The Disability Advisory Committee is charged with assessing the campus environment and climate for appropriate accessibility, serving as an advisory board regarding recommendations for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities at TU, ensuring that key administrators are informed of emerging disability issues on campus, fostering collaborations across campus to promote a welcoming climate, and promoting education and training to increase disability awareness.

The Committee met twice as a group in 2014-15, once in the fall and once in the spring. Individual committee members were involved in a number of important accessibility projects as described below.

- **Towson University Website Accessibility.** Website content must be accessible to people with disabilities under Section 504 and the ADA, and there has been an increasing number of OCR and DOJ letters and settlements, and higher education court cases which mandate that institutions take a comprehensive approach to addressing information and technology accessibility. Matt Wynd has been instrumental in ensuring that the new Towson University website is accessible to people with disabilities and in compliance the WCAG2AA (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards. The new website OmniUpdate Content management system will prompt users to make changes before publishing pages if the content does not meet the WCAG standards. Additionally, OTS is developing a Web accessibility professional development program for its developers and administrators with the intent to provide the team with a better perspective on accessibility goals and how to spot accessibility problems in TU web resources.

- **USM Accessible Technology and Information Workgroup.** Given the scope of the task of making technology and information is accessible, Susan Willemin worked with other USM DSS Directors to form a USM Accessible Technology and Information Workgroup. This past year, the group approached the USM Chancellor’s office with a proposal to pool resources on a system-wide basis. The DSS offices are particularly concerned about addressing technology accessibility as recent rulings have indicated that providing a student with an accommodation rather than creating effective, accessible technology may no longer be acceptable. The group is currently working with Don Spicer, USM Associate Vice Chancellor and CIO. In early June, Susan Willeming and Jo Ann Hutchinson, UMD DSS Director, presented the workgroup’s draft “Accessible Technology and Information Workgroup Report” to the USM IT CIO Committee, as well as MJ Bishop, USM Director of the Center of Academic Innovation. The report contains recommendations pertaining to web accessibility, accessibility of online courses and materials, captioning and procurement.

- **Burdick Hall Para-Transit Service and Access.** Pam Mooney and members of the Disability Advisory Committee worked with Director Scott Guckert in Facilities
Management to identify a better para-transit drop off/pick up location for individuals with disabilities needing access to Burdick Hall. Another ADA-compliant para-transit drop off/pick up location was identified that is appropriate for all ambulatory and wheelchair users in that it is close to the east entrance of Burdick Hall and can be easily accessed by students and others going to both Campus Recreation Services and Kinesiology using ADA-compliant paths. With this location, the former Towsontown Blvd. drop off/pick up location will be discontinued. Connector paths to the new location will be installed.

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Update.** UDL is an educational framework that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences. Betsy Neville and other members of the Disability Advisory Committee had met in 2012-13 with Assistant Provost, Dr. Jane Neapolitan, regarding promoting UDL principles with faculty. Since that discussion, Jane has promoted UDL with faculty across the campus. During 2014-15, the 50+ faculty who participated in the UDL workshops in 2013-14 shared their projects in early fall. Some continued their focus on UDL throughout this year and were joined by additional faculty to participate in an on-line professional learning community. A UDL Cultural Diversity session was held in December, and in March, Dr. Fran Smith presented a half-day workshop on UDL principles. Dr. Liz Berquist presented a webinar session on UDL and in late April, Matthew Bergman, teacher and administrator at The Hershey School and CAST UDL cadre member, presented a UDL evening session. This was co-sponsored by the Department of Special Education and was attended by over 100 TU faculty, Special Education alumnae and current interns, as well as BCPS mentors.

- **Captioning Update.** Towson University guidelines specify that captioning is needed for the following types of media: 1) media used to orient, publicize, promote or explain the university and its services that is intended to reach the general public, 2) media intended to reach the general public that is linked to the university website, and 3) media for instruction for deaf and hard-of-hearing students registered with DSS. Recognizing that captioning can be costly, Susan Willemin worked with Dr. Ellyn Sheffield to negotiate a special rate for captioning for Towson, as well as all USM institutions through Verb8am (formerly TU Captioning Solutions/ICART). Additionally, Dan Leonard worked with Director Ron Santana, Digital Media Services, to caption all spring 2015 commencement ceremonies on the SECU Arena jumbotron to provide wider accessibility.

- **ADA Coordinator Update.** As the Committee had requested, funding for an ADA Coordinator position was finally approved for FY 15. Susan Willemin wrote and sent forward the position description for approval (attached), but due to the hiring freeze no action was taken on recruitment for the position.
FY 2014-2015 Committee Members:

Bob Giordani, Registrar, Chair
Barbara English, Associate University Counsel
Jerry Jerome, Faculty, Department of Kinesiology
Dan Leonard, Fair Practices Officer, President’s Office
Pamela Mooney, Director, Parking and Transportation Services
Betsy Neville, Chair, Department of Special Education
Lisa Taylor, Project Manager, Facilities Management
Susan Willemin, Director, Disability Support Services