A. NAME

The name of the Commission is the University of New Hampshire, President’s Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.

B. MISSION AND PURPOSE

Mission Statement
The mission of the President’s Commission on the Status of people with Disabilities is to promote empowerment and inclusion of students, faculty and staff and guests with disabilities at the University of New Hampshire. The commission acknowledges that people with disabilities are a diverse group that includes individuals with visible and non-visible disabilities. The commission shall provide a forum for discussion and assessment of disability-related issues and opportunities that are relevant for the campus and larger community. In addition, the commission shall advise the President, the Associate Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity (AVP) and the Director of Affirmative Action and Equity on disability-related issues, policies, services, attitudes and practices on campus. This mission is motivated by the belief that people with disabilities add value and diversity to our living, working and learning environment.

C. MEMBERSHIP

1. Classification of Members
   a. Chair/Co-Chairs
      The chair or co-chairs will consist of faculty or staff appointed by the President/AVP.

   c. General Members (Please refer to APPENDIX A: Potential Composition of the President’s Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities)

      Given that the establishment of a university environment free of physical, programatic and attitudal barriers for people with disabilities involves a campus wide coordinated effort from accessible technology to accessible academics, housing and transportation, general members are appointed by the President/AVP and shall consist of staff and faculty from the following offices/departments:
d. Adjunct Members
The commission general membership may invite the participation of one (1) adjunct member at any given time. Adjunct members will fully participate in commission decision-making, having all the voting privileges of a general member.

e. Ex-officio Members
Ex-officio membership shall consist of:

- one (1) member of the Disability Services for Students (DSS) staff
- one (1) member of the Affirmative Action and Equity Office staff
- one (1) member from off-campus office/group whose mission is to advocate on behalf of, or provide services for people with disabilities
- two (2) members of the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity

Ex-officio members are not voting members but may join a subcommittee where their expertise may be most useful.

2. Appointment of Members
a. Appointment
Nominations for new members will be accepted in the spring of each year. The chair/co-chairs of the commission will forward nominations to the President/AVP for approval and appointment. The Office of Community, Equity and Diversity will submit announcements soliciting membership nominations to venues such as The New Hampshire and Campus Journal.

b. Replacing members midterm
If a general member leaves the commission prior to the end of the term of appointment, a new general member may be appointed to serve the remainder of the term, upon recommendation of the chair/co-chairs, and by the President/AVP.

3. Term of Office
a. Length of term
General members serve one three-year term. Student general members and adjunct members may be appointed for a one-year term with a maximum of two years.

b. Beginning of term
The term of office is the academic year for both general members and adjunct members. Members joining the commission midterm will end their terms at the end of the academic year also.

c. Reappointment
General members may serve one (1) three-year term; student general members and adjunct members may serve two (3) consecutive one-year terms. Current general and adjunct members must be renominated by the chair/co-chair and reappointed by the President/AVP. While the expectation is that general faculty and staff members will serve for three (3) years, members may step down before the end of their term if circumstances require. The chair/co-chairs, by recommendation to the President/AVP, may ask members to step down at the end of their term if members fail to fulfill their responsibility.

4. Membership Responsibility  
   a. General members and Adjunct members  
      The responsibilities of general members include:  
      • attending an annual orientation/retreat  
      • attending nine (9) monthly meetings of the commission during the academic year  
      • actively participating in one (1) working group  
      • participating in other activities as agreed upon by the commission  

      Failure to meet these responsibilities may lead to non-reappointment or being asked to step down before the end of their term.

5. Excessive absences  
   a. If a member misses three (3) regular commission meetings, does not participate actively in a working group, or does not meet other responsibilities, the chair/co-chair will meet with this member to discuss whether the member has the time and/or commitment to continue as a commission member and to discuss whether this person should resign (or be asked to resign) from the commission.

   b. When a general commission member resigns, a new member may be appointed to complete the term, following the procedure in outlined in III.B.2.

6. Representation  
   In order to best serve the community, every effort will be made to ensure representation from members of the disability community and people who are engaged in disability related issues.

D. COMMISSION LEADERSHIP  
   1. Chair/co-chair  
      a. Appointment  

      i. The President/AVP, upon receiving nominations from the commission members, appoints chairs/co-chairs of the commission. The chair/co-chairs’ term shall be for one year running from June 1 through May 31. The chair/co-chairs may be considered for a second term by request of the President/AVP.

      ii. The chair/co-chairs may receive a work-load adjustment as determined in consultation with their supervisor. The chair/co-chairs will not serve to fill one of the general membership openings, but will have voting privileges.
iii. The chair/co-chairs are selected from among the established faculty and staff members of the Commission who have served as a Commission member for at least one year. Nominations for chair/co-chairs will begin in February and forwarded to the President/AVP following the end of the academic year. Chairs/co-chairs may serve a second year by request of the President/AVP.

b. Responsibilities
   The responsibilities of the chair/co-chairs include but are not limited to:
   i. facilitating and organizing the work of the Commission, including but not limited to promoting a non-discriminatory environment, recommending policies to the UNH President, the Associate Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity, Director of Affirmative Action and Equity and the UNH community, and providing leadership in the development and implementation of education and outreach programs
   
   ii. attending joint commission member meetings/retreats/advances and participating in monthly meetings on the Advisory Council for Community, Equity and Diversity along with chairs/co-chairs from the other commissions, and representatives from other UNH governance groups.
   
   iii. completing other roles and responsibilities as defined by the President/AVP.

E. MEETINGS

1. Types of Meetings
   a. Regular
      Regular meetings of the commission membership will be held at least monthly during the academic year on a day and time established by the membership. Staff from the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity will be responsible for developing an annual schedule of regular monthly meetings, maintaining the commission budget, website editing and distribution of meeting agendas. The chair/co-chairs will be responsible for setting the agenda and facilitating commission meetings.

   b. Annual Retreat/Orientation
      The Commission may hold a retreat/orientation during the academic year to evaluate commission activities and/or to set goals for the upcoming academic year. Both retiring and new commission members may attend the annual retreat/orientation.

   c. Special
      Special meetings of the commission may be called as needed by the membership. The chair/co-chairs are responsible for notifying all commission members of special meeting times and for distributing an agenda prior to the meeting.

   d. Commissions Collaborations
      Members of this commission may meet at least once annually with the members of the
other President’s Commissions as well as student groups, campus departments/offices and other campus governance groups in order to advance the work of the commission.

2. Quorum

A quorum is defined as at least 60% of the voting commission membership, including the commission chair/co-chairs. Should a quorum of members not be present at a commission meeting, a binding decision cannot be made. A minority report can be submitted and will be reflected in the meeting minutes.

3. Decision Making
At the beginning of each academic year, the commission will discuss and decide which model of decision-making will best serve their purposes that year. The commission can use a consensus, voting, or other model of decision-making.

   a. Consensus model
   Decisions of the commission can be made by a consensus of a quorum of the membership. Consensus is defined as reaching a decision that is most beneficial for the group as a whole through considering all the many viewpoints and concerns of the group. Consensus implies that each individual within the group respects differences and is willing to reconsider their own position to move toward a position that everyone in the group can support. (See Appendix B for an outline of consensus decision-making.) The chair/co-chairs may make decisions on behalf of the commission as part of their responsibilities.

   b. Voting and consensus
   If consensus cannot be reached on a question, assuming that a quorum of members is present, the membership may agree to vote. At least 51% of the members present must agree to change to a voting process. If this change is agreed upon, a decision can be made only with a 75% majority vote.

   c. Voting model
   Decisions of the commission can be made by a majority of a quorum of the membership under the voting model. A decision can be made with a 75% majority vote.

F. WORKING GROUPS
1. Membership
   a. Selection
   Commission members are expected to serve on at least one working group, except for the chair/co-chair who will be an ad hoc member of every committee. Members will select their working group assignments at the first meeting of the academic year.

   b. Committee Facilitators
   All working group facilitators will be general commission members. The working group members select the facilitator for each working group.
2. Working Groups
   a. Working groups will be established at the beginning of the academic year, or as necessary, to plan strategy, program, and/or to conduct research in project areas chosen by the commission.

   b. Working groups are responsible for informing the commission membership of plans, progress, events, and assistance needed relative to their project areas. Working groups are also responsible for preparing a report on their activities once per semester; these reports may be included in a year-end report to the President/AVP.

   c. Each commission member is expected to serve on at least one working group. Non-commission members are encouraged to also serve on working groups.

G. BYLAWS
The bylaws of the commission will be used to guide the commission's processes and procedures. Understanding that gray areas may arise, these bylaws can be revised with final approval by the President/AVP.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL COMPOSITION OF THE PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The composition of the President’s Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities is driven not by category of employment (Operating Staff, PAT, and faculty status) but rather area of expertise. To enhance inclusion into every aspect of living, working, learning and socializing at UNH, specific expertise is required to ensure accessibility from computer technology to academics, transportation and building design. To ensure that the commission will remain a strong and viable presence on campus, individuals should be nominated to serve on the commission from the following campus offices and departments. Nominations of both undergraduate and graduate students should also be included.

Admissions, Affirmative Action and Equity, Athletics/Campus Recreation, Center for Academic Resources, Counseling Center, Disability Services for Students, Energy and Campus Development Faculty/Faculty Senate, Health Services, Human Resources, Institute on Disability, Institutional Technology, Northeast Passage, Residential Life, Student Groups/government (2 undergrad, 2 graduate) Transportation Services, University Operations and Maintenance, Veterans Affairs, Vice President for Student and Academic Services

APPENDIX B

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING
This framework is to be used as a tool for understanding and employing consensus. Consensus values the ideas and understanding of all participants. Consensus offers the possibility to work through differences to reach mutually satisfactory decisions. For this to happen, the input of all members needs to be heard so the ideas and values of individual members are not lost in the process. The fundamental essence of consensus allows all members the right and obligation to express their ideas and feelings and assures the right of all members to speak and to be heard.

During discussion, a proposal is put forward. Amendments and modifications are made to the proposal through discussion by the group. Open exchange of ideas is critical for the success of the consensus process. Members need to express their opinions and reservations clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are troubled by the proposal to provide alternative suggestions. The proposal should be modified to address the stated reservations if at all possible.

When a proposal appears to be understood by everyone, and no new modifications have been proposed, the facilitator should ask if there are any further reservations with or objections to the proposal. If none are voiced, the facilitator calls for consensus by asking once more if there are any objections. After a moment of silence, if no one objects, consensus has been reached.

If it appears that consensus cannot be reached, there are several ways to proceed. The proposal could be withdrawn. Those with reservations could:

- a. Express non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")
- b. Express reservations ("I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it.")
- c. Stand aside ("I personally can't support this, but I won't stop it.")
- d. Block ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this.")

The chair/co-chairs of the commission ordinarily acts as facilitator, or may appointment someone else to act as facilitator, during decision making. The role of the facilitator is to aid the group in defining the decisions that need to be made. The facilitator helps to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. The facilitator:

- keeps the meeting moving;
- focuses the discussion on the proposal;
- ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the discussion; and
- tests to discover if consensus has been reached.

If the group feels that the proposal merits action and cannot achieve consensus, the membership can agree to vote. Refer to V.C.2.