

Handicapped access improving on campus

By Michael Melissa
Contributing Features Writer

Walking into a classroom and navigating the obstacle course the previous class had left when they finished with their group discussion is fairly easy, right?

Students rearrange the desks so they are in some kind of order, although the rows are now six inches apart

rather than two feet. Maybe you're sitting in the back of the class today and the professor is soft-spoken so you struggle to catch every word. A minor inconvenience, right?

Now imagine being in a wheelchair and having to negotiate the six-inch rows your classmates left you when they rearranged the classroom. Or maybe you are a deaf student who cannot hear the professor's words of wisdom. How do you cope?

Instead of altering disabled students' learning habits, the federal government instituted a plan for colleges and universities to accommodate these individuals.

Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 made it the responsibility of colleges and universities to aid disabled students. A reasonable effort by the university must be made to accommodate these students.

Anita Stockbauer, director of UNLV's Disability Resource Center, defines a reasonable effort for a qualified student (one who is handicapped but is capable of making it around campus) as one who makes it to class and keeps up with the standards of the class.

"It would be reasonable to expect the student to go to class and absorb as much information as possible, even if they were not capable of taking their own notes," Stockbauer explained. "It would also be reasonable for them to stick to a time frame that demonstrates time management, even if they needed extra time to do their testing and asking to take the test a week early as opposed to taking two weeks at the end."

Stockbauer hopes UNLV can continually improve compliance with section 504 to make the campus more user-friendly for disabled students.

Recognizing the need to pro-

vide a service to students with special needs, the DRC opened in 1989. By 1991, it dealt exclusively with disabled students.

In 1994, the Faculty Senate endorsed a proposal by the DRC requiring all faculty to include in their syllabi that students with documented disabilities are entitled to DRC assistance.

"It is a very helpful tool to us because if a student wishes to remain anonymous, it lets that student know there is a service on campus that is available to them," Stockbauer said.

The DRC gives professors a place to send students they suspect are having problems in class due to impairments.

"In other words the professor can say to the student, 'You seem to be having some problems,'" Stockbauer continued. "Is there any emotional or psychological disorder?" Some faculty may feel uncomfortable confronting a student like that, when their ultimate goal is to help the student. But by putting that statement in the course syllabus it helps us immensely."

Although figures are incomplete, the DRC aids approximately 650 students, while its personnel sees more than 300 students weekly.

Many students who have disabilities are not in need of weekly attention but still sign up to gain more information and learn about new technology that may help them. According to national statistics, approximately 2,000 UNLV students have disabilities, physical or psychological. Some of these students may be in wheelchairs and do not need to identify themselves to the DRC as they see themselves being able to function within a classroom without any accommodation issue.

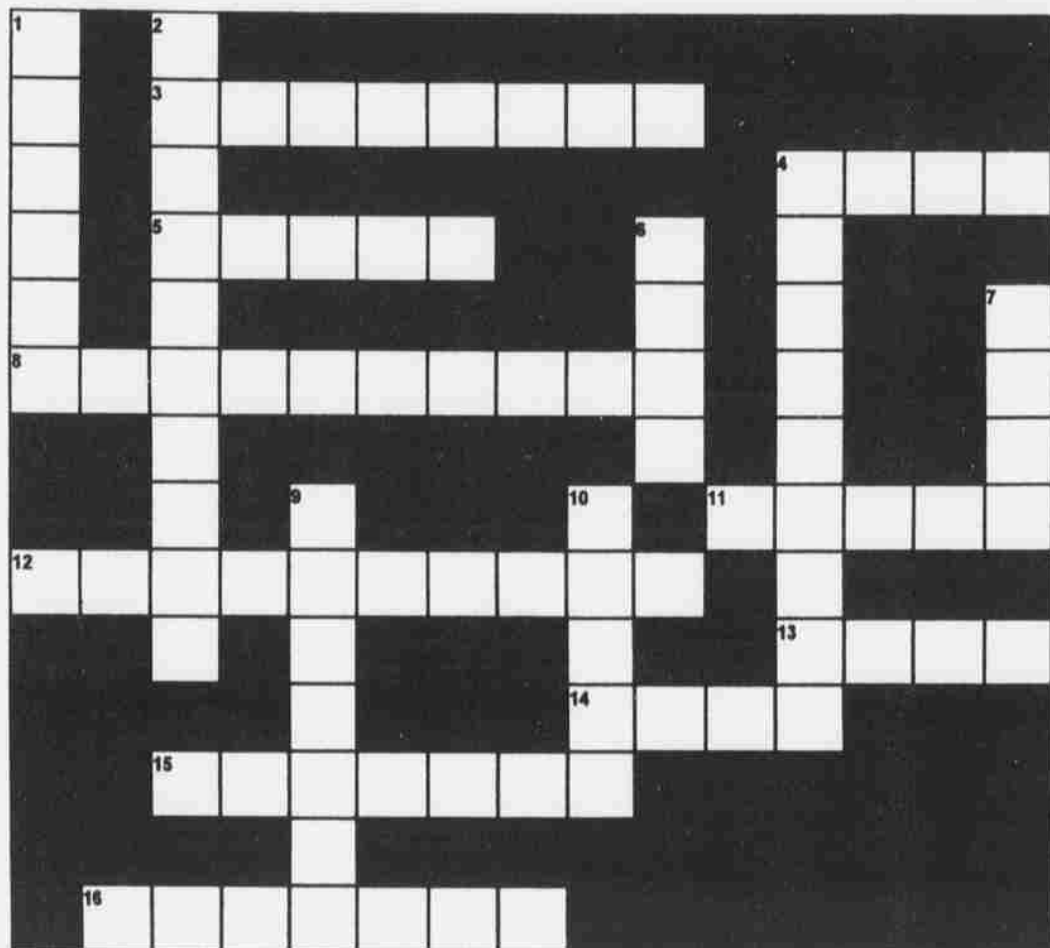
"Still, people may perceive a person with a noticeable physical disability as someone who may need assistance, when in fact they don't," Stockbauer said. "A chair user doesn't need any assistance in the classroom. They just need a chair to get from point A to point B."

Disabled accessibility inside buildings as well as pathways

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Columbus Day Crossword Puzzle



Across:

- 3. Spanish queen
- 4. Columbus made ___ journeys
- 5. Columbus' 2nd ship
- 8. Ship lost in storm
- 11. He was trying to discover route to ___
- 13. First ship to arrive in New World
- 14. discovered in South America
- 15. Columbus identified this as one of the four Biblical rivers of paradise
- 16. American export first discovered in Cuba

Down:

- 1. Indians discovered on Columbus' 2nd trip
- 2. Now Haiti and the Dominican Republic
- 4. Illegitimate son and biographer
- 6. Chinese emperor Columbus tried to find
- 7. Believed to be attached to Asia
- 9. Island discovered on 2nd journey
- 10. Columbus' brother

- Answers:**
- 1. Pinta
 - 2. Santa Marta
 - 3. Isabella
 - 4. four
 - 5. Pinta
 - 6. Khan
 - 7. Cuba
 - 8. Santa Marta
 - 9. Jamaica
 - 10. Diego
 - 11. India
 - 12. Valladolid
 - 13. Nina
 - 14. gold
 - 15. Orinoco

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