

# Is UCLA Really Accessible?

Sachi Gill and Ness Solomon

## Background

Students with mobile disabilities are often overlooked and not considered by institutions when designing buildings or routes, which can greatly affect accessibility for these individuals. Here at UCLA, this is especially prominent because there are many hills, stairs, insufficient ramps, malfunctioning elevators, and inconvenient walkways that are not inclusive towards students with mobile impairments. As the Editorial Board of the Daily Bruin describes, “Put simply, this is a human rights issue. It’s about time that the demands of the disabled community are not only heard, but acted upon” (Board, E., 2023). Given these issues pose a threat to the comfort, safety, and educational experience of students with mobile disabilities, it is important to uplift their stories and provide them with a platform where they can share their perspectives and allow for their voices to be heard.

## Objectives

We hope to provide students with mobile impairments/disabilities at UCLA, the opportunity to share their experiences navigating through campus.

- We plan to do this by reaching out and surveying students with mobile disabilities about their thoughts on accessibility throughout campus and their experiences navigating campus, and if it has impacted their educational experience in any way.
- We will then create a website with markers of buildings and walkways/routes that will both visualize and showcase the personal stories of different students with mobile disabilities at those locations.

## Community methods

This project hopes to empower and uplift the community of students with mobile disabilities, including both current and future bruins. This is incredibly important because these students are often ignored as the institution chooses not to prioritize their needs, safety, and basic human rights. Hopefully, this will help uplift their voices and allow for the institution to understand their experiences and make more meaningful, inclusive changes.

## User Stories

As a wheelchair user, I struggle to access certain buildings on UCLA campus due to a lack of ramps or elevators, so I want to share my experiences navigating campus to raise awareness about the challenges faced by students with mobile disabilities.

As a student with a mobile impairment, I face many difficulties with uneven walkways and stairs throughout buildings and overall campus, so I want to voice my perspectives on getting around UCLA, to hopefully help other students like me identify the most ideal routes or buildings on campus.

## Potential Survey Questions

1. Do you identify as someone who has a mobile disability/impairment?
2. If so, what is your disability/impairment?
3. What building on the UCLA campus do you find yourself accessing most?
4. Do you find this building to be accessible? Please describe your experiences and why you feel this way.
5. What walkway/route on the UCLA campus do you find yourself accessing most?
6. Do you find this walkway/route to be accessible? Please describe your experiences and why you feel this way.

## Long-term impact

In the future, we hope our website can be used by the Disabled Student Union (DSU) at UCLA to help uplift students with mobile disabilities and provide them with a space of acceptance. We hope our mapplication not only amplifies the voices of those with mobile disabilities at UCLA, but is also able to get back into the hands of the community it aims to serve. This can hopefully allow the community to play an active part in managing this platform in ways that best suit them and their needs. Due to the DSU's mission to provide students with "a safe and inclusive" environment where they can be empowered, we feel that they would be able to widely benefit from this tool (Desai et al., n.d.). Further, with this tool, the DSU could be more informed about buildings or walkways that are not as inclusive and accessible to students with mobile impairments which could help promote their pursuit to an improved campus for students with disabilities. Ultimately, we hope this mapplication is used to advocate for the rights of students at UCLA with mobile impairments/disabilities and we feel as though the DSU could benefit from using this tool to "create a community of acceptance at UCLA" (Desai et al., n.d.).

Citations:

Board, E. (2023). *Editorial: UCLA's lack of accessible structures does disservice to students with disabilities*. Daily Bruin.

<https://dailybruin.com/2023/01/26/editorial-uclas-lack-of-accessible-structures-does-disservice-to-students-with-disabilities>

Desai, A., Murray, I., & Chotai, V. (n.d.). *Disabled student union*. UCLA Community.

<https://community.ucla.edu/studentorg/4411>