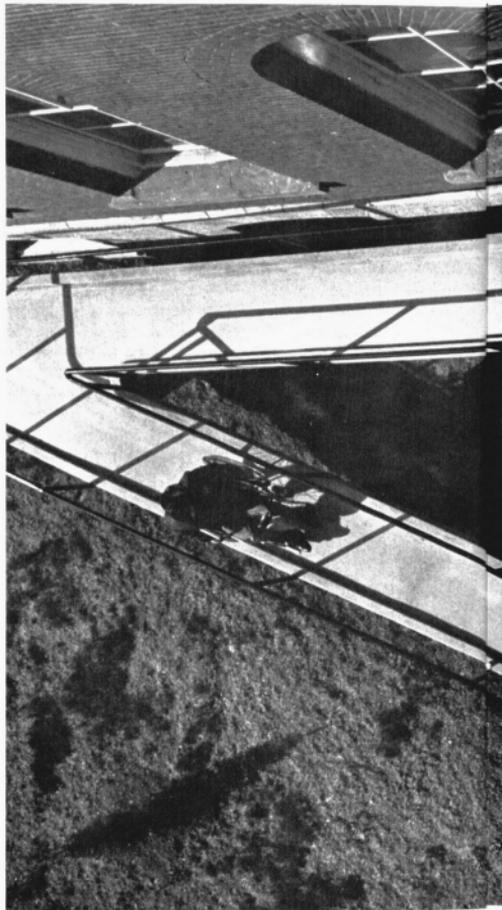
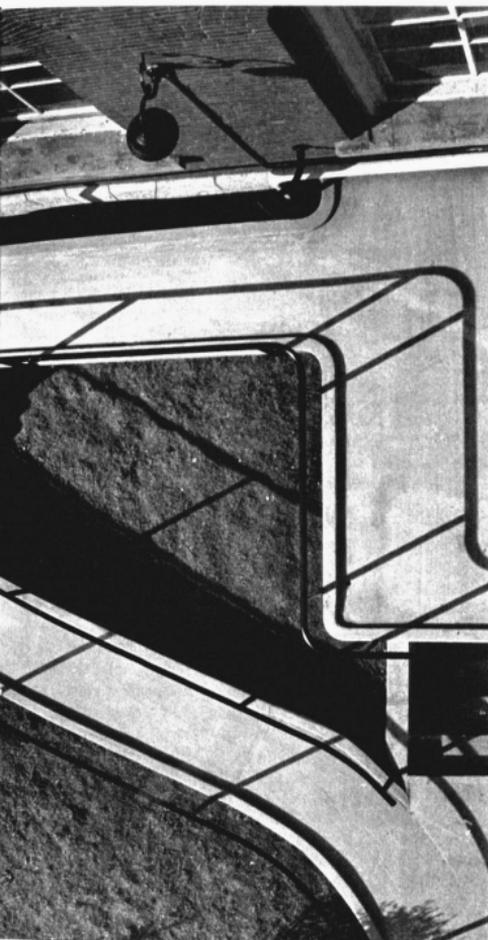


COLUMBIA'S



HANDY CAMPUS



With enrollment figures soaring in the past six years, the campus has of necessity become more complex.

But the University has not become so impersonal that it has forgotten the needs of its young men and women. In particular special provisions have been made so that handicapped students now can receive higher education and compete favorably for good jobs. Years of research, planning and modifications have made the Columbia campus one of only three fully accessible universities for the handicapped in the Midwest.

In 1959, the University expressed its concern and interest in the more than 300 high school graduates in a seven-state area, including Missouri, that were physically unable to attend college.

"We could no longer neglect the abilities of these students who have definite college potential," explains Jim Irvin, co-ordinator of handicapped student services.

Application was made for a pilot project to research and investigate the feasibility of modifying the campus for handicapped students, and a grant of \$700,000 to alter the campus was allocated in September, 1960 from the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The University was declared the educational center for handicapped students in Region VI, a seven-state area including Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

What went into creating a "total" university?

Elevators were installed in the University's main administrative and classroom buildings, the Student Health Clinic and certain dormitories.

Ramps were added to entrances of the Memorial Student Union, the library and the classroom complex. Handrails appeared and sidewalk curbs were modified.

Recessed areas were cut away from curbs for the newly purchased bus. The bus has a hydraulic lift for raising and lowering students in wheel chairs and room inside for 13 wheel chairs and 13 other students.



By the fall of 1962 the University was ready.

Today 15 severely handicapped students have received degrees from the University. Fifty-eight severely handicapped and approximately 100 semi-handicapped students are enrolled this fall.

The five-year grant period was used to modify the campus, co-ordinate existing services, and establish a handicapped services center in Parker Hall. "We are a co-ordination agency working under Testing and Counseling, which also is located in this building," says Irvin.

In addition, the Student Health Clinic has a direct responsibility to evaluate handicapped students' physical abilities and provide physical therapy services. There is one full-time bus driver and several part-time speech clinicians and physical education instructors.

Handicapped students are not treated much differently than other University students. Admission requirements are relatively the same. They are expected to take a minimum of 12 hours like all other full-time students. And they are not even dismissed from physical education, a program which now includes swimming, bowling and billiards.

The aim in accommodating handicapped students is to expose them, to integrate them with the entire student body. In living with able-bodied students, eating in the same cafeterias, participating in the same activities and experiencing the same problems of studying, tests and social interaction as other students, they become more independent. College life becomes a learning experience and a testing ground for the business world.

At present one handicapped girl is president of her dormitory floor; another student is a MSA senator, and the handicapped students have their own club, SAG. "That's Student Advisory Group," Irvin says. "They get together once a month and report on problems which need attention. In particular, their complaints may involve too many persons in one dorm, a particular sidewalk



or ramp that is too steep, or the need to make showers more flexible." The seating for wheel chairs in Jesse Hall Auditorium was relocated as a result of consultation with handicapped students.

Individually they participate in activities corresponding to their own school and own interests.

But for them college life has to be at a slower pace. Handicapped students are urged to spread out their classes through the day giving them time to travel between buildings. Between classes the students often cross campus on their own with the aid of 45 cut down curbs and 35 ramps at building entrances, repaired sidewalks and, sometimes, student assistants.

"We have two buses and one more on order," Irvin says. One bus now runs the entire time with the second bus held in reserve to cover breakdowns and service needs. But the hours each day are growing longer because more students are taking night and Saturday classes. "We hope to have the third bus by Christmas and thus be able to use the second bus on an everyday basis."

The buses transport students from dormitories to classes each day, to the library on certain evenings each week, to home football games and other campus-sponsored activities.

Changing a campus to accommodate wheel chair students and students with braces and crutches was no easy task. Sometimes a new door was cheaper than modifying an old entrance, sometimes even new ramps were too steep.

"We were one of the first and very few to take an old university and modify it for the handicapped," Irvin says. "Other schools are now being built with the specific purpose of being accessible to the handicapped, particularly new junior colleges. But few large, old universities can fully accommodate them."

Think of the average dormitory. Then consider removing steps so a wheel chair can roll up and

down a ramp to a side entrance, adding an elevator, lowering a telephone, and a drinking fountain so it is 30 inches above the floor.

In certain dormitory rooms, desks had to be raised and widened so a wheel chair could fit under, closet racks lowered to sitting-position reach. Restrooms, laundry rooms and cafeterias were made accessible.

Today every major division of the University is accessible and 75 per cent of the classes are available to the handicapped. Modification and construction alone cost nearly \$540,000.

Future modifications and improvements will come from University budgets. "It is generally agreed that the University will continue to provide services and incorporate in any new building accessibility for the handicapped," Irvin says.

In September, the elevator in Mumford Hall was completed. And Rothwell Gymnasium got a ramp. Last May a ramp was added to the industrial education building and plans are drawn to make Jesse Hall more accessible.

I am hoping at least one more dormitory will be made available for the girls," Irvin says. At present only Johnston Hall can accommodate women students in wheelchairs. The University arranges to have an able-bodied student with a handicapped student in a room and tries to place the handicapped on different floors. The entire Pershing Group, which includes four dormitories, is accessible to the men students.

"But the Fine Arts building still has no elevator and only first-floor courses are open to the handicapped student," Irvin says with regretfully, because many of the handicapped have become interested and developed a talent in music or art or both while in hospitals.

There is the constant need for awareness of continuing and changing needs in campus remodeling and new construction. Definite provisions have already been made in the plans for the new multipurpose auditorium, the new math building and the biological sciences building. □