Commission Co-chairs:
Georgia Kerns, Associate Professor, Department of Education
John LaCourse, Professor/Chair, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Membership:
Dani Adler, Associate Director, Center for Academic Resources
Mariah Bellington, Human Resources, Workers Compensation
Doug Bencks, Director of Campus Planning
Emily Boysen, Undergraduate student
Chandler Bullard, Program Specialist - Outreach & Program Support, Northeast Passage
Kristin Carpenter, Assistant Director, Residential Life
Cathy Coakley, Educational Program Coordinator for Student Athletes
Kevin Ennis, Undergraduate student
Felicia Fowler, Graduate student
Linda Guttman, Associate Director/Clinical Director, Counseling Center
Elaina Hill, Residence Hall Director, Residential Life
Jeff Parsons, Transportation Operations Manager
Tobey Partch-Davies, Project Director on Poverty and Disability, Institute on Disability
James Piet, State of NH Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation
Kei Saito, Doctoral Graduate Student, Dept of Sociology
Lonn Sattler, Veterans’ Coordinator, Office of the Registrar
Tara Scholder, Senior Associate Director of Office of Admissions
Judy Stevens, Health Education/Community Health Nurse, Health Services

Ex-officio Members:
Wendy Beckwith, EEO/ADA Compliance Officer, Office of Affirmative Action
Sylvia Foster, Educational Program Coordinator, Office of the President’s Commissions
Janice Pierson, Senior Program Assistant, Office of the President’s Commissions

2014-15 Commission goals and initiatives

The Commission continued its efforts within the framework of three major working groups.

- Programming
- Physical Access
- Communications and Public Relations

Below is a summary of each group’s activities, accomplishments and related goals.

(1) Programming Working Group co-sponsored two lectures in the MUB Current Issues Lecture Series; (1) Dr. Delaney Rustin, creator of a feature-length documentary on global mental health *Hidden Pictures*, and (2) TV actress Lauren Potter from the show “Glee”. Working with the MUB Lecture Series has provided a means for the commission to collaborate with other
offices/campus groups thereby increasing the visibility of the work of this commission across campus while providing avenues for students to gain awareness and education on the issues that people living with disabilities address on a daily basis.

A panel discussion in collaboration with Disability Services for Students was presented in March. UNH students with hidden and apparent disabilities spoke of their experiences and answered questions from staff, students and faculty members.

For International Education week, the commission brought in Amos Winter, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT. Professor Winter discussed issues surrounding the lack of affordable wheelchairs for persons experiencing poverty in underdeveloped countries. He brought in models of his “freedom chairs” and provided a presentation on the mechanics involved with development of the chairs. This presentation provided an exceptional opportunity to invite students from engineering classes to learn from an inventor who engages in building inexpensive devices and tools to assist persons with disabilities.

(2) **Physical Access Working Group** continued to provide their assistance to staff from Campus Planning, Global Information System (GIS) on building interior features for the Accessibility Map. An audit of campus building interiors was compiled and organized and the database was presented to GIS. However, due to the complexity of this next development phase, GIS is unable to continue their work at this time. GIS is involved with numerous campus construction projects that take precedence, and additional funding will need to be raised to hire additional staff to do the map work. This led the commission to commit to a plan to work with several campus departments on raising the level of awareness on the importance of having this map feature. The goal will be to elevate its priority on the Campus Planning project listing.

This group also expedited discussions with staff/administrators from Facilities and brainstormed ideas on clearing snow and ice from sidewalks and doorways. As this was an especially difficult winter, several persons using wheelchairs were often met with snowbank barriers. This group will continue their work over the summer months on developing a “Snow Route” around core campus areas. Meetings will also be held with Housekeeping staff to discuss snow removal around doorways.

(3) **Communications and Public Relations Working Group** continued their efforts to construct a PowerPoint of potential accident scenarios with bicycles, mopeds, headphone and mobile phone usage on campus sidewalks and crosswalks. They will also continue in their efforts of working with WildActs on developing the sidewalk safety video. However, WildActs has been involved with several other projects and we were unable to connect with them this past year.

The link for the *Guide to Bias-Free Language* (a 4-commission effort) has been placed on the commission web site, and information has been provided on the guide at various tabling events.

The commission website was updated with resources, special features, photos and the video production of the Students with Disabilities Panel Discussion.

**Collaboration efforts with other commissions/groups**

**Best Buddies** – provided funding for a member of this student organization to attend the National Best Buddies Leadership Conference.
Title IX – worked with commission co-chairs to draft a letter to President Huddleston voicing concern over the lack of information and training on Title IX and staff/faculty reporting requirements.

Awards Task Group – a representative from this commission will be working on the task force to develop an online portal for all commission-related awards.

Assistant Basketball Coach Investigative Report – worked with the other commissions to draft a letter to the President and Jaime Nolan requesting that the report be removed from the website and replaced with a modified report, protective of identities and minus inappropriate descriptors.

Commission co-chair meetings – continue to have active representation with this group (newly titled “Advisory Council for Community, Equity and Diversity”). In addition, several commission members attended a joint commission member retreat in January.

Additional goals for next year
  1) Commission will review existing working groups to determine priorities and goals for the coming year. There have been discussions to redirect effort to focus more on the hiring of persons with disabilities at UNH.
  2) Members will make a concerted effort to increase communications with student groups (Best Buddies, Eyes Open, Wildcat Friends, etc.), and seek opportunities for collaboration on national campaigns like “Spread the Word to end the Word”, and UNH-sponsored events e.g., “Special Spirit Game”, a night of basketball for Special Olympic athletes.

Respectfully submitted by Georgia Kerns and John LaCourse, Co-chairs