DISABILITIES ISSUES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING
September 26, 2012
Morrill Hall Room 238A

[In these minutes: committee orientation, review of disabilities education resolution, disability services update, implementation and content of resolution discussion.]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Mary Kennedy, Chrispin Behnke, Dale Branton, Sherry Gray, Donna Johnson, Virgil Mathiowetz, Amber Mayer, Patrick McNamara, Brian McAdams, Joanna O'Connell, David Peterson, Julia Robinson, Jennifer Rothchild, Kimberly Simon, Carla Tabourne, Susan Rose, Kristine Talley

REGRETS: None

ABSENT: Clare McCormick, Peggy Mann Rinehart

GUESTS: None

OTHERS: Mari Magler, Associate Director of Access Programs for Disability Services

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Professor Kennedy called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.   She asked each member to introduce him or herself and state their department.

COMMITTEE ORIENTATION

Professor Kennedy began the committee orientation by reviewing the senate organizational chart. She explained that the committee reports directly to the Senate Consultative Committee. She read the charge to the committee and pointed out that guests to the University are included in the population that the committee advocates for. She reviewed the duties of the committee which includes: to advise the president and administrative offices, including the Disability Services Office and the University ADA Coordinator, on policies, programs, and services for students, employees, and guests of the University. She emphasized the inclusion of guests in this duty.

She stated that it is important for the committee to consider the available resources when developing resolutions. She sees the members as being advocates for

individuals with disabilities. Moving forward, she sees the resolutions from last year moving through the consultative committee.

DISABILITY EDUCATION RESOLUTION REVIEW

Professor Kennedy provided the members with a copy of the resolution and asked the members to read it again. She explained that the minutes from the FCC meeting when the resolution was presented are available to read.

She thanked Professor Branton for his eloquent presentation of the resolution at the FCC meeting and felt it was received well by the members. Professor Branton agreed that the members had a favorable response to the resolution. Professor Kennedy added that after the presentation, the FCC members began brainstorming regarding resources, how to distribute it, and how to engage the faculty in a meaningful way. She saw this as evidence that they are interested and committed to implementing an educational program for faculty regarding disabilities issues and accommodations.

Professor Kennedy went on to detail the suggestions and concerns raised by the FCC.

- The FCC felt the resolution was very general. Professor Kennedy responded to the FCC by explaining that the resolution was intended to be general and they envisioned a web-based educational program that would also provide the faculty with resources.

- The resolution needs to be broadened to include more stakeholders because the faculty is not the only group at the University that teach and interact with students. The focus of the resolution is currently on how to assist students with disabilities and there was no formal recommendation to broaden that base.

- In regard to broadening the stakeholders, it was suggested to target the directors of undergraduate studies and undergraduate faculty members since they are involved in advising undergraduates. Professor Kennedy suggested adding the director of graduate studies and department chairs. The focus is on those personnel that interact with the students.

- There was a concern that educating the faculty may not change their behavior. A pre and post evaluation would address this concern. She would like to access data that exists with Disability Services before the program is implemented, and collect data after stakeholders complete the program.

- There could be a litigating issue if the program is made a mandatory requirement. Perhaps the program should only provide information and not be a requirement. Professor Kennedy and Professor Branton were

concerned that if it is not required, it will not be completed. Ms. Simon offered to consult the Office of General Counsel regarding the legal implications of the resolution.

Professor O'Connell reminded the members of the HIPAA training that is required and includes consequences if not completed. She added that there are laws mandating disability compliance and without training, University employees risk being out of compliance due to ignorance. She emphasized that employees need to be informed to avoid breaking the law. She noted that pointing out the parallels between the need for HIPAA training and the need for disability education will strengthen the resolution.

This program should be the beginning of developing a culture of awareness, not just a program for incoming faculty members.

Professor Kennedy explained that the discussion of legal ramifications was not the focus of the FCC meeting.

Ms. Johnson reminded the committee that there are resources that exist through Disability Services that are available to employees and students. She explained that she does not have a large enough staff to offer face-to-face trainings to each department.   Professor Branton commented that the committee has envisioned a web-based program that is analogous to the HIPAA training.

At this time, Ms. Johnson was asked to show the committee a video that Disability Services has developed and give a brief update.

DONNA JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF DISABILITY SERVICES (DS)

Ms. Johnson began by explaining that it is important for people to understand the role of participants in the interactive process, per the ADA amendments, which includes the faculty or supervisor, the student or employee, and the disability services provider. DS created a video to clarify the roles.

The committee viewed: "Advancing Access for Everyone," created by Disability Services, Office for Equity and Diversity.

- The video explained that Disability Services facilitates access and works in partnership with University students, faculty, staff and guests to advance equal opportunities for learning, working, and participating in campus life.
- The student or employee describes the barriers they encounter in the learning or working environment.
- Faculty or managers contribute their knowledge of the essential components of the course or central duties of the job.
- The DS specialist provides their knowledge of potential accommodations, alterations, or modifications that may remove or reduce identified barriers.

- Through this process, barriers are identified and reasonable accommodations that do not compromise the essential elements of the course or job are determined and implemented.
- Student Services ensures that students with disabilities have equitable access to academic and student life.
- U Return serves all employees with any disability or medical condition requiring accommodations
- Accommodations and Services provide interpreting, captioning, document conversion, testing accommodations, computer accommodations, and access assistance.
- Outreach provides education and training, consultation, and technical assistance. Guests of the University have access to accommodations so that they can participate as fully as possible in University activities.

- The title of the video is meaningful: "Advancing" incorporates the concepts of movement and forward thinking; "access" is the core of DS's work. Everyone is important, including students, University employees, guests, and those who work for DS.

Professor Kennedy responded that the video provides a foundation for more specific information regarding disabilities, accommodations, and resources to assist the faculty in making accommodations.

Ms. Johnson told the committee the video cost $5,000 to produce; therefore DS partnered with the Marcus Foundation to involve the Medical School and share the cost. This model is an option for the funding of the disabilities education program. She cautioned that while the video is short, it was started in the summer and it was not easy to complete in time to present at the September Disabilities Issues meeting.

Ms. Johnson distributed copies of a flier inviting the members to the Access Achievement Awards reception and a packet of charts detailing the work of DS.
- The first chart displayed the growing number of individuals served by year. There was a 33% increase from 2011 to 2012, which Ms. Johnson sees as a positive indication of people being aware of DS.
- Ms. Magler explained the chart detailing the number of interpreting hours delivered. She stated that there are 17 full-time interpreters on campus working with students, staff, faculty, and visitors in a variety of settings. The number has decreased by 5% and is contingent on people leaving and entering the University.
- She then explained the real-time captioning hours chart and that the department employs four full-time captioners. They offer both real-time captioning by going to meetings and events for those that have hearing loss and do not know sign language or prefer captioning.
- The media captioning hours chart only depicts the hours completed by the DS staff and does not include the hours spent on media that has to be sent to a third party for captioning. DS pays for all captioning.

- Ms. Johnson explained the tests administered chart and noted that faculty can do test accommodations in their department locations to ensure the student has access to the instructor, as they would under normal testing circumstances.
- Ms. Magler explained the pages converted chart and stated that DS converts text books, Power Points, notes, and any materials that a student with a print disability or visual loss.

Ms. Johnson informed the committee that she plans to support and expand the use of technology in the classroom that can alleviate the work of DS. For example, Smart Boards can record what is written and the students can have instant access to this information, without having to contact DS.

Professor McNamara pointed out that the number of faculty and staff members using DS has increased dramatically, while the number of students has grown incrementally. Ms. Johnson stated that this increase is due to the early intervention work DS is undertaking.

CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM DISCUSSION

In response to the video, the committee discussed the content and implementation of the disabilities issues education program.

Mr. Behnke proposed that new faculty members are presented with the information first and senior faculty members, once they have reviewed the material, revisit it every three years. Professor Kennedy raised the option of staggering the release of the program, first to new employees and later to senior faculty.

In response to the many questions, Professor Kennedy suggested the subcommittee be reactivated to brainstorm for resources and coordinate the details of the program.

Professor O'Connell mentioned the format of Adobe presenter, allowing for a transcript, pausing, flow charts, and a quiz. She emphasized the importance of students and faculty understanding that reaching out to DS is a matter of asserting their rights, not asking for favors.

Ms. Johnson added that a module could be created to explain why documents need to be given in advance for conversion, what the process is of converting documents, and the benefits. Professor O'Connell added that it would be useful to inform the faculty of formats that are best for conversion to braille.

Professor Branton commented that the program needs to provide information to make faculty feel comfortable providing assistance to the students regarding specific issues. Professor Gray noted that different units experience different issues, for example, working with international students and leading trips that may include disabled students. She mentioned the possibility of training trainers, which would allow for education to go beyond a web-based program and avoid over-extending the DS staff. Trainers from each

unit could provide training within each unit. Ms. Johnson added that advisory committees could help by identifying issues for specific groups with disabilities like employees, faculty, and students.

Professor Kennedy mentioned the idea of providing the information "just-in-time," which gives the faculty the opportunity to revisit the information if a situation arises in the future. This will help remind the new faculty of the services and alleviate the feeling of being overwhelmed with information at orientation. Ms. Johnson added that it is important to communicate the resources that are already available, however, they are overlooked due to a lack of communication.

Professor Kennedy drew the discussion back to outlining the duties of the subcommittee. She stated that their charge should be to identify the content and implementation. She added that the FCC was more concerned with how to implement the program and broadening the target stakeholders. She acknowledged there may be overlap as a committee discusses content; they will automatically have to consider how it is implemented.

Professor Branton pointed out that the FCC asked if the word "training" could be changed to "education" within the motion. They felt it better described the goal of the program. Professor Kennedy explained that "education" is seen as more broad based versus "training," which implies step-by-step instruction and she does not oppose the change in wording. She mentioned it could be helpful to garner support from the Student Senate before taking the resolution back to the FCC.

In response to a question, Professor Kennedy noted that it would be the duty of University supervisors, deans, department chairs, and directors of undergraduate studies to request that volunteers complete the program. She does not believe the committee is in the position to control that. Professor O'Connell responded that it is most important to create a culture of awareness regarding disabilities issues and the training will help foster this understanding.

In the interest of time, Professor Kennedy asked those interested to join the subcommittee via email. She will send an email outlining the responsibilities involving content, implementation, arranging meetings, and they will need to identify a chair. Ms. Simon suggested that the subcommittee utilize the DS video as a way to spark interest and serve as the first step in developing a more specific education program. She noted that the DS video can serve as a reminder to all faculty members of the services that are provided and it is timely to remind employees at the start of the academic year. Professor O'Connell commented that the subcommittee can help DS market the video and draw attention to the message.

ADJOURN

In the interest time, Professor Kennedy concluded the conversation and asked committee members to review the list of pending issues, select two they would like addressed this

year, and email this response to Ms. Rich. She would like the committee to have an email discussion regarding the broadening of the stakeholders. They will reach an agreement at the October meeting and then she will attempt to be added to the agenda for the SCC or FCC.

Hearing no further business, Professor Kennedy adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate Office