

Aids for handicapped students discussed in report

By **TIM MEKEEL**
Collegian Staff Writer

For the physically handicapped student, the Penn State campus can prove an endless obstacle course of steep staircases, unyielding doors and lengthy hikes to class.

A commission appointed by University President John W. Oswald made 27 suggestions to help handicapped students and the University Board of Trustees may decide this month which of the suggestions to use.

The major points of the commission's proposals include:

- appointing a full time coordinator of services for physically handicapped students;
- having each college and Commonwealth Campus appoint a faculty member to serve as both adviser and advocate for handicapped students;
- providing a special orientation period for new handicapped students;
- altering physical barriers, such as high curbs and steps;
- modifying one residence hall to meet the needs of handicapped students;
- surveying community apartment buildings to find suitable housing for handicapped students who are unable to live in residence halls.

The report defines the physically handicapped student as someone requiring a wheelchair, crutches or braces, or displaying faulty coordination, having limited use of the upper extremities, being blind or visually impaired, being deaf or having a degree of deafness not correctable by a hearing aid, having communication problems involving speech, expression or perception, or having a chronic health problem which interferes with daily functioning.

Commission chairman John H.

Doolittle, associate professor of physical education, is optimistic that the suggestions will be implemented. "Dr. Oswald has supported it enthusiastically and assured me it would not collect dust. We're looking to the trustees to say what direction they want to attack this in," he said.

The report also has been referred to the Council of Academic Deans for review.

In the meantime, commission member Angelo R. Bigatel, director of physical plant design and engineering, said some minor campus alterations are complete. About 60 curb ramps have been installed along campus paths and a map that accompanies the report identifies buildings accessible to physically handicapped students, locations of public elevators and unobstructed routes from building to building.

Bigatel said, "We've always responded to someone who has a problem."

But the solutions are not simple. "The curb ramps are a good idea, but they had to be put off to the side so they didn't confuse the blind students, and then they're used by bicycles. So you can solve one problem and create two more," Bigatel said.

The commission's report estimates there are more than 400 students in the University who are handicapped to some degree.

The report says many handicapped Pennsylvanians have had to pay higher tuition and extra travel expenses at out-of-state colleges which are suitably designed.

Only seven of 35,000 University Park students are in wheelchairs, the report notes. This disparity exists because the University is nearly inaccessible to

wheelchair patients, the report explains. The report says many handicapped students must limit their academic work since preferred classes are offered only at inaccessible locations.

"Penn State has the obligation and the opportunity to proclaim to the academically qualified physically handicapped students of this Commonwealth that they are welcome, and that they are encouraged to take advantage of the educational programs of this comprehensive University," the report said.

The report specifies difficulties the physically handicapped student encounters at Penn State. For example, a wheelchair-bound student living in a residence hall is confronted with drinking fountains and telephones that are too high, toilet seats that are too low and doorways that are too narrow.

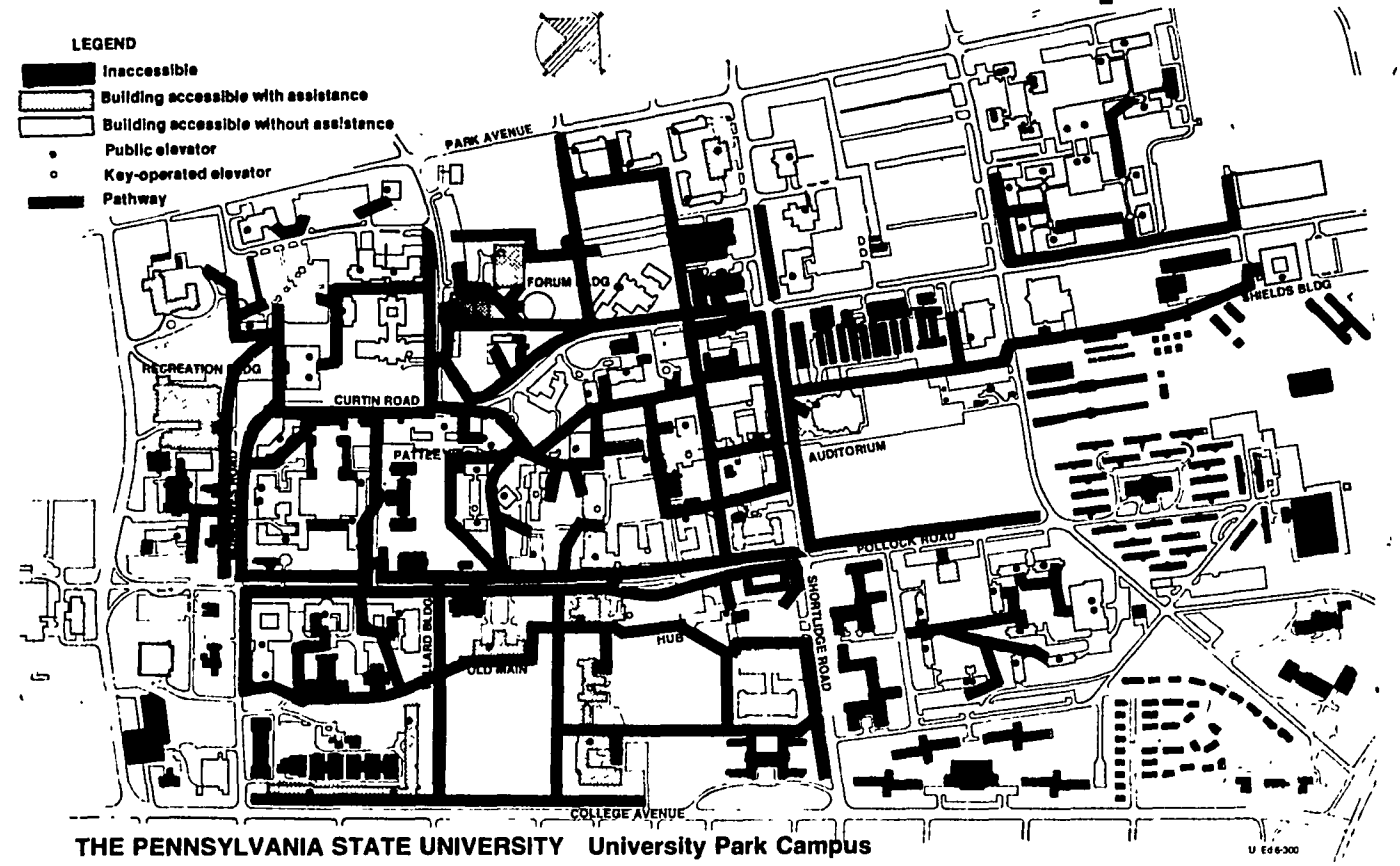
Physical plant personnel will modify a dorm room at the expense of the student, who must also pay for restoring it after he leaves, the report says.

The report also details problems handicapped students have gaining admission to the University registering for classes, finding parking spaces, using library services and recreation facilities.

The most basic problems for handicapped students are getting to University facilities and moving around inside them.

An ironic example is Ritenour Health Center. The report says that the physically handicapped student may encounter significant difficulty in entering the facility.

Special provisions have not been made for students in wheelchairs, or those needing braces, or crutches, to enter and exit with ease, the report says.



Cookies carrying mouse hairs recalled

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The president of Bremner Biscuit Co. of Louisville said yesterday his firm was not ordered by the federal Food and Drug Administration to recall thousands of cases of cookies and graham crackers because of possible contamination by rodent hairs.

"It was a voluntary recall and not as bad as pictured by the FDA," said Jay Vandertoll, the company president.

The FDA said that the company had to recall 20,875 cases of cookies, but Vandertoll said the recall actually involved between 1,000 and 1,700 cases of cookies and graham crackers.

Vandertoll said that several months ago the company found a mouse nest in the raw materials in one of its warehouses here.

"Rather than take any chances, we recalled some of the cookies and had them tested by an outside laboratory," he said. "The results were way below the level that would have prompted any action by the FDA."

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