

## **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.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Voting or Ex-officio</b>
Steven D. Parker	Campus Diversity Officer		EO
Torry Swedberg	Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Specialist from the community		
Christian Breczinski	Advising and Accommodations Coordinator		EO
Randy Westhoff	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs		EO
Travis Greene	Vice President for Student Life and Success		EO
Sherry Lawdermilt	Chief Information Officer		EO
Casey McCarthy	Director of Public Safety		EO
Travis Barnes	Director of Facilities		EO
Nicholas Taylor	Affirmative Action Officer		EO
Ashley Gomez	Director of Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion		EO
Brent Steinmetz	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)	2021/2022	V
Bridget Tews	Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty (MSUAASF)	2021/2022	V
Geri Olson	Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)	2021/2022	V
<b>Vacant</b>	MAPE	2-year term	V
<b>Vacant</b>	Middle Management Association (MMA)	2-year term	
Tori Warne	Student Senate representatives (1 of 2)	Annually in spring	V

Simon Duerst	Student Senate representative (2 of 2)	Annually in spring	V
Thomas Dirth	Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) member (1 of 2)	2021/2022	V
Amanda Longie	Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) member (2 of 2)	2021/2022	V
Larry Strowbridge	Plant Maintenance Engineer, appointed by CDO	2022/2023	V

Key: V = Voting; EO = Ex-Officio  
Term: Fiscal Year 2022 (2021-2023) July 1 to June 30 of next year