

United States Cultures Proposal



Columbia University Northwest Science Building

Broadway & 120th Street, New York, NY

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Architectural Engineering

Structural Option

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March 4th, 2010

Executive Summary:

The focus of this United States (US) Cultures Proposal will involve an in-depth study into the following question.

“How has the American Disability Act (ADA) influenced building construction?”

The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990. It is an extensive document of law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Disability is defined by the ADA as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.”

A study of the ADA’s laws concerning building construction will be addressed throughout this proposal assignment. Building design is believed by the author to be influenced greatly by the ADA. A Penn State building case study will be addressed, along with the Northwest Science Building concerning this US Cultures Proposal.

This US Cultures Proposal is intended to provide the author with the following knowledge gained.

- Cultivate knowledge concerning issues of physical disability.
- Cultivate knowledge of United States social identities not in isolation, but in relation to one another, specifically, the interaction between physical disability with legal requirements for the built environment.

The author intends to fulfill specific goals for this US Cultures Proposal. These goals are listed below.

Goals of US Cultures Proposal:

- Research and discuss the ADA’s laws concerning building construction.
- Provide one study of a building built before the ADA act was signed into law.
- Provide a case study involving the Northwest Science Building’s design components fulfilling ADA requirements.
- Conclude on the main influences of the ADA on building construction.

To meet the goals of this US Cultures Proposal the author suggests the following deliverable.

Deliverable of US Cultures Proposal:

Provide a 7-9 page single spaced document, which includes text discussion and images as needed. This document will include title and works cited pages (included in the 7-9 pages).

Research

The following research will take place and will be discussed by the author for this US Cultures Proposal.

- **American Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The ADA will be researched for any clauses that refer to building construction and also specifically for providing design elements to facilitate the needs of disabled individuals. This research will be cited and discussed appropriately.

- **Penn State Sackett Building Case Study**

This building was built before the ADA was signed into law. This building has gone through several changes to accommodate ADA requirements concerning building construction. The changes of Sackett Building will be addressed and discussed. This will reveal that the ADA not only influences the design of newly constructed buildings, but also influences historic buildings and their occupants.

- **American Disabilities Act Influence on Northwest Science Building**

The Northwest Science Building is currently under construction (March 2010) and therefore will be up to speed in providing ADA accommodations for building occupants. The author will show several different examples within the building's design that are meant to accommodate ADA requirements.

Conclusions

In conclusion of this US Cultures Proposal the author will discuss the main design influences the ADA has made upon building construction. All goals and knowledge gained will be addressed and discussed.