

To whomever this may concern,

On March 14th, 2014 and April 2nd, 2014, we visited MacDowell Hall to conduct a screening of the compliance with the requirements of the ADA for public facilities. MacDowell Hall is a 3 floor dormitory at Misericordia University that was built in 2013. Some features of this building include rooms that are suite style, used as a housing option for many students. Each of these rooms has 3 bedroom (some are designed for 3 people, some are designed for 5 people, and some are designed for 7 people), a common room, a bathroom, and a kitchen that contains a refrigerator, oven, and countertops. There are also classrooms in this building, which are used for studying and learning purposes and hold many desks as well as white boards and updated technology. A study room is available on each floor, where the students are able to go to study in quiet or just to relax. These rooms include tables and chairs, couches, and a television hanging on the wall. Laundry rooms are also accessible to the residents on each floor, where there are 2 washers and dryers. For the sake of our assignment, our group focused on and analyzed a study room, hallway and laundry room on the 3rd floor of the building, as well as one of the stairwells in the building.

When analyzing the study room, we noticed that a lot of its features were ADA compliant. However, we realized a few things that were not very accessible. The way that the furniture was spread out throughout the room was rather scattered and created a lot of congestion. This caused an environment that was not very conducive to studying, as there was not much room for comfort. It was hard to get around the room because of this as well. Along with this, we noticed that there was only one table to be used in this study room. This table was not very accessible because the table was tall and the chairs to sit at were tall as well, which would not be accessible to certain people with disabilities. The room lacked a smaller table that

would be able to be used by someone in a wheelchair or another disability that would hinder them from using a tall table. The typical cost of one of these tables could be \$179.97. Having an accessible desk for everyone to sit at and utilized would be a great investment. Besides these details, there were many things about this room that were, in fact, ADA compliant. After measuring the doorway at the entrance of the room, we concluded that it was wide enough to allow passage of a standard wheelchair, as well as the fact that there was clear floor space for when the door is opened and closed. There is an accessible path on each side of the door and the walking surface in the room is firm, stable, and slip resistant as well as the carpet being securely attached to the floor.

Next, we looked at the laundry room and realized a few things. There was not enough equipment in the room to accommodate all of the people that live on the floor. There were only 2 washers and 2 dryers on each floor to accommodate for people in about 10 bedrooms. This could cause confusion and chaos when people are trying to do their laundry. Also, the 2 washers were stacked on top of each other, which would not be compliant for people living with disabilities. This would require them to reach up in order to access the washing machine, which may require assistance depending on certain disabilities. It was also a small room, so if there were too many people in the room at one time, it would become very congested and would not be compliant for someone in a wheelchair. Having a bigger room with a different layout would be more beneficial because you would then have room to purchase more washers and dryers and spread them out rather than stacking them on top of each other, so that all people were accommodated. Contrastingly, the doorway to the laundry room was compliant with ADA standards, such as a wide enough entranceway and an appropriate space for the door to swing

open and closed. There were also no level changes in this room, which provided a firm and stable floor surface.

The stairwell that we assessed in MacDowell proved to be extremely ADA compliant. We are assuming that this is because the building was just recently built. When filling out and answering all of the questions on the “ADA cat” website, we realized that each one fulfilled the requirements expected. For example, each step had the same riser height and tread depth and there were handrails on both sides of the steps that also complied with ADA standards. This included the width in between the railing and the wall, and the circumference of the railing itself. The tread surfaces were firm and stable, as well very slip resistant. All of the other requirements for an accessible staircase were ADA compliant as well.

In the hallway, we were required to analyze many different things. One of the things we noticed was the sign next to the elevator. We were required to measure any signs that we saw and make sure that they fulfilled the ADA requirements. When measuring this sign, a pictogram was included which was supposed to be at least 6 inches high. However, when we measured it, it was a little off. This would require a new sign to be put in that met the standards, which could cost \$10-\$20. Besides this, the rest of the hallway met the standards of ADA, including handrail and floor surface requirements.

Since MacDowell Hall was just recently built and is very modern, there were not many modifications that we found were required to make. This building met almost every ADA standard, which our group was very impressed by. The only comments that we had about each area that we analyzed was more about the way that furniture/appliances were set up and organized, rather than the actual room itself. Rethinking the setup of appliances and furniture in the different rooms may possibly allow more compliance, such as creating a more accessible

environment for all people. Our group would like to thank you for allowing us to participate in this service learning experience in your facility. We hope that you take our comments into consideration. We were thoroughly impressed with the compliance of your building and the lack of modifications that were required.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dougherty, Angela Gonzales, Devin Simpson, and Kaitlyn Smalley