President’s Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities
November 4, 2014
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Wendy Beckwith, Mariah Bellington, Kathy Berger, Emily Boysen, Chandler Bullard, Cathy Coakley, Kristin Carpenter, Kevin Ennis, Sylvia Foster, Jillian Hall, John LaCourse, Tobey Partch-Davies, James Piet, Kei Saito, Lonn Sattler, Judy Stevens

I. Minutes and Commission Leadership
   ▪ The October minutes were approved as written.
   ▪ John reminded members that he and Georgia will be stepping down as co-chairs at the end of their terms in May. Members should contact John or Georgia if they are contemplating taking on a co-chair role.

II. Time allocated for working groups

III. Updates from Joint Commission Co-chair Meeting and University Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity Meeting
   ▪ Members reviewed the minutes provided from both meetings.
   ▪ All co-chairs were asked to send their responses to questions (listed below in bold) posed by Jaime Nolan. Commission feedback was as follows:
     ▪ What is the central purpose of the commissions?
       ○ Educating the campus community about the issues around inclusive excellence and diversity.
       ○ Acting as watchdogs to keep everyone in check. Challenging our assumptions related to our belief systems as to who belongs here.
       ○ Keeping in contact with constituents to learn more about their concerns and bring these forward.
       ○ Promoting change in a positive direction to improve campus climate to assure everyone has the resources they need to feel included and succeed.
     ▪ What is the central purpose of the University Council?
       ○ Several members had difficulty defining the role of the council, which led to the suggestion that more communication between the council and the commissions would be helpful.
       ○ Provide greater leverage with our message by working to locate the intersections of purpose, issues and resources.
     ▪ Are the intended purposes being met?
       ○ Members felt that this commission is meeting the goals as stated in its mission.
       ○ Use of periodic campus climate surveys provides a monitoring system.
       ○ Student classroom evaluations often tell the story of whether students feel included.
       ○ Although the commissions cannot dictate or implement policy changes, we do play a role in providing recommendations to upper-level administrators as well as advocating for policy changes.
     ▪ What needs to change, what are the obstacles?
       ○ Need greater incentives from Dean’s Council to involve more faculty in the work of the commissions. Service credit should be provided to faculty co-chairs for the commissions.
       ○ The work of the commissions should be recognized as integral to the UNH Strategic Plan as we build inclusive community.
       ○ During policy discussions more communication needs to be done to assure persons with disabilities are included in the discussions concerning under-represented groups.
       ○ No statistics are being kept on who is attending our programs. Suggestion made to have sign-in sheet at entrance to decipher student, staff, student, faculty status as well as major/department.
       ○ The work of this commission needs to be made more visible to the rest of the campus community especially since this is a relatively new commission.
There is a lack of financial commitment from upper-level administrators to build new programs, provide additional staff plus update technology to provide greater access for persons with disabilities.

IV. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

PROGRAMMING WORKING GROUP (Georgia, Judy, Kathy, Sylvia, Chandler, Kristin, Linda, Tobey, Jillian, Kevin)
- **Events and Programs:**
  - Work continues on promotion for Amos Winter’s November 18th program.
  - As part of the MUB display wall during the MLK celebration taking place in January/February, students and staff were invited to write about their stories. Chandler has volunteered to be the representative from this commission. Unveiling will take place on January 27.

PHYSICAL ACCESS WORKING GROUP (John, Lonn, Jeff, Doug, Wendy, Kei, Jim)
- Wendy reported that the GIS team is still working on the interior map applications and merging the mobile application with the GIS system that already exists (including the bus stops). Incoming comments will flow to Facilities and to Wendy.
- It was noted that the GIS team has been doing the accessibility map work on a gratis basis, and the office has many other projects it is also working to complete at the same time.
  - Suggestion made for the commission to advocate for greater funding to be provided to GIS to hire additional students or provide release time for faculty to help speed up the work on this project.
- Suggestion was made to ask University Communications and Marketing, who are the keepers of the UNH Home Page, to include a wheelchair or other symbol to denote link for the new interactive map.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP (Mariah, Cathy, Nate, Emily, Tara, Janice)
- Mariah reported that communication should be going out soon from Human Resources for the Disability Commission Award along with other commission-related awards. Information will also be posted on the Facebook page and the website.
- Work continues on the sidewalk safety project.
- The group will be reaching out to Best Buddies to see if they can assist with the national campaign on “Spread the Word to End the Word”, a promotional campaign to help raise awareness about the hurtfulness of the use of the word “retarded”.

Respectfully submitted
Janice Pierson