Memorandum  
To: Assistant Director of Building Services, Greg Fichter  
From: Mitchell Edwards, Erin DeVoe, Bawi Ceu  
Date: October 12  
Subject: Proposal Requesting ADA Renovations to Woodburn Hall

Introduction  
Indiana University is currently working on many renovation projects around its campus but is neglecting to fulfill the ADA requirements that all public accommodations must be modified for individuals with disabilities. The school building, Woodburn Hall, is used daily by students but does not have simple commodities such as Braille on many classroom doors, large room numbers from a visible location, and signs pointing to and recognizing the accessible options.

From the Disability for Student Services Department, reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment that will enable a qualified student with a disability to participate in a course, program, activity or service. Reasonable accommodations assure that individuals with a disability have rights and privileges equal to students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or adaptive technology, services, or modifications for facilities.

Details of the Problem (laws/morals)  
In 2008, the number of individuals with disabilities who received some type of college degree in Indiana was 422,500 people. In 2016, the number jumped to 467,900 people. This means 31.1% of individuals with disabilities in Indiana are or have obtained a college degree, a 2.8% difference from 2008. The number of individuals with disabilities on college campus’ is increasing every year, influencing campus’ everywhere to make accommodations for disabilities. Indiana University is a diverse school that has shown many efforts to be inclusive and make certain every individual on campus has equal opportunities and accommodations for their level of ability. However, there are still vital components missing that would not necessarily affect individuals without disabilities, but would greatly affect individuals with disabilities.

At Indiana University, one of the educational buildings, Woodburn Hall, neglects to accommodate individuals with disabilities in multiple ways. On each classroom door, there are room numbers that are supposed to help students identify which room they need to be in. These room numbers are only effective for students who have great vision. On some classroom doors, the small plaques are located at the very top of the door frame. This is a place not only difficult to locate, but the numbers are so small that any individual with a visual impairment would not be able to identify the classroom, potentially affecting their attendance to class and, thus, their education. A majority of the classrooms do not offer Braille as an alternative to identify the classroom, making it nearly impossible for any student or staff member with a visual impairment to navigate themselves around the building. Woodburn Hall has many barriers such as staircases and small stalls, but this building does
provide alternative, accessible options such as elevators and wheelchair accessible stalls. However, these accessible options are not labeled with the International Symbol of Access. When an individual with a disability is presented with a barrier, which is something that prohibits them from partaking in an activity, there should be a sign pointing to and identifying the nearest accessible option, making it just as easy to navigate themselves around as it would be for individuals without disabilities.

Since Woodburn Hall is a public university educational building, it is also a federally owned or leased building meaning it falls under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, also called the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968. This protects individuals with disabilities from being discriminated against and requires these buildings to be accessible for anyone with a physical disability, such as visual impairment. The Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights Act requires federally owned or leased buildings to have appropriate treatment and services, which Woodburn does not fulfill. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, State and Local Governments, requires publicly funded universities to make modifications to their buildings for individuals with disabilities with no special charges.

These acts and laws ensure individuals with disabilities have the accommodations necessary in public universities to accomplish everything individuals without disabilities can. Woodburn Hall does not comply with these acts and laws completely. An individual with a visual impairment would be at a great disadvantage if they needed to locate a classroom which did not offer Braille or a room number within reach. These modifications must be made so all students and staff at Indiana University have equal opportunity.

**Disability Services for Students**

The IU campus has a department for disability services. This department specializes in addressing problems related to students with disabilities. Their mission statement includes, “providing a welcoming and supportive environment for you at Indiana University Bloomington and ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to a full and enriching Hoosier experience.” Various disabilities include physical, psychological, learning, neurological, medical, vision, hearing, and temporary impairments. Indiana University has lifts and elevators around campus to help aid students. Due to older buildings, elevators are not feasible in every situation. However, stairway lifts have been installed in these buildings. All are accessible to anyone in need. Because of the variety of lifts instructions are posted outside on how to use them.

As from the Disability Services for Students website, “A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment that will enable a qualified student with a disability to participate in a course, program, activity or service. Reasonable accommodations assure that individuals with a disability have rights and privileges equal to students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or adaptive technology, services, or modifications for facilities.”

**Importance of the Issue**
Considering the percentage of individuals with disabilities and the growing population at Indiana University, it is important to acknowledge everyone's need. The Americans with Disabilities Act had such a huge impact on not only with those who are disabled in any form but also on the families, friends, and everyone in general. And we can’t assume the population is or will be decreasing because there are many reasons why people experienced such fate.

Oftentimes, the awareness of the needs of the disabled are often overlooked and claim a ramp and an elevator with braille is simply enough. Disabilities can affect a person in various ways. For example, there are online barriers, auditory, cognitive, neurological, speech, visual, and others that affect individuals with their learning and accommodations. And no should be limited by their disability when it comes to learning and accommodating.

Aside from the obstacles, it is also important to notice and implement the laws concerning the issue itself. In a Wall Street Journal’s report in 2016, it is shown that more than 240 businesses have been sued for websites inaccessibility by individuals with disabilities. Their websites were inaccessible for disabled users. And the ADA Services also reported that the consequences of “Civil penalties may be as high as $55,000 for a first violation or $110,000 for a subsequent violation.”

As an institution, it is important for Indiana University to not just abide by the regulations and procedures but beyond. Based on the survey we send out, 100% of our participants agreed to the implementations of signs, braille, etc, for disabilities at Indiana University. These are simple renovations that will make the community a better place. And not only this helps the individuals with disabilities but everyone who visits or attend Indiana University.

**Conclusion**

Accessibility is an important aspect of society and should not be limited to any one group of people. Denying a person access whether of service, education, or opportunity is a violation of fundamental human rights. Indiana University is a government institution and is required to provide accessibility to all students. Failure to do so can be seen as a discriminatory practice. While Indiana University provides services to those with disabilities, it has not guaranteed alternative accommodations. Woodburn Hall is the perfect example. The building is old and simple renovations can vastly improve access to students with disabilities. We encourage the Building Services Department to fulfill ADA requirements and continue improving accessibility for all students.