

## **Bemidji State University - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee**

### **Background**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) direct education institutions to ensure that students can participate in educational activities and employees can work without refusal based on their disability. As such an institution that falls under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), Bemidji State University must maintain and develop priorities that comply with these federal mandates.

BSU mission and values, along with university strategic priorities (especially priorities 3 and 5), speak to the robust engagement of students and a culture where "...diversity is embraced, and all people are safe, welcome, and validated". Likewise, BSU's strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion (priority 1) states that the university will "foster an equitable, safe, and respectful campus and community culture for every person who learns, teaches, works, and visits our campus". With these commitments in mind, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019) reports that ~19% of college students report having a disability, while between 16-18% of the U.S. population and ~11% of Minnesotans has a disability (SIPP, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to proactively develop and maintain strategies to meet and exceed federal guidelines for campus accessibility to ensure BSU community members with disabilities, can enjoy the same level of engagement as their nondisabled counterparts.

### **Mission Statement**

The ADA committee is dedicated to supporting equal educational and workplace experience Bemidji State University's students, faculty, and staff, by guiding the removal of accessibility barriers and advising the development and maintenance of a barrier-free environment at BSU.

### **Charge and responsibilities**

The BSU ADA committee acts as an advisory body to the university administration with the objective of developing and maintaining a universally accessible environment at BSU. The ADA Committee will achieve this objective by functioning in three primary ways:

- Providing transparency and oversight of BSU's progress goals (accessibility transition plan) to full compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act by identifying areas of need for improvement and a timeline for meeting objectives.
- Provide guidance on new construction, facility renovations, repair, restoration, and maintenance projects to ensure that new projects meet and exceed Title II standards.
- To support the ADA coordinator and influence and support best practices as it relates to disability accessibility at BSU, including implementation of universal design efforts, technological and course delivery accessibility, and parking and physical plant policies.

The ADA committee will convene quarterly to set and monitor BSU's accessibility transition plan and to be responsive to an accessibility audit that will be conducted on its behalf. It will charge its members with working with their respective offices to implement plans that meet with the recommendations of the committee.

### **Leadership, Membership, and Terms of Service**

The committee includes ex officio members, representatives of specified university offices, faculty, staff, and students. It is expected that faculty, staff, and students with disabilities will be represented on the committee. Ex officio members serve if they remain in their positions. Other collective bargaining representatives serve two-year terms and may be reappointed. All members have voting privileges.

Campus Diversity Officer	Steven D. Parker	
Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Specialist from the community	Vacant	
Advising and Accommodations Coordinator	Christian Breczinski	
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	Randy Westhoff	
Vice President for Student Life and Success	Travis Greene	
Chief Information Officer	Sherry Lawdermilt	
Director of Public Safety	Casey McCarthy	
Director of Facilities	Travis Barnes	
Affirmative Action Officer	Nicholas Taylor	
<b>Staff members from collective bargaining groups:</b>		<b>Terms of Service:</b>
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)	Brent Steinmetz	2-year term
Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty (MSUAASF)	Errin Jordan	2-year term
Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)	Rachel Munson & Geri Olson	2-year term
Middle Management Association (MMA)	Vacant	2-year term
Student Senate representatives (1 of 2)	Crystal Kastl	Annually in spring
Student Senate representative (2 of 2)	Kendra Draeger	Annually in spring
Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) member (1 of 2)	Thomas Dirth	2-year term
Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) member (2 of 2)	Amanda Longie	2-year term