

Committee on Disabilities

One of the functions of the Department of Student Services is to provide services to students with special needs. This group of students had a variety of needs from learning disabilities to other disabilities -- mobility, hearing, and visual impairments; others are in wheel chairs. I, Marion Basha, am the designated Counsellor in Student Services responsible for meeting the needs of this group.

By way of making the University Community become more aware, and in hopes of being able to provide a well-rounded service, I organized a University Committee to Explore the Needs of Students with Disabilities. This Committee includes representation from the Registrar and Business Offices, Security Department, Library, Student Union, Council of the Disabled, Tutoring Office, Maintenance Department, faculty from Science and Arts, Residence, Vet School, one student with a disability, the Canada Employment Centre, and myself as Chairperson.

The Committee met a couple of times in the spring semester of last year, and had continued to meet on a monthly basis this past year. We are really in the very early stages of trying to define exactly what our purpose is. The initial meetings were devoted to in-service training, to help each of us to become better informed of our own attitudes and language barriers. More recently we have divided into sub-committees and are working on a couple of specific tasks. One task is to clearly spell out what our mandate is, which will be ratified at our April meeting. A second committee is identifying what type of information needs to be distributed to the faculty, staff, and students who are here, as well as those who are planning to enrol. A third committee is exploring the possibility of obtaining a grant to hire a student to do more extensive research and information gathering in the whole area of students with special needs. We have identified many other concerns, and time and the future will determine when these will be dealt with.

This gives you a brief summary of what's been going on with this committee. It is hoped that through our efforts, any student with a disability, or related special need, will be able to function on our campus in a way that helps them realize their full potential, efficiently and effectively.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for their support, interest and commitment. Also, if you would like further information regarding this committee, or would wish to help out, please feel free to see me in Student Services, Robertson Library, or call, 566-0443.

Marion Basha

