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## **The accessibility of Kansas State University's campus: A community-based action research project**

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### **Kirmser Award**

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### **Abstract & Keywords**

For our Culture and Context in Leadership class we were challenged to conduct research regarding inclusion in the Kansas State or Manhattan communities. Our group chose to look at the accessibility of Kansas State University's campus for physically disabled students, staff, and visitors. While working with our community partner, the Student Access Center, we discovered that there was no map of campus showing accessible routes and entrances. We decided to create such a map that the SAC and new student services would be able to utilize. In order to get reliable information, we analyzed several buildings looking for accessibility issues. We each completed an ethnography to get a first person point of view as well as interviews with K-State Students who deal with this everyday.

**Keywords:** Physical Disabilities, Kansas State University, Leadership, Inclusion, Culture, Map, Campus

### **Course Information**

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**The Accessibility of Kansas State University's Campus**  
**A Community-Based Action Research Project**

by

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LEAD 350: Culture and Context in Leadership

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction.....2

1. Literature.....4

2. Methods.....7

3. Findings.....7

    3.1 Ethnographies.....7

        3.1.1 Samuel Edwards.....8

        3.1.2 Sara McAfee.....9

        3.1.3 Kamaron Davis.....9

        3.1.4 Melanie Riordan and Kayla Wilkinson.....10

    3.2 Interviews.....13

        3.2.1 Charli Wilks.....14

        3.2.2 Sara Castellano.....15

        3.2.3 Sami Thomas.....17

    3.3 Survey of Buildings.....17

4. Action Plan.....26

    4.1 Wheelchair Accessible Campus Map.....28

Acknowledgements.....30

Bibliography.....31

*“Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you’re needed by someone.” -Martina Navratilova*

## **Introduction**

Seven billion. This is the approximate number of people who live in this world. This is a number that most cannot even fathom. Fifteen percent of that number comes out to about one billion. This is the number of people in this world who live day-to-day life with some sort of disability (WHO). This number also represents the number of people who are constantly overlooked, judged, mistreated, or unaccounted for because of their disability. Each and every person on this Earth holds their own social and personal identities. Some of those identities we get to choose, others we are born with or naturally pick up throughout our lifetimes. Although no one tries to be judgmental or intentionally cast individuals into categories based strictly on their appearance, it is unfortunately a thing that happens every day. For our LEAD 350 class each group chose a Community-Based Action Research Project. This project had to consist of us pairing with a community partner and addressing the issue of inclusiveness throughout the Kansas State University campus and Manhattan community. As our group discussed what we should do for this project, we looked through each of our own social and personal identities. We recognized those identities in which we shared and those identities in which we differed. It became clear that the single thing we all had in common was that we were all able-bodied individuals.

As we wanted to strive to educate ourselves and view this project through a lens that none of us personally held, we decided to base our project on the question, how accessible is Kansas State University’s campus for physically disabled individuals? We recognized that there

are many other forms of disabilities than just strictly physical and we want to be clear in the fact that we believe all disabilities are of equal importance to study, however; for this project we came to the decision to base our research strictly on physical disabilities because they are easier to track, test, see, and for our purposes, gather information on. We paired with the Student Access Center on K-State's campus for our community-partners. The Student Access Center's mission statement says that they appreciate disability as an integral part of the Kansas State University experience. They are committed to providing equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for students with disabilities. Through collaboration and support of the entire campus community, the Access Center promotes disability pride, self-determination for the student, and universally accessible design principles, so that everyone has full access to university life.

This research question is of great importance, matters, and should be of interest to every individual, whether that be faculty, staff, students, or visitors of Kansas State University, because we all are, know someone who is, or someday could be affected by a physical disability. This question pertains to, not only inclusivity, but inclusive leadership because it is a matter of making ALL students, faculty, staff, and visitors feel welcomed and accounted for. At Kansas State University, if a student unexpectedly is put in a boot, crutches, or a wheelchair; they are automatically faced with having to navigate through their daily life in a different way. If our campus is not inclusive in the way that our buildings, sidewalks, walkways, etcetera, are designed, those individuals may be stuck. They might not be able to get to their classes on time or at all. Our research matters because we are standing up for all of those individuals who are,

might be, or have been physically disabled. We are letting their voices be heard and are hoping to be the start of the change that needs to come about.

## **1. Literature**

Due to the structure and exclusiveness of the research question, it was very difficult to find sources that would have helpful information. When the online search for literary pieces started, we had not yet talked to our community partner about what we could do for them and our research question had a lot of gray area. Did we want to focus on the inclusiveness of physically disabled students in the classroom, in social life, in basic necessities, or in all of the above? Pieces that had direct correlation between physical disabilities and higher education in a variety of many topics were pulled in order to get a broad range of sources that could potentially help us down the road.

One of the very first articles found was “Working with Students who have Physical Disabilities” by Naomi Oritz through Kids as Self Advocates (KASA). This article that has been the most helpful overall. It talks about correct wording to use around those who are physically disabled as well as how to treat them as a student from a teacher’s perspective. It also points out limitations of the classroom that can arise and offers solutions.

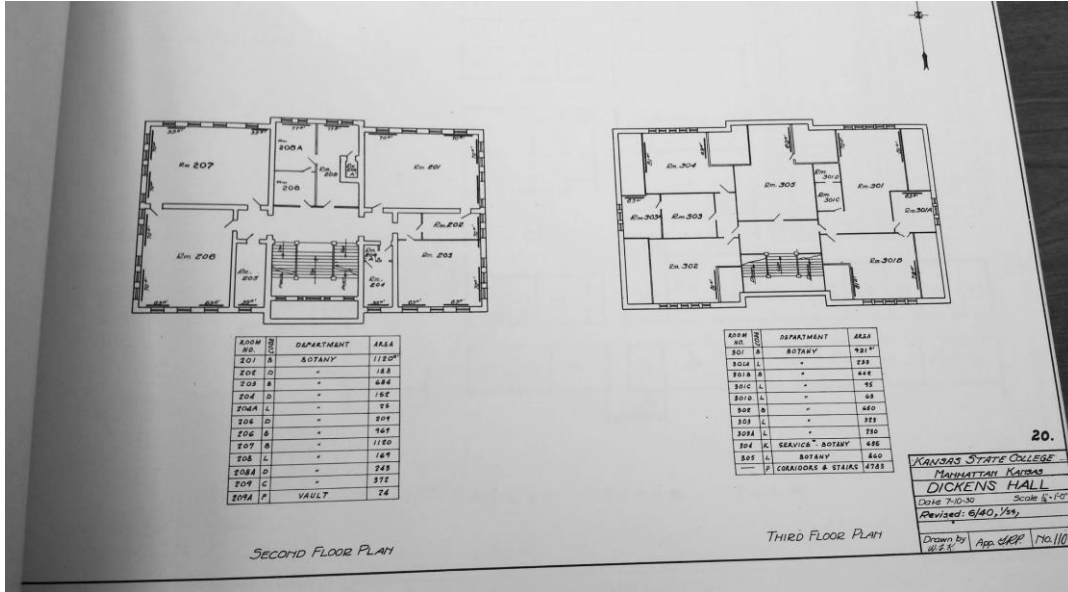
Lisa Cooper’s Dissertation, “Disability as Diversity: Assessing the Perceptions of Students with Physical Disabilities Regarding Access and Equal Opportunity in Postsecondary Education” evaluates research utilizing the “Minority Group Model of Disability.” This model shifts the focus away from the functional limitations of the person with the disability and toward the barriers existing in the environment that exclude the individual with the disability and has four

main focal points: Academic, Structural, Residential Living, and Co-curricular Program. This model was created to help fight the oppression of people with a wide range of disabilities in the legal system. While this dissertation had a lot of very useful information, the length of it helped us realize that we would not be able to successfully obtain results regarding the social aspect of inclusiveness for those with physical disabilities at K-State in the short amount of time we had.

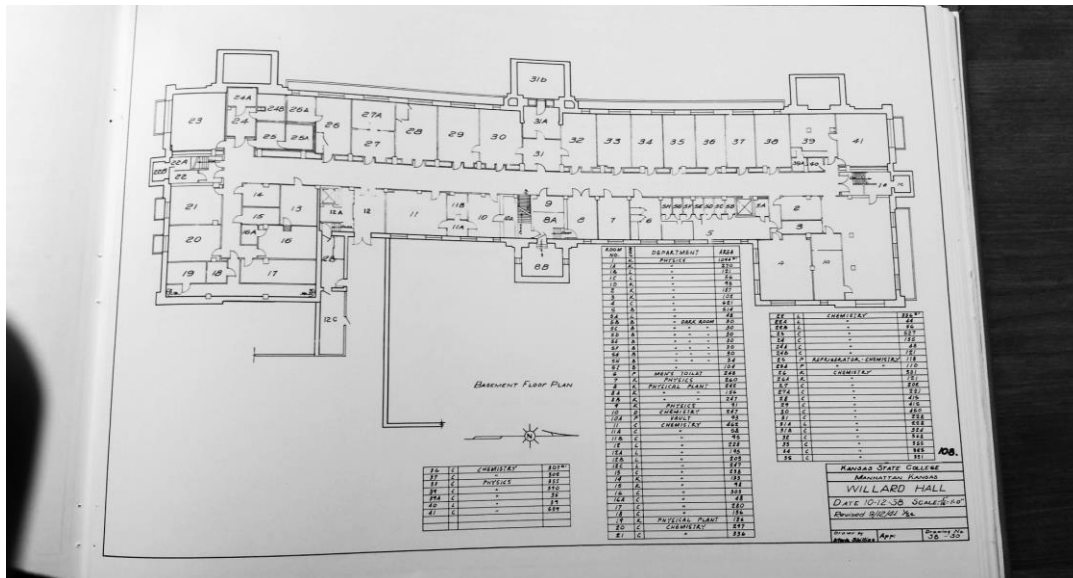
One of the last articles found after talking to our community partner and determining the best area of focus was, "Campus Accessibility: A Survey of Buildings and Paths of Travel" (at Hampshire College) by Joel Dansky, Ben Kuriloff, and Jay Cassano. This Survey was a very detailed and thorough version of what we wanted to accomplish at K-State. As a team they surveyed every building on campus and looked for anything that could be considered non-accessible. There were many issues this survey points out that we had not considered before and made our own survey that much better. Examples of these issues include round door-knobs, counters or desks higher than 34", desks need vertical clearance of 27" and lateral clearance of at least 30" underneath to fit wheelchair, doorways and travel paths need to be at least 36' wide, and shelves and objects that protrude from the wall without a base detectable by cane. While reading through some of their survey, similar issues on K-State's campus came to mind and some of those areas will be addressed in our own smaller scale survey.

In addition, one group member came across a few books in the Kansas State University Library regarding the history of the buildings on campus. One book in particular, "Floor Plans and Designated Use of Each Room in Each Building on Manhattan Campus as of Oct 1957," was

very interesting. They had noticed drawings of Dickens Hall and Willard Hall where no elevator was shown where this is one now almost sixty year later. These images are shown below:



Second and Third Floors of Dickens Hall as of October 1957 as drawn by W.J.K.



Basement Floor of Willard Hall as of October 1957 as drawn by Robert Pyle



## **2. Methods**

To gather our findings for this project we chose to utilize two different methods. First, we chose to interview both individuals who live with a physical disability permanently in their everyday life and individuals who have dealt with a physical disability on a temporary basis. Our second method for this gathering findings was completing ethnographies. To execute these ethnographies, each member of our group put ourselves in the “shoes” of an individual with a physical disability. Kayla and Melanie took away their sight and walked a portion of their class schedule without vision. Sam took away his ability to walk as he navigated through a portion of his class schedule in a wheelchair. Kamaron took away his ability to use both hands as he went through a normal campus day only using one arm. Sara took away her ability to use both feet as she navigated a day on campus with crutches. Through these two different forms of methods and gathering research, we were able to generate very reliable and interesting findings.

## **3. Findings**

The findings that were generated through our extensive research, interviews, and ethnographies are helpful for the furtherance, growth, and potential of Kansas State University as a whole. We hope that these findings will serve as a notable guide for furthering the Student Access Center, Kansas State University students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities, and any other campus programs to whom of which they are deemed useful.

### **3.1 Ethnographies**

Working on this project we have been able to step outside of our own worlds and experience different perspectives on life. As individuals that have never experienced any long term form of a physical disability, we were full of assumptions of what we thought it would be

like but it was truly unclear to us what the day to day experience would be like with a physical disability. We wanted to completely immerse ourselves in the hope that we would experience a change from an ethnocentric way of thinking to an ethnorelative thought process, as described by Bennett's Model. The second stage of ethnocentric side of Bennett's Model is *Defense*, and this is a place that many able-bodied individuals start. The actions of an individual or group in this place on the scale tend to separate people into 'us' and 'them' categories and "are likely to have many negative stereotypes of 'them,' including a full stock of jokes emphasizing the assumed failings of other cultures" (Bennett, 2004). Through our research we strived to move along the scale to the first stage of ethnorelativism, *Adaptation*. Bennett's definition of Adaptation is where "one's worldview is expanded to include relevant constructs from other cultural worldviews." This involves feeling empathy for those in different cultural worldviews than your own, because you can see through 'their lenses,' and may be used as a key component of 'translation' between the two cultures. By reaching this stage of ethnorelativism regarding those with physical disabilities we hope to be active spokespersons regarding their needs on Kansas State University's Campus and beyond.

### Samuel Edwards

For my ethnography I decided to do a campus with a wheel chair. I also timed tours that I gave to visitors who used wheelchairs and visitors who did not. What I found was that on average a tour with an individual who used a wheelchair, took fifteen minutes longer than a tour without. Not only would I have to drastically change my route as I went, I had to add about half a mile just to make sure we got to handicap accessible doors and curb cuts. While I myself was in a wheelchair, I found it almost impossible to get to class on time. I no longer could use

doors I used every single day of my life. If I had to use a non-motorized wheelchair every day, I'm sure for a fact that I would not be able to do so without help. At the end of the day my arms were sore and my hands were raw from using the wheelchair. One of the most frustrating things was when the curb cuts were uneven. Uneven curb cuts mean that you have to find another place to cross the street, unless you want to wheel down the street with cars passing you to get back on the sidewalk. Some building's handicapped accessible entrances were obscurely located and poorly marked. For example, Waters Hall you have to enter from the basement, and then the elevator is hard to find, Dickens hall you have to enter from the back, and Anderson Hall you have to enter from the basement on the south side and navigate tight hallways to the elevator. In order to get to Ackert or General Myers from the quad you have to go through Cardwell, making tours and personal life a hassle. K-State needs to make some serious changes with curb cuts, walkways, and handicap accessible markers.

### Sara McAfee

For my ethnography I spent an entire day as if I had a stress fracture in my shin, therefore; I was forced to use crutches. On a typical day, my class schedule took a total approximate time of seventeen minutes and twenty five seconds to walk from class to class. On crutches, the same exact schedule took me twenty nine minutes and thirty seconds. Because one of my dear friends was currently suffering from this same injury, I was inspired to try to walk in her shoe for a day. It was extremely difficult for me to navigate my schedule with this disability, especially because my classes are scheduled back to back. If I were to have done this on an actual day of classes, I would have arrived late to all of them. I also would have had to hop up two flights of stairs because I have a class in General Myers, which does not have an

elevator or any handicap accessible entrances. Other than the fact that the crutches hindered my speed, this process also hurt my underarms and took an immense amount of energy to get from one end of campus to another.

### Kameron Davis

For my ethnography, I went a day as though I had an amputated left arm. To my surprise, having success in entering buildings and getting to classes at times was pretty difficult. Opening up doors was hard at time because some doors were too heavy. I would often have to pull the door open far enough to where I could slide my body in the door to get it open. With such a struggle to open doors as an average sized male, as a smaller female, opening up doors with one arm could cause a lot of problems. A great way to make this easier on amputee studies would be to have all handicap entrances have the handicap button next to the door to press so that the door opens on its own.

Having a class in Dickens hall, I also had trouble with steps because there were no handrails to hold on to when going up the steps. In this building the steps are very steep so it is easy for a person to lose their balance when using them. When I went up these steps as an amputee, I noticed it took longer for me to go up the steps in Dickens hall because there was no hand rails to hold on to for my right hand and I didn't want to potentially lose balance and fall down the steps. It's would be a great addition to buildings if they had handrails on both sides of steps truthfully for everyone when going both up and down steps. Guaranteeing the safety of students both handicap and non-handicap.

Melanie Riordan and Kayla Wilkinson

*For this ethnography Melanie and Kayla helped each other stay out of harm while navigating campus without vision.*

Kayla Wilkinson

The ethnography I chose was to navigate part of my class schedule without my vision and with the help of another group member, Melanie. We started out in the Leadership Studies Building where I placed a folded bandana over my eyes, which blocked my vision completely, rather than just impair it. Honestly I became instantly scared; it's very jarring to be uncertain of your surroundings and have to rely on another person to be sure that you do not fall into harm's way. Melanie did a great job of keeping me safe and heading in the right direction while still making sure I was moving forward on my own. Directly upon exiting the Leadership Building, there are large stone columns and I swore I was going to walk into one, so even though I knew it would look strange I put my hands out in front of me to feel for them. Following this there is a set of stairs that lead up to the street level. Stairs without vision is intimidating, I had not previously counted the stairs so I did not know when they would end. As for finding the first step, I slowly shuffled my feet forward until I bumped into it. We crossed one crosswalk okay and then turned to cross another shortly after. At the end of this crosswalk, there is no curb cut so I stumbled on the curb. We continued up to Cardwell Hall and I could feel how much the sidewalk actually shifted to the right on this path. I felt like I was going to walk into the corner of the building at any moment, but I was actually still on the left-most side of the sidewalk. Upon reaching Cardwell I needed to climb a few more stairs in the same manner and enter the double set of doors. Afterwards talking to Melanie, she had told me that

one girl had placed her hand right in front of my face, and I honestly didn't even notice the slightest bit. This route took me twice as long as it would walking without a vision impairment, and I assume that this would equate with the other routes between classes as well.

### Melanie Riordan

My name is Melanie and I chose to complete my ethnography by walking a section of my class schedule without my vision. In order to do this I used a bandana to completely block out my vision. My initial reaction to total blindness was to panic and worry. I instantly became aware of how lucky I was to have the vision that I have. Each step was a mystery because, even though I had walked the path that I was walking upon many times, I had never done it without my vision. As I was scared; I slowly began to try and utilize my other senses. Similarly to Kayla, I held my hand up in front of my body, waving it around because I was afraid that I would run into something like a pole, building, or person. I knew that this may have made me look ridiculous but at the time all I cared around was my personal safety. I also became hesitant in taking steps. I found myself rubbing my foot around the ground and taking baby steps to make sure I would not walk into the street and that there was nothing in front of me. The sidewalks that I walk on to navigate through my daily schedule are fairly curvy, this is something that I never noticed before I completed this ethnography. As I walked along each of the paths, I found myself becoming very aware of things that I usually do not notice at all. As Kayla assisted me in staying on the sidewalks and through the crosswalks; I chatted with her about how incredibly thankful I am for my vision and how much I truly could not imagine how a blind individual copes through daily life. If I was having this much trouble walking from one class to the other at my university; how would I ever be able to cope through the tasks that day-to-day life would bring?

As I came upon my first curve in the sidewalk; I remember thinking that the sidewalk curved way more than I had ever noticed. The second obstacle that I took on was crossing the crosswalk. As I tried to utilize my hearing to figure out when I could cross, I had to rely on Kayla to navigate me through that obstacle. I again thought to myself, how do people who are blind do it? As we continued along my route, we encountered yet another obstacle. The sidewalk that I walk on every day was under construction and was fenced off. I had no idea that there was construction going on there. Fortunately, I had Kayla to navigate me around the construction work; but what would someone who was blind do in that situation? They are so used to a certain path and when that gets taken away, how do they know where to go? Kayla and I continued and the next obstacle that I unexpectedly took on, that I continuously overlook in my day-to-day life, were the dips in the sidewalk. As I encountered the first dip, I was shocked and a scared. As I reached my destination, I took off my bandana with a huge sigh of relief. The entire time that I was “blind”, I was worried, anxious, and scared. I did not know what lied ahead and I was hesitant to take it on. It ended up taking me a little over two times the amount of time that it usually takes me to walk from one class to the other. How visually impaired individuals take on day-to-day life of walking their schedules on campus and actually make it to their classes on time is fascinating to me.

### **3.2 Interviews**

To get a better perspective about what it is truly like to be a K-State student with a physical disability, our group interviewed Charles (Charli) Wilks, Sara Castellano, and Sami Thomas. These students experienced a wide variety of encounters at K-State and present insight to issues that could arise when maneuvering campus as well as the social and emotional

impact. We strived to practice our leadership listening skills during this segment of our research project by reflecting back to some of the readings we have gone through earlier in the semester. Through these interviews we practiced balancing all four of the listening styles that were categorized by C. Otto Scharmer in “Addressing the Blind Spot of Our Time.” We had moments of talking with the interviewee where we already knew some of their story, so we briefly practiced *downloading*. We were looking to gain valuable research information, so at times during the interactions we practiced *factual listening*, where we were searching for hard facts to include into our data. When discussing some of the harder topics with our interviewee, we practiced *empathetic listening* and we could see how their experiences have touched them on an emotional level. For the most part, we worked to practice *generative listening*, because this is truly the best way to hear someone’s entire story. Before the interviews were done we also reflected back to what we learned in “Listening as Healing” by Margaret Wheatley. We tried to keep what we learned about listening, and how to listen well, in mind throughout the duration of this project.

### Charli Wilks

Charli is a current student at K-State who is majoring in music education, lives on campus, is in the marching band, and lost his eyesight at the age of five due to a tumor in his brain that crushed his optic nerve. When very first starting at K-State Charli came to campus before classes started and, with the help of a trained professional and a specialized GPS system, mapped and memorized campus. On his phone there is a GPS system where Charli can stop in front of buildings, record the name, and the program would play this back to him when he passed this spot in the future. Over time he memorized campus and can walk around from



memory most of the time. As for the marching band, Charli learns the same way as everyone else by going certain directions at specific times with the beats. He is not on the field alone though, another band member marches with him elbow to elbow. Music is Charli's passion; he wants to obtain his Doctorates and teach at a school for the blind. His junior year of high school was the first year he had been able to use braille sheet music. Before this was an option for him he had to listen to other students who played his part and learn by ear, and students do not always play correctly. When asked about different aspects of student life and accessibility at K-State he mentioned that the Student Access Center (SAC) had actually bought a braille printer for him upon his request for his textbooks. The only issue Charli had with campus navigation, minus weather incidents, was inconsistent curb-cuts and open parking lots. A large majority of his teachers were very accommodating, but online videos and classes were a frustrating issue. When watching a lecture video, the teacher does not describe what they are writing on the board, and this can be problematic to those who are in Charli's situation. Charli typically had his roommate describe what they were writing on the board to him, but now works with someone whose job is to describe what is happening in the video. Charli is a fantastic person to be around with an outgoing and humorous personality. When asked, "If your life was a movie, what title would you give it?" he answered with, "That's hard... we'll just go with The Unseen Story." If there was one thing he wished people knew about him it would be that he is an approachable person who is not fragile or needs help simply because he is blind. This is something we as individuals need to remember when interacting with those who have different abilities than our own. They are as much human as you are, they just do things in a different way, and that way is not "wrong."

Sara Castellano

Sara Castellano is a sophomore nontraditional student who is not only a student at Kansas State University, but also an athlete. Sara is an Italian student that has come to this university to be the captain for the Women's Tennis Team. She is studying Mass Communications and lives in the Kansas State Jardine Apartment Complex. In the winter of 2014, Sara suffered from a stress fracture in the middle of her shin bone. This meant that she would have to take a few months off of sports and walking. She was originally given a pair of crutches and a cast. Shortly after noticing that Sara could not get around in this manner, she was given a 'boot' and a scooter. For the next three months, Sara's entire schedule would have to change to account for her temporary physical disability. During the interview, Sara was asked if she chose to reach out to the Student Access Center or if she decided to deal with her injury alone. Sara explained that she did not ask for help from SAC because she does not like to depend on others or ask for help. In addition to her pride, Sara has heard from other teammates that the golf cart routine, which is provided by the Student Access Center, was not as effective and reliable as it sounded in theory. When discussing Sara's newfound lack of mobility, she informed us that the biggest issue for her was the time that it took to get from one point to another on campus. She started to use the aTa bus system, but trying to get to the bus stop and the hassle of getting on and off of the bus, was too much of an endeavor. For the first month, Sara chose to ride her bike and to carry her crutches overhead. Crutches were the best form of transportation for Sara at first, because she could hop up and down stairs when she had to cross parts of campus that are not accessible by wheels. For example, the Kansas State Tennis Coach, Daniel Steinberg's Office is located on an upper floor of the Ahern building

on campus. Sara could never find an elevator, so she would have to hop up and down the stairs to make it to her meetings.

Later, Sara found that riding her scooter was much easier, although she would lose the option of hopping if need be. This scooter was given to Sara by her athletic trainer; it is a device that you can rest your knee on the topside of and hold onto the handle bars above as you scoot along your way. The scooter was a much faster means of transportation for Sara, which meant that she could now make it to class on time again. The downside for Sara having the scooter was that she would have a harder time using the aTa bus system. To get on the bus Sara would have to carry her scooter herself, or find someone in line to carry her scooter up the three narrow, steep stairs at the aTa bus door. Sara said that the bus drivers never offered to let her use the handicap lift on the side of the bus. Another downfall for using the scooter, was that it was hard on her hips and she started to develop a callus on her knee and middle shin.

In Sara's last stage of recovery she was relieved of her crutches and scooter. She was then told to use a walking boot. Sara was pleased to say that throughout her experience her professors and classmates were very helpful and understanding. For Sara, the hardest part of having a physical injury was getting to campus from the Jardine Apartment Complex. When asked what advice Sara would give to students who have recently found out that they are in a similar situation as hers, she said, "Plan ahead, be patient, and take all the rides that your friends offer to you."

### Sami Thomas

Sami Thomas is a current K-State student whose mother is in a wheelchair. When Sami visited K-State her campus visit was less than enjoyable for her mother. "K-State was not

accommodating at all. I'd even dare to say that KU was better." When Sami and her mother arrived, K-State did not have any access to a mobilized wheelchair and didn't even have a wheelchair ready for her. So when her tour left, they were not included and another tour guide had to give them the tour. When Sami ate lunch at the Derby Dining Center, there was no access for her mother due to the elevator being down, so her mom had to eat in the lobby. When asked what the most annoying thing about K-State for her mother she answered "that K-State was only accessible at one place, it wasn't accessible across multiple entrances."

### **3.3 Survey of Buildings**

Before surveying buildings on campus in depth, we knew that there would be major issues with a few of the buildings. Kansas State's Campus began in the 1800's and some of those original buildings are still here today. Upon doing further research we found that a large majority of the buildings were built in the 1960's and before (Howes, 1963) (Fischer). As Lisa Cooper mentions in her dissertation "Section 504. Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is considered the first civil rights legislation for individuals with disabilities. This particular section, ratified in 1974, is a program access statute that prevents postsecondary institutions receiving federal funding from discriminating against individuals with disabilities." During this movement the Minority Group Model of Disability was also developed by activists in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (Shakespeare, 2002). This model presents that it is society's responsibility to ensure the full access and inclusion of its citizen who have a variety of disabilities and shifts the focus from limitations of the person with a disability to structural barriers that exist in the environment. It was after this movement that many buildings began adding accessible entrances and components to buildings (Cooper, 2012).

During our survey of the various buildings on campus, we categorized them into four groups based on accessibility. The descriptions of those categories are as follows:

- Red-Accessible: This category contains buildings that are not accessible at all or are only partially accessible.
- Orange-Accessible: This category contains buildings that are accessible with large amounts of effort.
- Yellow-Accessible: This category contains buildings that are accessible with small amounts of effort.
- Green-Accessible: This category contains buildings that are easily accessible.

#### **Ackert & Chalmers Hall**

- All three entrances to Ackert and Chalmers are automatic doors. On the southeast side there is the entrance to Ackert and just a few feet away is an entrance to Chalmers. There is also a second entrance to Chalmers on the northwest side. Ackert and Chalmers are connected by two sets of doors, and Ackert is the only building with an elevator. Therefore if you would like to get on another floor in Chalmers you need to make your way through two sets of manual doors to Ackert, use the elevator directly to the left in Ackert, and go back through these sets of doors to get back to Chalmers. Also in order to get to these buildings from the east you must go through Cardwell hall as the pathway has a set of stairs. We have categorized Ackert as yellow-accessible and Chalmers as red-accessible.

### **Ahearn**

- Enter through the South side back door with a ramp to the entrance. There was a handicap sign next to the door but no button for the door to automatically open. On both the north and west side entrance the handicap signs with ramps and door that automatically open. Could not find an elevator in the building and as far as we can tell there is none. We categorize this building as orange-accessible.

### **All Faiths Chapel**

- The entrance to this building is handicapped accessible as it does not have any stairs and is equipped with an automatic door. The main use of the building, the chapel, is located directly to the left of the main entrance and its navigation is by way of a ramp. There is a handicapped seating section at the front of the chapel. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Alumni Center**

- Enter from either the East or West entrance. Both have ramps up to the door with automatic doors, Elevators are located on the south side of the main hallway as soon as you enter. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Anderson Hall**

- Entrance for handicapped accessibility is located on the South end of the building. This entrance is a ramp followed by an automatic door. The problem with this is that handicapped individuals enter through the basement of the building. There is a long narrow hallway equipped with uneven floors. The elevator is located further down in

the hallway. Individuals may be confused as to where they are going when they get into the building. We categorize this building as an orange-accessible building.

### **Bluemont Hall**

- Entrance for handicapped individuals is located on the northwest and southwest side of the building through a ramp followed by an automatic door. The building is clearly marked for handicapped individuals and is easy to navigate. The elevator is easy to find and very accessible through the building's wide hallways. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Burt Hall**

- Main entrance is the only accessible entrance and does not have an automatic door. After the first doors there is an immediate second set of doors, and yet another set after that, which are all manual. The only elevator in the building is a cattle elevator at the far west side, which is used mainly for equipment. While there are no classrooms on the second floor, there are labs students can work in as well as professor's offices, and these are inaccessible. We categorized this building as red-accessible

### **Cardwell Hall**

- If you are going to Cardwell from the west side of campus, you must enter through the west side doors that lead to the basement, as the pathway to the main entrance has stairs. These doors are automatic but you must go through most of the building until you find the elevator, which is not clearly marked, and looks like a service elevator. If you were to enter on the South side at the main entrance there is a ramp but the doors are not automatic. We have categorized this building as orange-accessible.

### **Dickens Hall**

- Enter from the back of the building on the east side. There is an automatic door and the elevator is on your left after you go partially down the hallway. We categorize this building as a yellow-accessible building.

### **Eisenhower Hall**

- Enter from the east on the northeast corner. You'll enter the basement, turn left and go down the hallway to the elevators. We categorize this building as orange-accessible.

### **Engineering Complex (Durland, Rathbone, Fiedler Hall)**

- Durland and Fiedler did not have clear signage on the exterior of the entrances, nor did they have automatic doors; Rathbone had automatic doors and clear signage, finding the elevator in these three buildings was not too difficult although there was little or no signage. At this time the entire engineering complex is undergoing serious construction. We categorized these three buildings as follows; yellow-accessible, green-accessible, and yellow-accessible.

### **English and Counseling Services Building**

- Enter the main entrance on the southeast side. Doors are non-automatic. Turn left to access the elevator. We categorize this building as an orange-accessible building.

### **Fairchild Hall**

- The entrance for handicapped individuals is very complex for this building. The front of the building consists of a rather large, daunting set of stairs. There is a small handicapped sign that points to the East. To get to this handicapped entrance, individuals must go around a flowerbed and up a rather steep slope. This building is



hard to navigate around without being handicapped. The elevator is working but navigating around the building is very confusing. We categorize this building as a red-accessible building.

### **Hale Library**

- Both entrances are handicap accessible with automatic doors. If you enter from the 1st floor, you have to ride the elevator up to the 2nd floor to enter the main part of the library. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Holton Hall**

- Enter from the east side, there is a ramp going straight to the basement level, there is signage and an automatic door, the elevator can be found down the nearest hallway. We categorize this building as orange-accessible.

### **Holtz Hall**

- Enter from the East side, one floor building, no elevator needed. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Justin Hall**

- The main entrance to the building has no stairs and is equipped with automatic doors. The hallways throughout the building are very wide and easy to navigate through. The elevator is found by going straight after entering the main doors, then turning right and it is at the end of that hallway. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Kedzie Hall**

- Enter from the East, elevator directly to your left. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **King Hall & Chemistry Biochemistry Building**

- For both buildings, enter from the Chemistry Biochemistry Building via the non-automatic doors on the west side of the building on the southwest corner. To get to King Hall, use Chemistry Biochemistry's elevator to the third floor where there is a ramp leading to King. The ramp is bookended by two non-automatic doors. Then use King Hall's elevator to get to your floor. We categorize King Hall as a red-accessible building. We categorize Chemistry Biochemistry as an orange-accessible building.

### **K-State Student Union**

- The entrance of this building is equipped with a ramp on the north side that goes up to a set of automatic doors. The south entrance is equipped with an automatic door and an elevator right inside. The elevator in this building is fully functioning and easily takes individuals to their desired floors. On each of the floors, individuals can depart the elevator and easily find their way around. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Leadership Studies Building**

- Enter through front entrance, automatic doors, signage good, elevator located towards the left, and no signage indicating elevator location. We categorized this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Leasure Hall**

- Enter from East side entrance, signage on outside worn and no longer visible, no automatic doors, and no signage inside to find elevator, elevator on left in middle of the hallway. We categorized this building as a yellow-accessible building.

### **McCain Auditorium**

- For the student section of the building with classrooms, enter from the south side, on the southeast corner doors are fully automatic. Elevators are clearly marked as soon as you enter. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.
- For the performance side, where you would go to watch shows, enter from the north side on the northwest corner. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Putnam & Boyd Hall**

- These residence halls only have one accessible entrance each, which both close after 9 o'clock at night. Many of the doorknobs within the complexes are rounded which become hard to open for those with without full grasp-ability. There is an elevator, but it is an old fashioned one with the second cage door, is very small, and sometimes does not stop completely level with the floor. We have categorized these buildings as orange-accessible.

### **Seaton Hall**

- The only automatic door is the entrance on the south side, from Bosco Student Plaza. The ramp is on the west entrance and clearly marked. There are multiple doors saying they are handicap accessible but only the one mentioned is automatic. There are elevators on both sides of the building, but you will need to go almost half the length

the build to get to them. If you need to go to any of the offices or the 3rd floor to the library, turn left when you enter to get to the elevator that has 3rd floor access. We categorize this building as an orange-accessible building.

### **Umberger**

- Front entrance has ramp access, but no automatic doors, elevator clearly located directly inside to the left. We categorize this building as a green-accessible building.

### **Van Zile Dining Center**

- The main entrance to Van Zile is accessible with automatic doors and the dining center is all very easily accessible. We categorize this building as green-accessible.

### **Waters Hall**

- Enter the building from the south side, on the southeast corner the door is underneath the stairs with automatic doors. You will enter from the basement. There are multiple elevators but very few signs pointing you towards them. We categorize this building as an orange-accessible building.

### **West Hall & Derby Dining Center.**

- West Hall has one handicap entrance with a door that automatically opens on the west end of the building. The main entrance to the Derby Dining Center also has doors that automatically open for handicap. The derby also has an elevator that is close to the main entrance and goes straight to the front of the line for meals. We categorize this building as yellow-accessible.

## **Willard Hall**

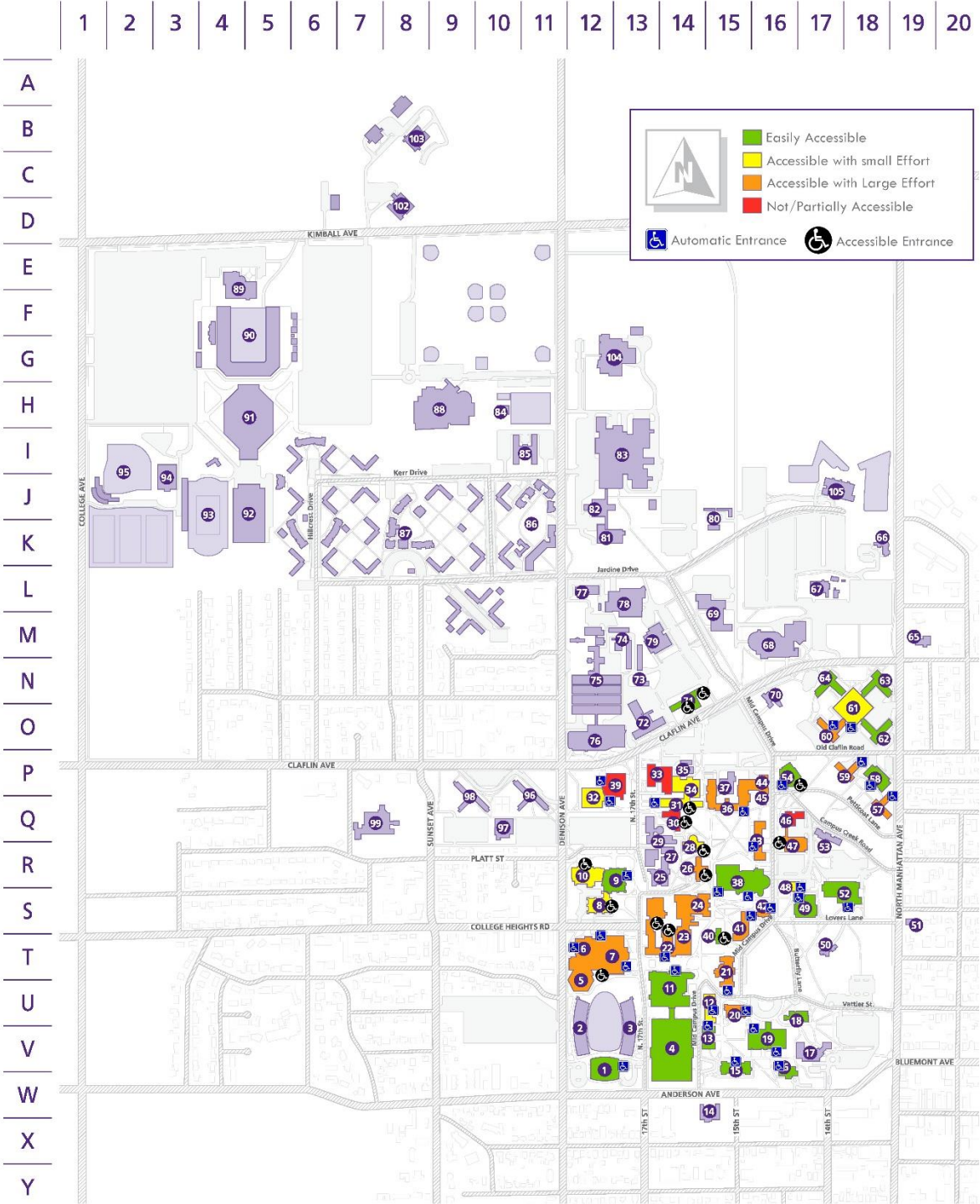
- The only accessible entrance to Willard is on the back side of the building and the easiest way to get there is to enter the Quad from the south side. The door is not automatic, and there are no signs to direct you the elevator once you are inside the building. Inside the building, not all tables are the recommended heights, and there are no accessible ceramic wheels. Overall we have decided to categorize this building as orange-accessible.

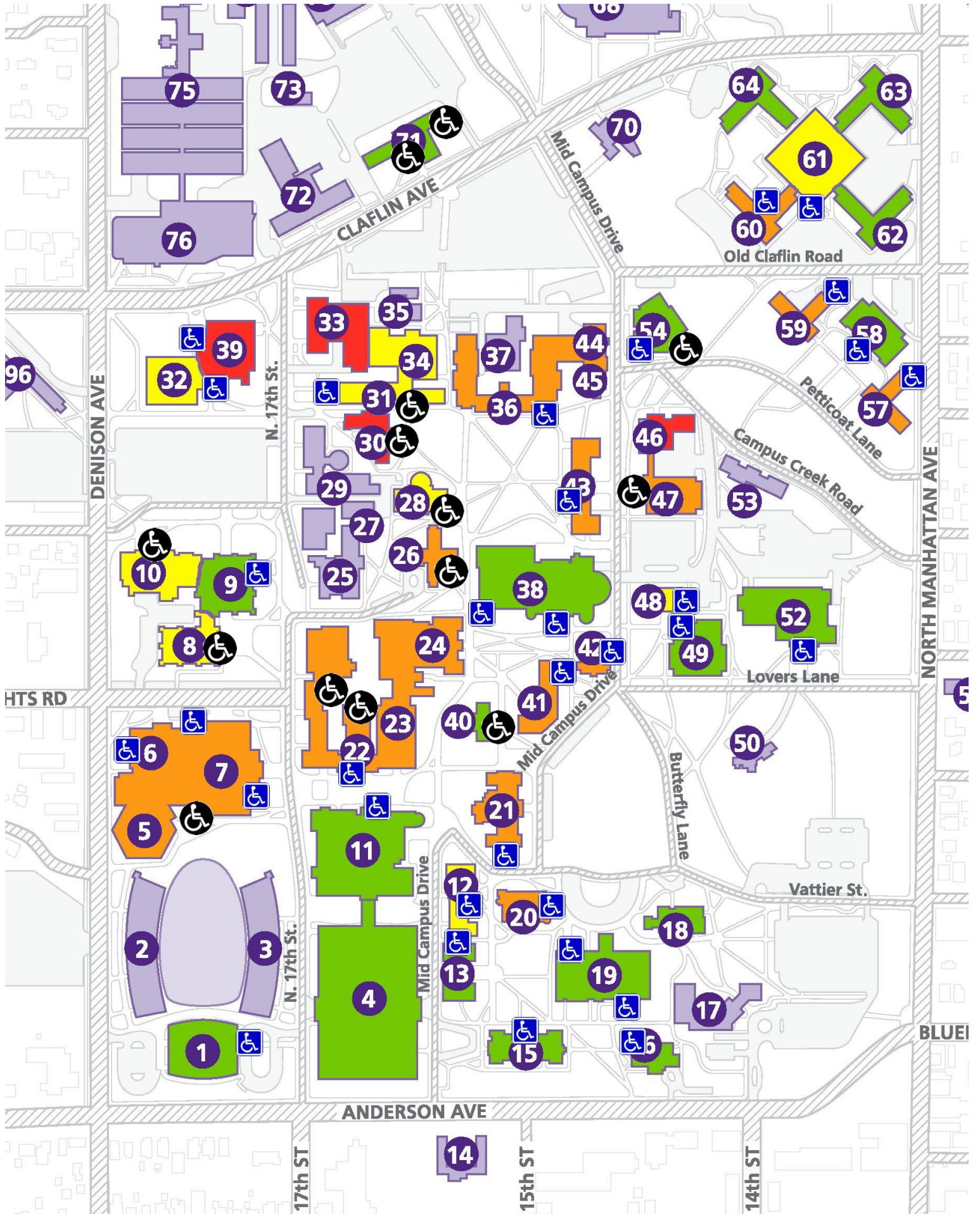
## **4. Action Plan**

While research like this can be enlightening and interesting to readers, it is not benefiting anyone or addressing the issues found by simply being reported; it needs to be acted upon. We worked with Kansas State University's Student Access Center (SAC) to help establish what we could assist them with through our research. As we present our findings to our classmates, we have invited the Student Access Center staff to come and observe our presentation. After communicating with Student Access Center throughout this project, we have finalized with them that we would equip them with a visual map outlining the accessibility of K-State's campus, which are presented on the following pages. They will then utilize this map and implement it into the new interactive map of campus that they are currently working on. We also plan on presenting this paper, the maps that we have created, and our findings to the New Student Services staff as they may be beneficial while giving tours to prospective student and visitors of Kansas State University. We hope that our findings will go further than just being for this project. We hope to see these findings impact Kansas State University into being an even more inclusive campus.

Accessibility Map of Kansas State University Campus

**KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY** **Campus map**





## **Acknowledgements**

First off we would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Leigh Fine and Brooke Bengel, for not only taking the time to meticulously read our research among many other CBAR projects, but also for directing our leadership class this semester. You helped us to think about new and old social situations and idea constructs in a critical and enlightening way. We have grown as leaders, students, community members, and individuals in more ways than one, and we could not have done it without your guiding hand and thoughts.

Additionally we would like to thank the Kansas State University Student Access Center, especially Ann Pearce, for allowing us to ask a multitude of questions, encouraging and guiding our research, and being flexible and understanding. We hope that the research we have completed thus far will help you as well as current and future students and visitors navigate campus more confidently and easily. We look forward to potentially continuing our work with you in the future to produce a product that can be used by the university publicly in a physical form as well as an electronic and interactive form.

Also thank you to the students we interviewed, Charli Wilks, Sara Castellano, and Sami Thomas, your voice is important and crucial for making a change, and we could not have done this work without you. We hope to maintain connections with you throughout our time at Kansas State University and that our research will benefit you in one way or another.



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In spite of how you identify individually, you live in a world that is socially constructed to categorize you based on your outward appearance and other social identities. Social Identification is the perception of belonging to a larger group of persons within society. These Identities or groups can be broken down into at least 11 categories: Race, Sex and Gender, Sexuality, Ethnicity, Language, Social Class, Religion, Ability, Family Structure, National Origin, and Age. Inclusiveness and acceptance of these identities vary through cultures and throughout history. In our Culture and Context in Leadership class we were challenged to explore inclusion regarding at least one of these social identities. In addition to this we needed to work with a community partner who would help us in our research, and in turn our research would be beneficial to them. Our group wanted to challenge ourselves and explore an identity we were unfamiliar with. To do this we compared each other's social identities and found the one thing we had in common was that all of us were able-bodied individuals, with no disabled family members. The term disabilities covers a wide spectrum that can be hard to define; for this purpose we decided to narrow our focus to physical disabilities that could affect the "typical college experience," specifically here at Kansas State University.

In regards to the research of inclusiveness and physical disabilities at K-State there are many focal points such as environmental accessibility, content accessibility, and societal acceptance. Unsure of which approach we wanted to take, we decided to first find literature discussing wide ranges of inclusiveness of physical disabilities in higher education, then digest what had already been discovered and the efforts that were taken in order to arrive at that discovery. Initially we started with the 21<sup>st</sup> century instinct of typing our area of interest into Google. These first few searches gave us results focused on choosing a college for physically

disabled students. We wanted more results that were backed by research so we redefined our search terms and searched exclusively through Google Scholar. One of these results was Lisa Cooper's Dissertation, "Disability as Diversity: Assessing the Perceptions of Students with Physical Disabilities Regarding Access and Equal Opportunity in Postsecondary Education." Cooper's Dissertation evaluates research utilizing the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which shifted the focus to environmental limitations for those who are physically disabled. While this dissertation had a lot of very useful information, the length of it helped us realize that we would not be able to successfully obtain results regarding the social aspect of inclusiveness for those with physical disabilities at K-State in the short amount of time we had. Unfortunately we were not able to access all of the results because we lacked membership, but quickly realized we could use the K-State Libraries database to bypass this. Through continuing our search on the K-State database, we were also able to find sources that were not presented when simply using Google's search engine.

Not sure of how to proceed from here, we got in contact with one of our community partners, The Student Access Center at Kansas State University, to see what we could research that would also benefit them. There are many areas of interest that the Student Access Center has, but the one thing our group found most profound was that there was not a map of campus that showed handicap accessible routes and entrances. From here we were dedicated to analyzing the accessibility of K-State's campus and producing a map that could be utilized by the SAC and K-State. We also narrowed our focus of physical disabilities that could affect navigation of campus to vision impairment, amputees and similar conditions, and mobility restriction. To get a true view of K-State's accessibility regarding these physical disabilities we

each completed ethnographies by going through part of our class schedule simulating one of the following disabilities: blindness, no arm, wheelchair, or crutches. In addition to this we interviewed three K-State students who experienced a permanent or temporary disability on campus and took their experiences into consideration when completing the accessibility map.

Knowing that K-State's Campus began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with some of those buildings still being utilized today, along with the information of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 from Cooper's Dissertation, we were curious to know the timeline of construction of buildings on K-State's Campus and how they aligned with this Act. Knowing this information was not likely in an online database, we searched strictly in the K-State Libraries at Manhattan's campus.

Refining the search terms was very difficult and took several tries, but in the end we were able to locate two books that would be of interest: one was in the special collections on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and another was located in Weigel Library in Seaton Hall. None of us had been to either of these places before and we were anxious to find them. The Special Collections on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor was definitely an experience we will never forget. After filling out a couple forms, requesting the book "Floor Plans and Designated Use of Each Room in Each Building on Manhattan Campus as of Oct 1957," placing our bags in a closet, and sitting at table to wait for the book to be brought to us, we were intrigued by what was presented in the book. The floor plans of most buildings showed no elevators and no accessible entrances. Knowing the layout of these buildings today we would see where they had to alter the architecture to accommodate for the physically disabled. Additional books in the Weigel Library simply titled "Kansas State University" and "The Evolution of a College," confirmed the build dates of buildings before the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Through this we not only were able to personally discover how

accessible K-State's campus was, but also the reasons behind why older buildings are harder to access and see how we have progressed as a University over the past century and a half.

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