

Environmental Access Initiative

The Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity
Ithaca College

*How much do you really understand about what is
required by the Americans with Disabilities Act?*

*Is your department adequately prepared to address the concerns
of students, faculty and staff members with disabilities?*

In recent years Ithaca College has made many advances in improving the accessibility of its facilities and programs for students and employees with disabilities. Federal laws require that the College provide auxiliary aids and services to ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the basis of disability. In spite of our progress, it is becoming increasingly clear that optimal compliance will be achieved only if the commitment to ensuring access is a campus-wide concern. Identifying and training key personnel in each department to serve as resources and liaisons is critical for meeting IC's long term goals.

The Environmental Access Initiative is an innovative model for providing disability awareness training to staff members at Ithaca College. Individuals representing various departments will engage in experiential learning seminars facilitated by *Empowerment by Design* (EbD), an Ithaca-based partnership of experienced specialists committed to enhancing the accessibility of our community. In interactive group sessions, EbD will raise member awareness of human abilities/limitations, Universal Design principles, ADA guidelines, and environmental design/modification issues. Each participant will apply this knowledge by designing and implementing a service-oriented accessibility project that is directly beneficial to the participant's department. Some examples include the development of a customized resource manual or a new set of departmental procedures that improve the identification of and service to students or staff members who need accommodations. Ultimately, members of the consortium will become empowered with the skills, resources, and plan to begin improving access at IC.

The tentative meeting schedule and outline follow:

October 13, 2004 - Group Session One
October 20, 2004 – Group Session Two
November 3, 2004 – Group Session Three
November 17, 2004 – Group Session Four
December and January – Individual Consultations
EAI Open House* - February 2005

* Participants present their projects to the campus community

The Environmental Access Initiative is an excellent professional development opportunity for individuals as well as an effective strategy for reaching a particular accessibility goal that is specific to a department. There is limited space, so act quickly to be sure that your department is included by contacting Traevna Byrd at 274-3909 or tbyrd@ithaca.edu.