuring the gym will provide access for disabled students, creating better processes to inspect physical features including accessible doors, and many others not listed here. These projects are addressing issues which are of large concern for many students, but have pushed aside for many years. BYU and the entities required to implement each project should realize the impact of equal access on its students and make these projects a priority.

7. Many students have shown their support for the disability community by creating interventions designed to increase access at BYU. While other colleges in Utah have graciously tested and/or implemented these new accessibility features, BYU has failed to do so. We call for a policy change that allows the UAC to advocate for these helpful solutions. The UAC should have the power to propose accessibility-related changes to university administrators, and be seen as advocating for a important issue. Incredible students with a hard work ethic and service-oriented mindset come to BYU and create groundbreaking solutions for those in need. We call on BYU to support such students in their endeavors. This includes testing out their innovations. BYU is not upholding its mission to promote student development when it refuses to provide these student entrepreneurs with opportunities for growth. Forcing students to go to other universities for experience and advisement stains BYU's commitment to excellence. By supporting students in their service-filled endeavors, BYU will also support the disability community at the university. A few of the student-led services include Portal, a inclusive way of opening doors, and Speech Cloud, an innovative software to decrease transcribing errors.

8. The BYU Gym project renovations should take into consideration all prior recommendations given by the Commission members and student suggestions. Students have been barred from exercising in intramurals, the weight room, the gym room, the basketball courts, the track, the swimming pool, and every other location for exercise on campus. BYU must realize that all disabled students exercise and may need to for their critical health needs or national teams just as abled-bodied students do. Disabled students may even need more exercise in order to combat pain or fatigue in doing activities of daily living. Specific accessible exercise features should be universally implemented.

Physical Campus

1. The Harris Fine Arts Center should be better equipped for d/Deaf and hard of hearing visitors. It is of primary concern that a place where many individuals come to hear performances and theatre is not able to accommodate them. The students who have classes do not have equal access to the facility. It is unacceptable to continue to ignore this problem of the audio induction loop system not working. BYU should address and fix the device. Ed Adams, Dean of the College Of Fine Arts and the UAC should collaborate and seek solutions with students.
2. Marriott Center bathrooms are inaccessible—you have to ask where it is because it is an employees only bathroom. The Marriott Center should have an existing accessible restroom for all patrons to use freely, like any other.
3. We recommend that BYU update signs to clearly identify every accessible feature including elevators, bathrooms, entrances, Braille writing, ramps and water fountains. BYU should ensure all elevators and bathrooms are easy to access. Many accessible features are hidden without proper signage.
 - a. One example of a need for improvement is the MARB, where there is often a closed door blocking elevator access. Another example is the Wilkinson Center Elevator that has a door that closes frequently, limiting access. Some students have either been unaware of these elevators existence or unable to access it. The KMBL has an accessible restroom that requires more than 5 lbs of force to operate, a compliance issue. Many doors to accessible bathrooms have traditional round door knobs that are not compliant to Section 504 as they require tight grasping and twisting. There is a need to raise the height of LSB railings on 4th floor entrance for safety measures.
4. The Commission recommends signage should be updated from words like “handicapped” to “disabled” to reflect the current acceptable word to use regarding disability. Both the UAC and physical facilities should research the ADA guidelines for disability wording in a respectful and holistic manner.
5. The Commission recommends signs in accessible restroom stalls encouraging abled people to use regular stalls if open.

6. The crosswalks around campus and within the university boundaries should have accessible features such as push button locator tones, tactile arrows, and audible walk indications with automatic volume adjustment. This will dramatically increase safety for students and visitors alike.

7. The International Code Council A117.1-2017 Standard for Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities should be more closely followed. Multiple individuals should discuss ways to implement these standards with disabled students. BYU should not only be a member, but an active participant.

8. The ANSI code should be re-evaluated and steps should be taken to compare all buildings to the code. This code is not required, but widely recognized throughout America as the standard of excellence for equal access. BYU should not only claim to follow ANSI but advocate for the rights of disabled individuals by initiating construction for accessible features.

9. Ramps often do not have edge protection or signage for drop offs. This is dangerous for those with mobility issues. Ramps should be renovated to conform to ADA standards with edge protection, width, and grade. An example is the McKay Education Building, which has several features that are unsafe, the doors on the east side lead directly to a drop off and the ramp cannot be accessed if the user goes through two of the doors.

10. BYU had a plan to renovate many buildings in 2015. This plan has disappeared, we have been unable to find this plan again. BYU should become transparent in what the plan detailed and if the plan was completed. If so, a continued plan of action should be made to further access for disabled students.

11. The double door system to many accessible restrooms is extremely limiting to individuals with mobility devices. These doors should be changed to reflect ADA law for space between doors. If possible one of the doors should be taken off increase access. For construction purposes, "At hinged or pivoted doors or gates in series, a separation is required that is at least 48" plus the width of doors or gates swinging into the space. This allows users to clear one door or gate before opening the next and applies to those doors or gates that are opposite each other where travel through both doors is required."

12. We recommend doors with accessible buttons should be programmed to open both doors with one button. Buttons are for helping disabled students have a smooth access experience, eliminating extra buttons will help accomplish this goal.

13. According to the ADA, handicap buttons should remain open for a sufficient period of time. The time for a door to hold should be 5 seconds minimum after the door is completely open, according to International Code Council. Doors around campus may close too quickly. Physical facilities and the UAC should work together to make sure doors are operating effectively.

14. Proactive maintenance: ADA handicap buttons and other accessible features should be fixed promptly. Through the Commissions research, the UAC and Access maintenance responsible for fixing equipment need to communicate in a timely manner. The UAC should also follow up regularly to insure that the maintenance is occurring. Maintenance workers should be trained to know safety and accessibility are top priorities. We suggest the UAC follow the Architectural resource guide confirming, "Daily safety checks are recommended for the end user to help determine if the doors are working properly in between scheduled maintenance programs. Building maintenance personnel are usually the key people in seeing that automatic doors are kept in good working order. There are a number of resources available for help with doing a daily safety check on automatic door equipment. A daily safety check label, which is available through door manufacturers and service providers, should be installed on or near all automatic door equipment.

15. BYU needs to include training about emergency training to all faculty and staff of the university. For instance, the majority of faculty do not know how to operate or locate emergency evacuation chairs. This is a serious safety allegation, but can be fixed with training all individuals paid by the university to know the correct safety measures for disabled students.

16. BYU Grounds Department should commit to keeping accessible entrances free of ice and snow. Although this is the mission of the Landscape Speciality Shop, student statements have still provided evidence for a need of renewed commitment to this service. This service should be listed on their website and if a disabled student needs assistance in clearing snow from the BYU facility, they should be able to contact Landscape.

17. In order to better serve its students the UAC should be relocated to a more prominent office in the Wilk. It should not be hid behind the CougarEat. This is a inaccessible location, especially with the many people using mobility devices. This will help students feel supported from the university, realize that they are not a burden or something shameful to be hid, and new students can locate the facility easily. This alienation and separation should not happen, as a disabled identity is not shameful.

18. BYU must ensure that classrooms are accessible for students with mobility issues. Disabled students must often attend classes where the desks are too close together, making it difficult to access. Many classrooms are built so individuals with mobility devices only access the very back row because of stairs and auditorium seating in classrooms. For example the Tanner Building has many rooms that are inaccessible with stairs in each classroom, as well as safety hazards due to insufficient space on the left ledge given for wheelchair access. The MARB has similar inaccessible classrooms on in the basement level. For a students full engagement in class, these classrooms are not effective.

19. At other times, students with mobility issues have classes at opposite ends of campus. This makes it nearly impossible to be on time and causes intense pain for some students with significant ailments. We call for improved accommodation of such individuals by rescheduling classes to rooms that are respectful of students' needs. This is standard practice at other universities in Utah, such as the University of Utah. BYU should improve its procedure so as to become the gold standard for compassionate treatment of students.

20. BYU should consult multiple disabled individuals when constructing new buildings. These individuals can show architects and builders where to put accessible features so as to be most helpful for disabled students and to follow ADA code. BYU is currently in the process of building several new buildings that may need assistance in knowing the correct accessible features and where to install them. This applies to buildings that will be remodeled as well, such as the LaVell Edwards Stadium. Many construction workers may know the legality of the ADA but do not realize that the accessible features need to be usable, not just put in to check off a box. BYU can consult the Commissioners as they have knowledge in the ADA and experience as disabled students. A good example of an accessible building would be the newly built Harmon Continuing Education Center which follows all ADA code. The attached Conference Center does not.

21. Older buildings should be renovated for equal access in a timely manner. Some older buildings may simply need awareness of the accessible features already in place. Accessible features should be treated with respect. For example, the Smith Fieldhouse provides a ramp to get onto the basketball court, but many times this is moved, preventing access.

22. Older buildings that are being renovated should automatically be inspected for all ways the building can be made more accessible. For instance, LaVell Edwards Stadium does not have accessible bathrooms or accessible places to sit with the student ROC. It also does not have a women's restroom for Press. This should be changed as construction continues.

23. Accessible pathways on campus should be the shortest route to and from buildings, not the longest. This may include creating construction to limit stairs and install ramps in places of high need.

24. When construction is going on, more safety measures should be taken to insure students will not fall or trip over materials. Construction should also be sure not to close off the only accessible pathway, or put wires, materials, or cords in the pathways.

25. Many instances of service vehicles parked in the only accessible path have been noted. Service vehicles and the individual groups dedicated to improving BYU should receive training on where it is accessible to park their vehicles without blocking pathways needed.

26. The Accessibility Center is only provided with four stalls for parking when students need an accommodation for parking. When more than four students require a need for a parking spot, the UAC should work with University Parking to find a parking spot for the individual outside the four stalls given. A student should never feel like they must be the most disabled out of the students vying for a parking spot. If a student presents a doctor's note and a need, this is a reasonable accommodation that should be carried out. If five students bring a need for accommodation, the UAC should not be limited by what they can provide. The UAC should work with disabled students to help them receive the accommodations each individual needs. An individual should be treated as a holistic being without other students in the equation. BYU needs to give the UAC power to help each student, regardless of another student's needs.

27. Physical campus should be inspected by ADAPT and Section 504 committees to see what constructional changes are needed. Many students have expressed severe consequences from campus and the inaccessibility of distance between classes, and parking within a close radius of buildings. BYU should invite both groups to inspect campus.

28. Students should be provided with help of mapping and counselor suggestions to make the most accessible path for their class schedule. Both UAC and academic counselors should know accessible routes for their students on campus.

29. Classes should have more than one accessible spot for students to sit. These spots should not only be in the back of each classroom but also other areas so students (especially those with sight disabilities) can see.

30. Many auditoriums have accessible seating, but the seating is on an incline at the back or very front of class. This incline should be made flat to accommodate the safety of disabled students. Individuals who use wheelchairs cannot use the spots made for them, if the surface is not flat. Some instances include the Talmage building auditorium, the JSB auditorium, and the JFSB auditorium. Most students will take a class from these large lecture halls and they should be prioritized to become accessible.

Testing Center

1. The testing center needs to have more communication with the UAC. Both parties should make a collaborative decision and approach to best help students.

2. All accessible equipment should be on hand, and the process for scheduling between the HBLL testing center and the Accessible testing center in the HGB should be standardized and more communication between parties should be implemented so tests are given in the timeframe asked for.

3. Students should be able to let the testing center know their needs so the testing center can accurately provide service.

4. Reasonable accommodations allow for students to have alternative forms of filling out a test. This includes having an individual fill out a test for them, or having accessible equipment that can be used without the use of fine motor skills.

5. Students with temporary disabilities should be given the support and temporary accommodations they need for the testing center .

6. Employees at the testing center who will regularly be interacting with students who are disabled should participate in a training which facilitates sensitivity and respect toward individuals with disabilities.

University Police

1. BYU police should closely monitor accessible tags and license plates for those with disabilities. According to a police officer within the department, there are students who use their grandparents or other family members. The tag should match the license plate of the car.

2. The University Police governs parking on campus. There are 10+ parking stall on campus that require both an accessible handicap parking pass as well as a permit number. Each accessible stall has a unique code such as UT ZE94M, (located in the JFSB underground parking). As of now, when individuals bring a need for a parking stall on campus the UAC should discuss with the University Police if they do not have any other spots. The UAC should be able to alert police when a student has the reasonable accommodation to reserve one of these stalls. The UAC and the University Police should collaborate to give the best service to students and faculty regarding these stalls.

3. Police should take stock of the stalls on campus and add several accessible parking stalls, including van accessible stalls. If the number Of stalls for both accessible and van accessible is not ADA compliant, additional stalls should be added.

4. University police should explicitly clarify where disabled students are allowed to park on their website. This had been confusing to find for many students. Transparency in all information necessary for a disabled student to park should be located easily.

5. BYU Police need to pursue subjects that misuse accessible parking spaces.

6. BYU police needs to have a electronic record of all individuals who use reserved spots, as well as a list of how many individuals have accessible parking passes.

7. BYU should require that all accessible parking passes be registered; this could be

done when a student registers with the UAC. These passes are registered according to the name of the pass holder, which provides police immediate access to the name and license plate number of the owner so that they can verify that the pass in the car does belong to the owner.

Campus Culture

1. BYU needs to put more emphasis on its statements of legal disclosure found in the syllabi. These University Policies include statements on the Honor Code, Sexual Harassment, and Student Disability. BYU should implement a brief 1-2 minute video to show the legally required University Policies in the syllabi each semester. By changing the way professors present the University Policies at the end of every syllabus, emphasis will be noted. Alternatively, the video could be required for all students and faculty to watch on their own time at the beginning of the semester. This video could explain and show the location of the UAC and Title IX offices as well as educate students on their responsibility to be engaged bystanders.

2. An essential outcome of the Commission research is to ensure that the past is not repeated. These recommendations will be successful in improving BYU for the new freshman that come. It is imperative that these recommendations be implemented so a strong culture of disability rights be developed. We recognize that for this culture change to be brought to pass, we must address multiple areas of physical and social changes simultaneously. This will insure the present and future culture will improve.

3. BYU needs to better moderate the conversation of disability on campus. The culture of individuals who are fearful of asking for equal access should never have happened. Students should never be afraid of speaking up to improve BYU. Students should not be afraid of violations from the Honor Code, withdrawal of accommodations, diploma withholding, or removal from their BYU approved housing because they advocated for fundamental rights other students have.

4. BYU needs to give more disabilities awareness to each of its RAs, TAs and any other student position that would work with a disabled person.

Other

1. BYU should reconsider the status of pregnancy, which is currently does not qualify as a

temporary disability, thus preventing pregnant students from accessing support through accommodations. When a pregnant individual is experiencing undue stress, the UAC should provide accommodations rather than leaving it up to the student to be at the mercy of their professor. This is especially critical when the student is experiencing complications in their pregnancy.

2. BYU Student Association, student clubs, and academic organizations must focus its serving on not only students outside, but also the students dedicating their time to the organization. They are to assist and help disabled students feel loved and supported.

3. We recommend that BYU provide accommodations within meal plans for students with dietary restrictions. We suggest that this go beyond gluten free and vegetarian options at each meal, but also on a case-by-case basis as students present the need, as modeled by a similar service at Brigham Young University, Hawaii.

Commission's Note on Recommendations

These recommendations have been reviewed by the Commission to express the suggestions of the disability community. These recommendations come from extensive research into accessibility on campus, and from student suggestions gathered in statements. Each recommendation is based on a need that has been verified by Commissioners. The Commission acknowledges that these recommendations are only an overview and do not specify every aspect of equal access on campus. While the recommendations will continue to be updated, we urge BYU to become thoughtful about accessibility and to address other issues when they come up. We will continually update the database of recommendations as needed including acknowledging completed projects.

Respectfully submitted,

<i>Kendra J. Muller</i>	Chief Commissioner
<i>Megan McLaw</i>	Commissioner; Executive Director of Media Management
<i>Topher P. Taylor</i>	Commissioner, Executive Director of Public Policy
<i>Caleb Stewart</i>	Commissioner, Executive Director of LGBTQ Awareness
<i>Jade Fisher</i>	Commissioner, BYU Accessibility Project Director
<i>Johnny Sanabria</i>	Commissioner, Executive Director Of Editing
<i>Grace Lester</i>	Commissioner, Executive Director of d/Deaf Culture and Hearing Loss Awareness

APPENDIX I: STATEMENTS

Abby Bennett

The push buttons to open automatic doors are broken about half of the time, which is really annoying especially when they're for heavy doors. I think they break quickly because students just use them a lot even when they don't need to.

The absolute worst time to be handicapped on campus is during the winter. I can't count the amount of times I've slipped and fallen on ice while walking to class. In addition, I often slip when I walk into buildings where there's no mat or anything and the floors get wet from students walking around with wet shoes. Sometimes on especially snowy days, I can't get to campus at all and I'm forced to miss class. Lastly- the LSB bathroom doors are so heavy it's insane. Not sure why that's even a thing.

Arianna Grundvig

While at BYU, I had two temporary disabilities. I tore my labrum and had a sling for a few months, and I tore my ACL and was on crutches/ in a brace for several months. Between these two experiences, I learned a lot about disabilities.

Initially, I thought that a torn labrum and sling would not impact my academic experience much. However, I struggled extensively in classes to take notes, reach desks, and fit my bulky sling behind the row of students in front of me (in a way that I could still reach my notes or laptop). It was a constant struggle to position myself in a way that I could take notes, avoid dropping things, and not bump into the students desks in front of me. There really was not adequate space for me to get between desks and fit myself into desks in a sling and this experience would be further aggravated (I imagine) by a boot, cast, or wheelchair.

Furthermore, at BYU, students with temporary disabilities do not qualify for most accommodations, particularly accommodations in the testing center. A friend of mine broke both of his feet and had to take tests in the testing center at a normal testing center desk because he was told he could not get testing center accommodations for a temporary disability. He needed help to get to the testing center room, desks had to be moved, and he had to squish his broken feet behind the rows of desk in front of him to take exams. With my torn labrum, I had to take tests with my non-dominant hand

because I couldn't reach the desks in the testing center with my brace and did not qualify for accommodations.

After tearing my ACL, getting around campus was a nightmare. Crutches on campus in the winter were difficult, and I found the ice on the way to campus a significant safety hazard (I didn't mention that I initially partially tore my labrum slipping on ice on the way to campus - though later completely tore it in a BYU intramural game). Additionally, I noticed while on crutches how difficult it can be to find elevators, locate ramps, and how much further students with disabilities have to travel to access accessible entrances, elevators, etc. This is not only difficult when moving slower than traffic (and exhausted from extra effort required to move), but is socially awkward when you suddenly have to break away from a group to find an accessible entrance.

BYU also does not have enough handicapped parking. When I had a torn ACL and when my friend was in a wheelchair, we learned that we had to be at campus bright and early if we wanted to get a handicapped spot. There simply are not enough spots to accommodate the students that need them. While a handicapped pass at BYU qualifies students to park in any parking spot, parking on the far end of a parking lot is completely disheartening when you know you have 8 minutes to make it to class, and a whole lot of ice and snow to crutch over.

My professors at BYU were all incredibly helpful during my experiences, particularly when I had to have surgeries. Most professors were willing to give me extended time on projects, papers, and even tests. That being said, I kept my professors in the loop about my medical situations and this is not something that all students think to do. For students who struggle with this kind of thing (on top of the added struggle of an injury), a professor unwilling to extend a deadline when the student forgot to ask before surgery amidst stress might be the final straw that causes unnecessary struggles for the student.

While unrelated to my thoughts above, I also believe that accommodations for pregnant women and mothers at BYU could be greatly improved. For a school that supports family, there are far too many professors who have no sympathy for pregnant mothers. I had professors tell my close friends long-winded stories about their wives pregnancies and how, as a result, said friends should have no problem completing assignments despite pregnancies. This ignores 1) the male professors ignorance for the female experience of pregnancy. and 2) The fact that not all pregnancies are the same. On the other hand, some professors are incredibly understanding of pregnancy, but the rules in regards to pregnancy could be better developed to ensure understanding across the board.

Aurelia Berryhill

So the biggest problems for me as a person with fibromyalgia were 1) The Testing Center, and 2) The stairs. My two biggest problems with Fibromyalgia were fatigue and pain. Although my professors were pretty understanding of my needs, (although sometimes uneducated about them), the problem was the testing center. I know that it's just a revolving door for tests, but it was just a deathtrap for me and my needs. First, that normal stress was just physically toxic for me. I would feel pain and fatigue akin to the flu just from the average stress that tests can bring, which just comes with the territory of University education. But when I actually got to the testing center, it was just rough.

Except for 25 min religion tests, I was just prepared for achiness and fatigue. The thing with staring at a paper for more than 30 min is that my fatigue would take over, and I would literally have to take a power nap, taking precious time for my test to recharge. Thanks to the UAC, I got extra time on my test so I could have that time. They also stopped allowing food at some point, which I get that they have to worry about cheating. But food was what sometimes kept me awake in classes, and I was pretty toast when they made it seem like we couldn't have snacks.

And everyone knows how awful it is sitting in those desks for a 2 hour test. For fibromyalgia, it was pretty killer. I literally would switch rooms just to get up and walk around. But the doors weren't always open. I always looked suspicious as well, which made me extra stressed. All this time, I'm worrying about this rather than the material I'm being tested on. I just have bad memories all around for the testing center. I'm sure everybody does, but after feeling like every time I walk in there, I have 30-90 minutes of aches and fatigue akin to the flu, the testing center is a place I don't really want to walk in again.

The stairs are also something I never want to deal with again. I am grateful I have the ability to walk up the stairs, but during days of fatigue, aches and pain, and general brain fog attributed to the fibromyalgia condition, stairs and inclines were just the daily torture. The hills were sometimes worse than stairs. I remember trying so hard to rush to my classes, and being in just a lot of pain. And the pain wouldn't go away right away. My body didn't know if I hiked the RB stairs or if I hiked the Y. Bodies with Fibromyalgia sometimes confuses mild pain with less mild pain. I know everybody gets short of breath while hiking up the RB stairs, so I shouldn't complain, or should I?

That brings me to something else. The nature of fibromyalgia is that it doesn't have any visible indications that it exists. It's an enigma, and it's something that I'm still learning about to this day. That means, not a lot of people know about it. I was lucky with most of my professors after I was diagnosed. But the average person, although sympathetic, doesn't really get what's going on. This made it hard to interact socially and has made it awkward in classes. Did I fall asleep 4 out of 5 days in my most classes? Yes. My poor partner in BIO100 would literally be discussing a subject with me, and I would just get so fatigued and lose my ability to stay awake. I'm glad that she was patient with me.

It was hard to feel so vulnerable in class. I felt that everybody would be making fun of me, or be thinking that I was a poor student, that I was a partier, or that I didn't care. But I did care. I did go to sleep at night. I did try my best. The funny thing is that I wanted to stay awake! I thought my classes were really interesting! But my body just couldn't handle it. And the stress of people judging me for this just made me down everyday. My confidence had this dent in it because I had felt weak and misunderstood.

There were more problems, like reading and the line up of assignments. Again, nobody really has a perfect line up of assignments, but because stress affects my physical pain, a week stacked with assignments felt like a tsunami of feeling sick and achy.

There was physical therapy available, but for a price. And also, it was all the way by Wymount, which stunk when I couldn't drive there. I often borrowed ice from the RB physical therapy room, which got me through a couple of tough days. I also thought parking was just a doozy. I don't want to steal handicap parking for those who are worse off than me, but finding parking then hiking the mile that was required just was counterproductive for someone like me. Sometimes I would have to power nap in the car before taking the hike if I got there early enough.

The physical obstacles, and the emotional vulnerability, made the experience pretty difficult. And I have a more mild form of Fibromyalgia where I could get out of bed and to school. I've heard of some other people with the same condition who can't function at all during flare ups. I don't know how they do it.

The lack of education about it also makes it hard to handle. The only time I really truly felt understood is when my Biology teacher told me that she's actually read articles about it, and when a UAC representative said "You're not the only one here with it" and made me feel like I wasn't crazy for feeling all this pain and fatigue. For the first time, I thought that it was an actual problem and not because I "wasn't Trying enough".

Cole Dayton

So I had a double knee surgery done like 10 weeks ago and because of it I went to live with my parents in North Orem because I couldn't walk or drive to school. My parents would drop me off and pick me up from school. However going from building to building with tons of other students walking around you was very hard. Then I got to the point where I could drive but I still couldn't walk very well and so if I had classes in the JKB I could park in the parking lot right next to it but if I had my classes and in the Joseph Smith building I'd have to walk all the way across campus, and that was really hard. I guess my only suggestion would be about parking around all buildings. I understand that that's easier said than done but if I had to go to class in the JSB no matter where I parked I would have to walk a pretty long distance with weak knees.

Courtney Wayment Smith

I am a student athlete at BYU and I spent 10 WEEKS on crutches last year. I ultimately stopped going to class for the rest of the semester because of the amount of anxiety it gave me to go up those stairs. Professors were fine - they were understanding but I was also in the big lectures at the time so it's not like they really cared if I was there or not! Physical campus helped open doors but not anything other than that! Parking police were a straight up joke though hahaha.

Elysha C.

My first documentation I submitted to the UAC was for anorexia. I submitted this to try and petition if I did not get into housing with a kitchen but because I did get into good housing I thought I would never use it. I received no outreach on what exactly accommodations were, what I qualified for, etc. and even if I had know that was something that the UAC did, their website also does not detail what they do. Eventually, I did hear from someone that I could receive accommodations for classes through the UAC so I set up an appointment. My first appointment went well and the person who I met with offered me the attendance accommodation which was helpful because this was something that I had been struggling with. Later, it became time for me to renew my accommodations. Since anorexia was no longer my main struggle as I was pretty stable in recovery, I had my therapist send in a new letter documenting my recent PTSD diagnosis. I met with my counselor(?) again after this. This meeting I asked if I could receive any testing accommodations as I had recently had a panic attack in the Testing Center. This meeting was not as productive. When attendance was brought up again she said

something to the effect of "I don't know exactly how this works but from what I can understand you can get yourself up if you try so keep trying" in response to continuing my attendance accommodations. She ended up renewing those and giving me the testing ones as well but that whole experience of having someone who was supposed to be my advocate and supposed to be someone who would understand why I cannot function to the same standard as my peers has made it difficult for me to want to return even though there are ways in which I could use additional resources. This was the counselor for mental health issues but it seemed as though she was more understanding when my diagnosis included a more physical aspect.

I am also lucky to have had good bishops and bishopric who have been very understanding when I tell them that though I try to attend church all of the time my attendance is generally lower than others. However, if this were not the case I worry that my ecclesiastical endorsement and therefore my education would be on the line because, as far as I know, there are no resources available that would protect me here.

Evan Hancock

Probably the most frustrating thing about trying to go to BYU as a disabled student is how hard it is to feel normal. Laws and ramps and elevators are great and all, but if the professors aren't willing to help, it can be so difficult. I'm here at BYU because I want to learn, because I want to be a good student. But I can't do my best because things happen. Sometimes, I wished professors would acknowledge that we as students have lives outside their classroom. For disabled students, we have more of a "life" to live than most because we have doctor appointments, longer and more difficult transits, and just plain old-fashioned emergencies.

I hate the stress sometimes that I have trying to figure out when and where to fit in an appointment that could literally be a life-or-death appointment, all while the professor demands that in "their" class, it's unacceptable to miss. I admit this is a bit of extreme point, and most professors aren't like this in specific cases, but still, every time a disabled student has to do something to accommodate for his or her disability and/or health, they get penalized and disadvantaged, whether that's intentional or even on a subconscious level. An individual student will always take more of the penalty than a school system is willing to acknowledge. The first step to fixing a problem is acknowledging there is one. Disabled students live with it, but I hope one day college campuses will fully see it.

Anonymous

I've been disabled since I was 17 when I was diagnosed with an autoimmune form of arthritis. I walk with a cane and often have to use the motorized carts at grocery stores to get around, due to extreme pain in my back, hips, legs, and hands.

At BYU, I have had mixed experiences. The faculty in the University Accessibility Center really do as much as they can - I've only had good experiences with them. Professors and advisers have overall been accommodating and understanding, but there is definitely room for improvement.

One improvement that comes to mind is accommodations with tests. Currently, the policy is that disabled students have to let their professors know beforehand if they are going to need an extension on exams. This is particularly hard on students with unpredictable chronic illnesses. I can be perfectly fine (perfectly fine as in capable of functioning and getting myself to campus) the day before a test, but be very sick and in incredible pain the next morning. Luckily this hasn't happened to me yet, but I live in paranoia of the day that it does happen. The day where I cannot get out of bed the same day as an exam is inevitable.

As for other classroom accommodations, some professors are lovely and amazing and so helpful, but not all. It's discouraging when a professor shrugs and says that they "guess" they will give you an extension on an assignment to accommodate your disability. Luckily, the vast majority of my professors have been more than understanding, but I cannot speak for any professors outside the humanities and religion departments.

My main complaint is with BYU Parking. It took me over a year to figure out BYU's policy on where students with disabilities can park, because only until about a year ago was the information clearly displayed on the website. For over a year, I was never sure where I could park, even though I have a handicapped placard. Now I know that I can park in any parking lot, in any slot (excluding those reserved for service vehicles, deans, or specific placard numbers) as long as I have my placard up. This information took way too long to discover though, and there were several days my first semester at BYU where I put myself in a lot of physical pain by parking in student lots, which are in horrible places a great deal away from the main campus. If the parking office could simply be more transparent about policies and where disabled students can park, that'd be awesome..

Also, there is a severe misunderstanding of disabilities on BYU campus among students. The common belief is that disabilities have to be at least somewhat visible to be a real disability. Conditions like blindness, deafness, the use of a wheelchair, down syndrome, and other obvious disabilities are accepted and never questioned (and this is good!) but less visible conditions and invisible illnesses are constantly scrutinized. My first semester at BYU, I was walking to class, and a guy said to me, "So you don't have a limp or any handicap, but you walk with a cane." I was stunned at his ignorance, and quickly explained that without my cane, I would develop a limp and be in a lot of pain, and then I walked in a different direction, uncomfortable and not wanting to interact with him anymore. Other people have also questioned my cane, and it's easy to tell that they don't fully believe that I have arthritis, because I do not look disabled, and I'm very young when arthritis is considered to be an old person problem.

There are also other disabilities that are not accepted or understood by students. ADHD, dyslexia, autism, bipolar, and other mental illnesses and conditions are often shunted to the side when disabilities and mental illnesses are discussed. Often, discussions end up focusing on depression or anxiety, which are severe and concerning conditions, but are often caused or made worse by the same factors that are constantly ignored by mainstream media and thought. Discussions about depression and anxiety are good and important, but too often they are the only disability discussed, and the discussions are often very shallow. Depression is often spoken of as feeling down, lonely, and sad, when it is much more than that, and many people don't realize the effects that it can have on a person.

Most students are simply unaware of disabilities and what they entail, and this leads to a lack of understanding and compassion. Abled students will look at disabled students with pity, when we do not want to be pitied! We want to be listened to, respected, and treated like normal people - because we are normal people! My disability does not make me less of a person, and it doesn't take anything away from who I am.

As for general accessibility, I've found that many buildings could be improved by simply having signage that indicates where elevators are, and making sure that at least one elevator is functioning properly. Signage that reminds students to not block the hallway may also help - often students stand in clumps, causing hallways to be congested, which makes it difficult for people with canes, scooters, or wheelchairs to maneuver. Reminders to look up from phones every so often could also be helpful - I have lost track of how many times people have run into me because they were looking down at their phone

instead of where they were going. As for wording on signage, words like "handicapped" should be subbed with "disabled", which has less of a stigma and is more generalized, meaning that it includes a wider group of people..

Grace Lester

I have moderate progressive hearing loss, and have worked with the UAC since my freshman year. When I first got in touch with them, they told me about the services they could offer me, but first they would need to have medical documentation before they could tell me what I was eligible for. I submitted the necessary paperwork and waited for them to get back to me for over a month after the semester had started. I assumed that they were just processing the paperwork, but when I reached out to them several more times, they admitted that they had just forgotten about me. And all that time I had gone without services. Since my hearing loss is only moderate, I was still perfectly able to be successful in my classes, but it was such a great help when I was able to start having transcribers join me in my classes. I honestly have nothing but gratitude toward my transcribers, who work incredibly hard and make a world of difference in my entire university experience, but there are a few things that are slightly inconvenient for me.

1. Different transcribers tend to include different things. Because they cannot keep up with the speech in class to get it exactly word-for-word, some of them will not include little social things like jokes or personal facts or stories that a professor or class member is sharing. I know that this doesn't affect my academic performance, but I feel like I am missing out on a shared experience when everyone around me is laughing and I didn't hear the joke and my transcriber chose not to type it out for me. Other transcribers will include things like that, but then they paraphrase important information so I miss out on important details, statistics, equations, etc. I know it is probably impossible to keep up with every word, and they must make judgement calls as to what is the most important content in a class, but I do wish there was a way that I could really share in everything that was being said.

2. The transcription is delayed a few seconds after the words are said. This makes it really difficult in classes that the teacher tends to write out things on the board, because when the professor is saying things like "right here", etc., I missed out on where he/she was gesturing to and the context of the moment is gone by the time I read what has been said. Also, sometimes it is just difficult in general to choose between watching the professor and what they may be writing or demonstrating, and focusing on my screen so I can keep up with what they are saying.

3. I have had students look over at my computer for entire classes, reading my transcription, and pointing out to me if my transcriber made a typing error or laughing at different ways that they format things. It isn't like this has any huge impact on my quality of life, and it isn't malicious, but it's a bit annoying and it feels like an invasion of my personal space and privacy. Sometimes I will use my transcription on my phone rather than my laptop just so I can hide it in my lap and not have people who don't need the service reading over my shoulder for the whole lecture.

4. I am not ashamed of my hearing loss, and consider it to be a huge blessing in my life, but I have had professors introduce me to the class as 'the girl with hearing loss and her transcribers' when they get my accommodations letter. I am a bit shy and being singled out is not my favorite, and also my entire identity is not my hearing loss and I like to have the independence to bring it up (or not bring it up) on my own terms.

5. On the note of professors, most of the time they are wonderful, but sometimes they simply haven't been introduced to the etiquette in talking to a person with hearing loss. I have one professor in particular who gets way too close to me and dramatically over-enunciates all of her words when she is speaking to me. Her class is in a classroom with about 50 desks, and I usually sit in the middle, and sometimes she will come and lecture right in front of my desk. I know that she is trying to be helpful, but I don't know how to tell her that she is actually being condescending. The more she would do this, the less I would participate in her class, because I was already getting unwanted attention, and again, it made me feel singled out.

6. I have priority registration, which is awesome, but in order to schedule my transcribers ahead of time, I feel like I can't just pop in to a class to see whether it might be a good fit for me. I also can't arrive more than a few minutes late to my classes, because if I haven't arrived after a certain period of time after class has started, they can just leave. (They will text me to see whether I am coming, and if I respond then they are willing to wait for me, but sometimes I have been in a test that took longer than I thought, and when I get out I see a text from my transcribers saying that they left. Of course I don't want them to just sit there if I am not coming, and I don't know how they could improve this.)

7. It would be amazing if they could get captioning on the devotionals! I don't go in person because if I watch it on my computer I can put the subtitles on.

This semester I have been experiencing anxiety, and when I went to reach out for help at the Counseling Center, they told me that they were completely full for the rest of the semester. It already took a lot of vulnerability for me to reach out and ask for help, and being denied that help was discouraging. There aren't any mental health providers within a 40 mile radius that accept my insurance, and I don't have a car, so there is pretty much nothing for me to do now except continue to care for myself and hope that is enough to reduce my anxiety. I would love to see BYU hire in more mental health providers in general, but especially if they could just get a few extra to work temporarily near finals time or in the height of midterms, it would be so beneficial, so that everyone's needs can continue to be met as more people seek services from the Counseling Center.

Overall my experiences with accommodations and the culture of BYU have been really positive, and I am very fortunate to have had people so receptive to me in the way that I would be most comfortable having my needs met. It would simply serve to make BYU even better if we were able to see improvements in things like this.

Harrison Riehle

You never realize how many hills BYU has until you have to roll up them. Or how many doors don't actually have a button for them to be opened. You will never notice how out of the way so many ramps are until you are constantly late to class for searching for them. But what will truly shock you is how understanding and kind each of your professors are. Or how willing so many of your fellow students are to help you on a moments notice. Though I was only in a wheelchair for a few months, I truly came to understand what it meant for BYU students to "go forth to serve." There definitely needs to be some improvement to the accessibility of BYU campus, but as long as the students and faculty continue to show love, all will feel welcome.

Heidi Jenson

Service Dog

I had to leave my service dog with my parents for a few weeks, and my mom wanted to keep bringing her to church and other places so she could continue to do her training. I wish on the rare occasions I have to leave her she could still be a service dog and do her job. She's never home alone, if she was a pet dog I could leave her when I go for a few hours but she's a service dog so I cannot. She goes everywhere with me. For instance, at BYU I had a welding class. Obviously that was really unsafe for her to come to. No matter how well they are trained, until they make little welding face masks, it would be truly

unsafe. But I also couldn't leave her at home. I would love for it to be okay to walk her around without being hassled here on campus, because they do not have a disability but are just helping me. I don't know how to change the stigmas, but it would be helpful.

Housing

The biggest trouble I have encountered has been BYU housing. My current landlord did not give me the option of renewing my contract because of my service dog. They said they were looking for something "different" for the upcoming year. They refused and did not want have the service dog in their apartment complex. I will be graduating soon, but for new students that need housing, this is unfortunate. There have been two other instances of service dog that have been living in my complex. One was evicted, even though she made all repairs out of pocket. The other was kicked out and given the excuse that "Oh, whoops we didn't know you wanted to renew your contract." It's really shady. Every time they talk to me about my service dog, they try to trick me into admitting that I just want a pet in my house. They try to say my service dog is not needed.

Accessibility Center

I wish that there was a place I could go on campus. There's nowhere to go to say I think I've been treated unfairly with my landlords. Because they haven't technically kicked me out or said I cannot have a service dog, I can't raise my concerns because they have the upperhand. I also don't want to raise my concerns because I do not want to be evicted from my apartment on account of whatever they say I did wrong. At the same time, I feel this strong sense of injustice. The Accessibility Center is always really hard to get in touch with. I don't know why. I actually went through my counselor that knows me really well to get accommodations so I wouldn't have to work with them. When I talk to the people at the accessibility center, it's hard to feel like they know who I am. It's hard to see how they would care about my problems. This is not an unfixable problem. The UAC just need more people or more resources. It shouldn't take that long to get in touch with them. They need better infrastructure, and better follow up! Something me and my friends talk about a lot is, for something to be named the Accessibility Center, they make themselves really inaccessible. For instance, If I have anxiety about these things, they say they would help but first you have to go through all these steps that give you anxiety. Well, a student is not going to do that, and just end up suffering. It's just so frustrating. The process is so frustrating that for the first couple of weeks I just brought my service dog to class with me, without the UAC letter. My instructors have been WAY more helpful about everything than the UAC. It's so strange interacting with the accessibility

center...what can they do? Let's start from there. It took about 1 to 2 months to actually get the letter from the UAC, it was longer than it needed to be. I already had her [the service dog].

Legislation and Advocacy Issues

I would love to figure out how to make service dogs more official. I would love to have people with disabilities pass legislation to make service dogs much more official. The law is pretty lax, and creates a lot of pressure from people that think I am just bringing my pet dog everywhere. You can buy the vests off Amazon, and this makes it difficult for me to be taken seriously. If there were more concrete laws in place then people would take me seriously and not think, "oh she's just pretending." I am totally willing to do extra steps to make my service dog more official. I didn't just slap a vest on my dog. She is trained and I wish that was taken seriously. My only concern would be that I worry that people who aren't familiar with disability to pass the law and make it impossible to get a service dog. That might be surprising for people to hear that I want more regulations. I want more regulations so that people take me seriously. I am not just bringing my pet around BYU. Down the line, the law would be helpful for housing because they would take me seriously. To ban someone from an apartment because they have a service dog is illegal. My rent person is not the first person that did not want to renew my lease. I had one before and I threatened him with legal action, but he basically said, 'go ahead you're not going to win' and then when I looked into cases in the Utah Valley area they were universally on the side of the landlord. It would just be a waste of my money to go after him. It's frustrating because on the one hand, I have an internal sense of justice, but on the other, am I prepared to take on the emotional burden of being the Joan of Arc for disabled people? I was a perfect tenant that was never late on rent, very clean, didn't break anything, and have a tiny dog, I don't know what they have against me. I did consider going to my landlord and stating that I was a human being with real needs and emotions and this is my dog and she's very well behaved. I am not just a name on a rent check but a real person. But you know, I have so much else to concentrate on. I am graduating in a month, moving out of state, and I am trying to find a job in my career field. I have so much stuff to deal with, instead of making sure that these middle-aged landlords have a legitimate need for a service dog. But then, if we (disabled people) don't do it, who will? Nobody is going to say "well, that's not fair to those disabled people but I'm going to help even if it doesn't affect me." Maybe when I have a career and money I can get into activism.

Mental Illness

It's also very hard to do advocate mentally. A large part of our generation has a mental illness that makes this hard to deal with. We're all too tired of fighting to deal with it. It's especially frustrating with landlords in a college town because they know that you need to be here, and you are only there for 4 years so you should just deal with it. It's intimidating because you're a student and they are adults. You should be on the same playing field as your landlord. You're paying money for a service. You both agreed that this house was worth this much money, so you should be on the same level. A lot of students and young people don't feel like they are, because they are new to interacting with landlords. But to throw a disability on top of that? That's impossible. I can barely advocate to tell them the shower isn't draining, and now they say that they hate you and your dog? Its very stressful environment, when it's a place that should feel like your home.

BYU's Intimidating Infrastructure

I have hope when I move out of state, because it won't matter if I get in a tiff with my landlord. It wouldn't affect anything other than my housing. But at BYU it feels like everything is connected. If I make my landlord mad, would I be breaking the honor code? Everything is connected because you must have BYU approved housing and ecclesiastical endorsements and it seems like literally every single aspect of your life is connected when you go to BYU. You don't want to advocate for yourself because you don't want to put your education in jeopardy. I want to graduate. It's hard to advocate for yourself when they are holding your diploma out like a carrot. BYU says, "be submissive, don't make waves, and we'll give you this fancy sheet of paper." It's frustrating, but you want that fancy sheet of paper so bad. It is a difficult power struggle. I think it's great to collect lots of stories, because they can't expel us all. If I hadn't had spoke together with two previous tenants with disabilities about what we had experienced, we all individually thought, well...maybe it was a misunderstanding or something. But with three of us, it looks like a pattern. When I talked with others it made me realize that the discrimination was really happening and I wasn't just a crazy person thinking everyone was out to get me and my dog. These stories seem so classic that you think I'm making them up, but they are real.

Hope Gautheir (Mother of Student)

Unless you or someone you care for has a disability, it's hard to conceptualize the barriers people with disabilities face, physically and socially. BYU is a world class

university, and I believe with recent construction, they are investing in ways that will help students with disabilities overcome physical barriers. The students need to do better though. The sentiment of 'Enter to learn, go forth to serve' fosters a spirit of generosity and service. However, that service doesn't always need to be lofty. Sometimes, it is simply looking around you to see who needs help. From her wheelchair, Elizabeth felt like an outsider. She needed friends, and she needed to be noticed."

Anonymous

First, traveling between classes is already a relatively unsafe situation for those that have trouble getting around. During the colder months, I found myself taking twice as long as typical when traveling from the TMCB to the JKB. I had to walk on sleet every day. Fortunately, the sleet would melt relatively quickly as it became later in the day, but that doesn't mean it's an acceptable or safe condition for me to adapt to. At 9am there is a rush of kids heading south on campus and that gives me and the others heading toward the JKB a significantly smaller piece of the sidewalk. I should not have to worry about being knocked over, slipping, or being pushed off the sidewalk. So, at the very least, the sidewalks should be cleared to limit the risk in those situations.

Next, I've spent a lot of time with someone in a wheelchair. While he always tried to be independent, the buttons to open doors in many locations present their own obstacle. Sometimes objects obscure the button, or it's too close to the edge of the sidewalk. The accessibility buttons are outdated and as a computer science major, I think it's time we rely on more efficient and helpful technologies like Portal. Technological advances in nearly every category seek to remove buttons wherever possible. The best example of this is with smartphones, but automatic doors have even been doing it for years. I'm referring to the automatic sliding doors. The new engineering building was recently completed and I can't understand why we are invested in innovation and engineering when it applies to a major, but not when the innovation can actually be applied to solve real campus issues.

Elevators. I can't count how many times elevators have been malfunctioning. I remember a time when I was sick and needed to get to my car, but the elevator in the JFSB kept taking me up rather than down to the parking garage. I would press the button, but once it got back down to the main floor, it would wipe my floor selection and begin going up again.

Lastly, we speak of serving, understanding, and loving others. There's an unfortunate culture throughout the world that is still quite present at BYU. That is, people are always staring at me. Many people make insensitive comments that stick with me for days. Particularly, one of my professors said something really offensive to me. It was so twisted I brushed it off in the moment, but it came back to hurt me quite a bit because of how infuriated I was that a tenured professor at BYU could be so incredibly ignorant. People look at me and make comments as if I have an undesirable life. Whatever people want to believe, my life is great and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I have my struggles, but I recognize where those struggles have shaped me to become who I am today. There's no way to achieve net zero ignorance or completely rid campus of people who stare or saying ridiculous things, but we could definitely spread more awareness of it. We are so concerned about not offending and accommodating (socially especially) minority groups in the LGBTQ community or those that are of a race other than white. Why don't we teach to be conscious and respectful of those in all situations? We need more awareness of this issue on campus. I'm constantly walking around on campus and people are here with their children or middle schoolers are on a trip for school, I shouldn't feel embarrassed walking between classes because a child shouts something ridiculous or because middle schoolers are laughing and pointing. If people are visiting our campus, we should expect a certain level of respect from them toward the students. Again, I'm not asking for perfection in this situation, but people need to know that we have students here trying to focus on education and all these visitors should not be distracting students or making them feel uncomfortable. Education should be our priority, not simply welcoming everyone onto our campus for various events and activities.

Anonymous

Accessibility Center

One of the major problems with the University Accessibility Center is that the process for getting accommodations is not well-known. Many people don't know that it exists, or they don't know where it is. When they go, there is no clear criteria for what accommodations you can get for which disabilities. Additionally, to many students it appears as if the UAC is trying to not give accommodations, or trying to make it difficult for students who have obvious disabilities to receive them.

I'd like to offer a few suggestions will help the UAC function more smoothly:

1. Internal processes: The UAC serves many clients. They can serve many more by streamlining some parts of their accommodation process. Some cases are complicated

and should be handled by full-time employees at the UAC. However, some cases are simple: a student provides a clinical diagnosis of depression, or some other disability. These cases warrant little scrutiny and could be handled quickly by part-time employees or even through an automatic process.

2. Transparency: Some students are bewildered when they are told that they do not qualify for accommodations, and without any explanation they are unlikely to challenge the UAC's decision. The UAC should, as a policy, make the process of accommodations transparent by publishing a guide of what disabilities get what accommodations and by justifying their decisions.

3. Visibility: Very few people know that the UAC exists, and it is notoriously hard to find. Some people feel that it is symbolically "trying to keep people with disabilities hidden". The UAC needs to be more publicly advertised.

Culture

BYU culture is often self-centered. There needs to be a radical culture change to help people become more explicitly Christian. The administration can help people become more anxiously engaged through campaigns aimed at encouraging students to serve each other in meaningful ways (not necessarily organized).

A Blanket Solution

One way to cover many of these issues at once is by changing the way professors present the University Policies at the end of every syllabus. No one reads that part of the syllabus. One solution is to create a brief (less than 5 minute) video that covers the University Policies and is presented in each class at the beginning of the semester. Alternatively, the video could be required for all students and faculty to watch on their own time at the beginning of the semester. This video could explain and show the location of the UAC and Title IX offices as well as educate students on their responsibility to be engaged bystanders.

Josh Hinton

I'm not taking any classes right now... So I haven't been on campus for a little while but I do know that I don't love most of the bathrooms. I can only use some, I go to the JSB, Wilk, and they took a door off a bathroom in the tanner so that one is nice. I have found a few that work for me so sometimes I will go to different buildings to use the restroom. It didn't ruin my life while I was there but, it did mean that I had to plan out my day.

Kylie Webster

I just graduated from BYU and I loved every second of it. I felt like for the most part, it was easy for me to get around thanks to BYU. One of my struggles would be the buttons for sure. I ran into the problem of them not working or having things in front of them so I could not get to them. I think for the most part the snow was pretty cleared, but I did feel like there were days I had problems with getting around with the snow. It would be very helpful to have buttons on all doors around campus. I would like to have more handicap sitting for sports passes. I would love more ramps so other students like me have options to go in other doors, other than having only one option.

Laura Wald

Oh my heck! The RB stairs!! How does anyone hurt or disabled navigate those? I hurt my back snowboarding before one of my semesters there and was trying to use crutches to get around. It was SO hard to get where I needed to go on time! I was trying to rush to my class at the RB and got to the top of the stairs and sighed thinking about having to get down them (I knew I would be late to my class too!). Fortunately, two guys walking by heard me sigh and offered to help. I jokingly said, "Not unless you can carry me down the stairs." One of the guys said he thought he could and DID! I was so grateful for that little miracle because those RB stairs are hard enough for fully functional people! Maybe I don't fit your demographic but I definitely sympathize with the problems of navigating parts of campus.

Anonymous

When I became disabled, I felt I became worthless to both BYU and church. I have contributed so much to both. Feeling forgotten and cast aside has been the foundation of my faith crisis. I was refused accommodations when I became wheelchair bound. Which, I know is absolutely illegal, but it's hard to know which fights to choose.

I had a professor that based a lot of the grade on attendance (including tardies). I almost failed because I can't stand more than ten minutes without passing out. So climbing the stairs was an excruciating. Process. He didn't give a crap about my "sob story" and said if someone was late because of a funeral he'd grade them the same.

I suffered from major depressive disorder and general anxiety and have a lot of related stories, including several times being pushed toward a general studies degree or having people say I wouldn't be a good fit.

Lauren Bairett

I've noticed that many (many) elevator and access buttons are behind trash cans. Find me the logic in that. This is in Heritage especially, a technically accessible building complex. I dislike having to schedule exams over 24 hours in advance, but it's understandable.

Sometimes access buttons are broken for long periods of time. (for instance, I haven't been able to get in the front of the Tanner on my own for a couple of weeks).

Lauren McLane

"I am no longer at BYU, but recently, I did go to a restaurant this past week without someone there to open the door for me (something that I never do anymore honestly) and it was just anxiety all over again because I struggled SO BAD opening the door and I was grateful all over again for automatic door openers. In my head I was like "OK I'm never doing this again by myself." Something as simple as not having door openers stops me from ever wanting to go do things by myself. But that experience just hit me all over again how something so small like Portal IS making a difference, and it's a big difference. I was grateful for Portal. But I don't know a good way to communicate that to someone like a VP of an University. BYU could become so much more accessible. As it gets more and more difficult for me to do things like open doors on my own, I'm always looking for shortcuts and ways to make things easier for me that I used to do for myself more easily."

Madi Hamberger

The office of accessibility is pretty inaccessible. I can't email to set up an appointment (You have to call during certain hours) and the appointment has to be in person. Also, there is not an answering machine.

Mandi Eatough

i'm super stoked people are working to make issues about accessibility at BYU (and honestly in higher ed more generally) public. It's been a long private battle for lots of us and it's more than time BYU took responsibility for it.

Faculty

"The course policies for many courses on campus were incompatible with some of the accommodations specified in my accommodations letter (excused absences and

extended deadlines when I was too ill to be in class). While some faculty members were willing to work with me on these problems, I had many who told me that they wouldn't accommodate me. Dealing with the stress of trying to gain access to courses where faculty members clearly didn't want me to be successful often meant I did worse in those classes.

As a student with an invisible disability I faced a number of faculty members who were skeptical (at best) or disbelieving (generally) about my need for accommodations. This meant that I was tasked with either educating the professors about my illness/invisible disabilities generally or I worked overtime to make sure I wouldn't need accommodations in their class.

There is virtually no training for faculty members about accommodations and accessibility. Many of my good experiences with professors involved me doing that training myself and them being willing to learn from what I was saying. Many of my worst experiences with professors involved me being accused of asking for special treatment and denied accommodations. At the time I didn't know enough about my rights to identify this for the discrimination that it was, and even if I had the power dynamic in confronting a faculty member for that is impossible to grapple with. It shouldn't be the responsibility of a student to tell a faculty that their actions are discriminatory (and illegal) when the university hasn't done the work to train faculty about these issues in the first place"

Physical Campus

As BYU has worked to push campus as a walking campus, the availability of parking, including disability stalls, has become a major issue. As a student with a physical condition that makes walking long distances incredibly difficult, I often found myself parking across campus from where I needed to be just to find an open parking spot. Many of the disability stalls I had used for parking on campus early on in my time there were removed or obstructed during the construction of a number of buildings on campus. When I asked the parking and accessibility offices about this issue, they both assured me that they were dedicated to keeping enough spots available for those who "really need them". I asked if they knew how many full time faculty/students had disabled parking placards and was told that they didn't keep track. Based on my experience there aren't enough spots to begin with. Them being blocked by construction materials & equipment for months at a time only reinforced that disability parking wasn't actually being considered an important issue.

I lived on campus in Heritage Halls and experienced individuals parking illegally in or behind the disability parking stalls (by buildings 9 & 10) on a daily basis. I was regularly unable to park or unpark my car because people treated those spots as a pick-up/drop-off zone. If this was outside of main parking hours for campus it was essentially impossible to get campus parking or police to ticket the vehicles that made it impossible for me to leave or go home. I regularly had to park in the Law School parking lot across the street because of illegally parked cars which on bad days caused major flares in my symptoms. I had an important prerequisite class that had lecture moved to the RB a couple of days before the class started (down the massive hill on the west side of campus) with a lab section in the MARB the hour after its completion.

Accessibility Center

The accessibility center focuses most of their advocacy and work on campus around mental health and learning-based disabilities. Both of these are incredibly important (and statistically are likely to make up much of the in-office accommodations work the UAC deals with) but it hurts to be a student with physical disabilities who is publicly ignored by the office. Every year the office sponsors a Disability Awareness Week on campus and nearly all the events (if not all in some years) focused around mental health or learning disabilities. Both of these are important and good topics to be highlighting on campus, but it's hard to not feel like an afterthought when physical disabilities are left off the table for discussion.

Megan Baldwin

I was a student at BYU when I started really struggling with anxiety and depression. I stopped being able to go to classes or work (I worked at the MOA cafe) because I was having such a hard time. I also stopped turning in assignments. I pretty much became a hermit. I couldn't even go to the grocery store without having a panic attack. It took me awhile to finally reach out to the University Accessibility Center to try and clean up the mess I had made of my semester.

They asked me for a note from my doctor with my medical information which I assume included my diagnoses, and then had me contact my professors. For the most part, I had a good experience with the way my professors reacted. The general answer that I received was that they would give me an incomplete and then I would have a year to turn in all the things that I had missed. One of my professors, however, did not give me that option. He said "I don't know what we can do to improve your grade enough to make it worth your time and to fix your GPA."

This was obviously not what I wanted to hear and caused me to really break down. From that point on I just continued to deteriorate. I did not get the forms filled out in order to get the incompletes in my other classes. I stopped communicating with the University Accessibility Center entirely, and my mom ended up having to do all the work of unenrolling me from school.

It took me years to finally try and figure things out with my transcript. At that point, I had become a mother to two toddlers, and wanted to do online school. BYU was my best option. However, my transcript at BYU had been mangled by that last semester. Five F's. Just thinking about it caused me to have panic attacks. But I eventually gathered enough courage to contact the University Accessibility Center. They told me that it was possible for me to retroactively withdraw from the classes I had failed that semester, and directed me to the Petitions Office. I sent in my petition, explaining the circumstances surrounding that gosh-awful semester. They accepted it and my transcript was repaired. From there, I applied to transfer to BYU.

Altogether, I had an acceptable experience with the way BYU handled my struggles with mental illness. I was lucky. I only had one professor that pushed back when I asked for help. But I wish that all of my professors would have recognized that my truancy and incomplete assignments were a red flag and reached out to me. But the University Accessibility Center did their job. I do wish they had followed up with me. I was suicidal, and I stopped communicating with them and with my professors. I did not get the paperwork turned in that I needed to. For all they knew, I could have been in a lot of danger.

If they had reached out to me to try and help me continue working towards getting incompletes in my classes, that could have changed my experience completely. More reaching out is a huge way BYU could improve, I think. Also, I think it would have been helpful if they had assigned a BYU therapist to my case to make sure I was doing ok. I think what they did was the minimum, which was helpful, but not helpful enough.

Anonymous

I wheeled back to Helaman Halls, building 9, where I live, and the elevator was out of order, I couldn't call the elevator car to the 1st floor. This has happened two times just this semester, the second one being at the Brimhall, where the elevator was out for a day. Nine out of ten times, the elevators will work, but that one out of ten time is always a killer for me and the professors.

It'd be very nice if there was a map that pointed out the accessible bathrooms, that way I, along with other folks, could head there instead of risking a handicap stall to be open in a normal restroom. The accessible bathroom in the law building, doesn't actually have a accessible stall. It is mislabeled. I went to the law building after class but just had to hold it. Buttons can be broken sometimes, or unresponsive on some occasions. Buttons would be useful in certain locations such as classrooms and other important areas. A button on glass wall leading into the Marriott's open hall would be nice. A buttons side door to lecture hall in the Tanner rm.115 would be fantastic.

Nica Bastidas

To be honest, I didn't think I fit under the requirements to receive any accommodations. So I didn't ask for any specific resources. I just let me professors know that I had hip bursitis and that there would be times when i needed to get up and move around or I might be a little late to class.

Luckily I lived at Heritage Halls during the time when it affected me the most, so I didn't have to come from off campus. But i also made sure to not have any classes in the RB or in the Tanner building so I didn't have to walk down and up too many stairs. But even with those accommodations I made myself, sometimes the walks were tough! Any campus is going to be big and require lots of walking.

Another thing that was hard was just feeling judged for getting up in the middle of the discussions. But it was even harder when i got stuck in a middle seat of a row and I didn't want to climb over everyone in the middle of a discussion so i remained in my seat in pain. It would have been nice if I had a designated seat on the end of the row for when I needed to get up. But I didn't feel like I was ever given that option because I didn't really look like I had a physical disability. I didn't have crutches or a cast or really any other sign that i was always in pain. Some days were harder than others, and it's not easy to vocalize your problems to complete strangers in your class.

I didn't go to the UAC, I guess you could say it was the stigma... Haha. I don't know. As I would read the disability statements, I honestly thought the UAC was more for those who had a learning disability or just needed extra help from a peer because they can't take notes or something. Haha. I really don't know. But for some reason I didn't feel like my case fit the criteria because I was still able to get all my work in on time on my own.

It was just those dreadful class discussions when I didn't arrive on time and had to sit through the pain because of a middle seat. Or I even just skipped some discussions and found the slides online when I was having a hard day. Anyways! It was hard some days, but I still managed to get through the classes :) The suggestions I would have is to just make it clear in the disability statements on I-learn (when you're just starting the classes) and everywhere else that this could also be a place where the professor could know of your invisible mental and health challenges. It would also be kind of cool in the professors could reach out (I know they already have a lot of work) at least at the beginning of the semester. It can be hard to be upfront about what's going on with you that others can't see.

Palakiko Chandler

At BYU, I am a program director for elementary students with various disabilities. I have also dated a deaf person. From these experiences I have realized that BYU needs to move more resources for accessibility to its student and the community. We play with children at the pool and at the gym, every Thursday and Friday from 11AM-11:50AM. At the pool, we have a girl in a wheelchair that loves the water. When she first came in January, we put her in the lift that allowed her to get into the water. The problem was that the chair couldn't bring her up. The chair was broken.

Me and a couple of the other volunteers would help her every Thursday, getting in and out of the pool. We would prop her out of her chair, maneuver her to the side of the pool, and would help her get in and back out. It took two whole months to fix the lift chair. Although we are grateful it was fixed, and the lifeguards were very important in helping that happen, for two whole months we allowed a young girl in a wheelchair to think that the lift not working was okay. BUT IT IS NOT. I would tell her every time I carried her to the pool, that she deserved the chair to work.

Accessibility is not for the rich, it is not a luxury, nor should it be "a special arrangement" it is for everyone. Friends who have depression have gone to the Accessibility Office gotten notes for late homework, and I know teachers who have right up told them that they are "fine" to turn things in on time. BYU needs to change. For being part of a religion who has faced persecution for being a religious minority, we sure do a bang up job recognizing and providing access to other minority groups, other than religion.

Because believe it or not, those are the people are called to serve. Back to the issue at hand. Accessibility allows us to be more inclusive because it helps people who have a disability feel like they can participate like everyone without being singled out.

Tiffany Gibbons

Half of the handicap buttons to open doors straight up don't work. It's like, you had one job.

My foot:

Two and a half weeks ago, I broke my foot. Though I was put in a walking boot, I was quickly banished back to crutches because I don't know how to take it easy, campus is HUGE, and I do a LOT of walking in a normal school day. I have quickly found that, while I'm pretty sure the campus is technically accessible, I have to go way out of my way to find ramps or elevators. I've been late to pretty much every class, even leaving earlier than normal, because it is so hard to navigate with crutches. My classes tend to hop from the HFAC to the RB, a trek for even the most able-bodied. Teachers say they'll work with me, but they also kinda don't. I spend most evenings exhausted, frustrated, and in so much pain— just from going to all my classes.

Hearing:

I am registered with the accessibility office because I have moderate-severe progressive hearing loss. I have found them to be so helpful, and have tons of options for me. I don't use many at the moment, because I generally just use my hearing aids and try to get a front row(ish) seat in my classes, but as my hearing gets worse it is nice to know I have options and support. My favorite part about having a registered disability with the university is priority registration :) most people don't know I have this hidden disability, and though I make it work, plenty of things slip through the cracks and can be really hard to recover from. I don't even think my employers know about this disability, though I wear my hearing aids to work. I can't really have a job The relies on my answering phones because I rely so much on reading lips and facial expressions.

Anxiety/depression/health:

Last semester, I was diagnosed with Mono. Which sucked. Not only was I tired all the time, I also became very depressed by how tired I was all the time. I was able to get a medical petition to lower credits signed, which was really nice because that way I could take fewer classes and keep my scholarship.

That being said, I have really struggled with depression and anxiety in general and I know I'm not alone. I know you can be granted accessibility resources through the university, much like my hearing disability, but mental health is so much harder to document and prove to the system. I feel like I am unable to take care of my mental health needs without seriously harming my academic record, and as a student fully supporting myself financially, scholarships are pretty important. I wish there were better ways to communicate such things with teachers, that don't take months to years of medical documentation and jumping through hoops.

Stephanie Quispe

I came to college never expecting I would be considered someone who has a disability. That honestly sounded ridiculous to me. After I was assaulted at BYU, I was forced to face all my demons. I got diagnosed with PTSD, which to this day still affects my ability to function and focus on school. I also briefly struggled with some depression, anxiety, and an eating disorder. It was quite difficult to balance school, and social life, while trying to take care of my mental health.

My counselor at the multicultural student services office suggested I get an accommodation letter from the UAC. I refused once or twice, until I found myself almost flunking semester after semester. I finally went to my therapist and got documentation. BYU refused to see me due to how severe my PTSD was, which makes sense and I am glad I got long-term help outside of the CAPS center. Shortly after I started working with UAC, I got a brain tumor, so needed documentation for the seizures/migraines I now get as a result of it. This also made me a bit more "slow" in terms of my learning capability.

The most difficult part about this journey is feeling accepted by others. I once heard a professor in my major say, "I don't even get why students need these accommodations. Back in my day we just sucked it up." That really made me feel small and I just kinda brushed it off. I have also had professors look at me like I'm lying or making up my sickness - whether that be emotional or physical. Most professors and other university staff have been amazing at making accommodations. Sadly, there have been a few that have not been. Those few actually made my depression worsen, because I honestly felt judged and belittled. It sucks, and I hate having to explain what's going on in order for them to take me seriously.

With time, I have learned to be strong and advocate for my needs. It has not been easy but I have come far in hopes that professors who haven't been as accommodating can learn from my experience, and be more respectful to the students who come after me.

The biggest take away from my personal experience having a disability, is that not all disabilities are visible. Some might be mental or emotional, like it is in my case. I might look put together, dressed up and smiling. But if i'm being honest, most mornings it takes so much strength to get out of bed, brush my teeth, and look semi-clean. I sometimes am shaking with anxiety to leave my house, or cry because I feel so overwhelmed. Yet, I still show up so people think it was no big deal for me to be in class. In reality it is an everyday battle; looking beyond my mind and having faith in giving it my all to attend.

Feeling invisible in a campus where I yearned to feel welcomed, made me feel so sad and anxious, I legit stopped going to classes and starting taking classes online. I realize this is just from my perspective, so I am now readjusting to being on campus and owning who I am. However, i think past experiences led me to think this way about BYU, and the perfectionistic environment it can sometimes portray.

Scott Miller

Campus was pretty good but when I was going to partial weight bearing and learning how to walk again sometimes I would have to sit on the ground or a bench with my crutches because of only having one leg to use. Getting into the bus was a big hassle because I didn't have a handicap parking sticker (something I wish my doctor would have talked to me about) because my availability to get in the bus was severely limited to how many people would be on it. I would have to wake up much earlier to get on a bus that had as few people as possible.

The accessibility center was great to work with because they were clear about what I was supposed to do for a shorter wait time when it came to testing. When I went to the testing center, despite following the UAC instructions the testing center told me I was in the wrong room which was a bit frustrating. I was sure about this because they told me to get into the elevator and go across from the desks where students check out their tests. The testing center told me I needed to go downstairs to a specific room that other students use. It seemed like they needed better communication with each other or with the student.

Many of my professors were understanding of my issue but I still needed to ride my scooter to campus for a 7 am final. I was able to use specific chairs in my classrooms and professors were willing to work with me even though I did my best to not need additional assistance.

I did notice that my map of the campus became very different and I became accustomed to remembering where the elevators were instead of stairs. Whenever an elevator would be broken I would have to go out of my way to find another one that would get me to my destination.

I believe I was very lucky that I was extra motivated at the start of the semester so I got ahead of all my classes so when I needed to take 2+ weeks off to recover from surgery instead of having to withdraw from classes.

First, I think doctors should address short term handicap parking for temporary disability with patients, maybe an app that notifies students of traffic between classes and out of order elevators so that they know how to get where they need to go, especially in the Tanner building, even though I had very few issues with that building.

The Ryde could operate more as a business to notify students of higher shuttle use in case if a student needs to take up additional space. Next, better communication between testing center and accessibility center. I also think that with students who have sudden temporary disabilities that CAPS could address new methods of coping when they are unable to be active. I was very active before my injury and it took me almost 5 months to be able to exercise again. CAPS only really takes new clients if they are seriously suicidal if they don't sign up months in advance. I think maybe giving students one session to talk about new activities to alleviate some of the emotional symptoms that come with a drastic change in life.

I realize that my experience was much lower scale than some of the students I see on campus with permanent disabilities. But this injury gave me so much more of a respect for students who have to deal with this on a permanent basis.