

Disability Rights and Concerns Committee
Meeting Notes
Jan 21, 2005

Members Attending: Virginia Anderson, Kenneth Kallio, Sally Knapp, Diane McFarland, Pamela Wolfskill.

Guests: Rodney Patterson

- I. Introductions, EOL leave form.
- II. Diane McFarland made a motion to accept the notes from the Oct 2, 2004 meeting. Pamela Wolfskill seconded the motion. The notes were approved.
- III. Report from Co-Chair Sally Knapp.

I I wrote Ed Drummond Affirmative Action Committee Chair to ask that Disability be included in forthcoming diversity discussions/workshops or publications, but have received no reply. We might think about requesting a similar program and joint forum regarding disability.

2. Our Disability report announcement on the UUP website and drew criticism from someone who complained that PDF is not accessible to “visually challenged individuals.” Phil Smith’s explained his reasons for using PDF:

“it would be possible to put the reports into HTML. But when one considers cost to benefit ratio it really is not worth it. Keep in mind that there are two major operating systems to deal with...Mac and PC. Then factor in that there are multiple browsers in use that display pages differently. And then consider that tabular information is difficult to code, given the multiplicity of browsers. And we haven't even mentioned the few pages of the report that contain a photocopy of a SUNY document....which is not possible at all to display in HTML. Converting a 20+ page of typescript into HTML would take several hours...to make a PDF takes less than a minute!

All in all...PDFs are the best way to provide lengthy data. There are several reasons for this: PDFs don't care what operating system they're run on; and they don't care what browser looks at 'em.....every page comes out the same on every machine and every browser. And everybody gets the same visual presentation...and gets an identical printout.

As for the visually impaired...PDFs have an excellent reputation in the text-to-speech arena. In fact, if you do a simple Google search on TTS...you'll see that much of the resources available are in PDF format.”

3. The Communications Dept. prepared a good press release regarding our report, which was published in *The Voice* and *New York Teacher*. I also found it under Empire Information Services, but I haven't seen it elsewhere.

I wrote Frank Maurizio to ask if he knew whether it had appeared in any other sources. He had not seen it elsewhere though he had calls from a couple radio stations and gave them my name and contact info. He felt that if the "mainstream" media hadn't picked

this up by now, it is unlikely that it will. He said I could send it to other publications that regularly cover disability and accessibility issues. He suggested I introduce myself to Denyce Duncan Lacy, the new communications director at UUP, and ask her advice. [I did introduce myself to Denyce and will discuss with her soon.]

4. Per your suggestion, Dave Dubois and I met and exchanged names and addresses with the chair of the Veterans Committee after our fall meeting.

5. I wrote again (email) last week to the Chapter Presidents of the campuses whose members had conducted facility surveys. You may recall that we sent them the individual surveys for their campuses and suggested they meet with people on campus and prioritize needs. I wrote:

“.....What could our committee do to help you make your campus more accessible?

Do you think it would be helpful to have a meeting of representatives from chapters to discuss ways to make campuses more accessible?

Please let us know how things are going and if there is any way our committee could help you.

We hope to hear from you by email or you can look for us at the DA. We'd love to chat with you there...” [I have not heard from any except one who is new and asked for a copy of report which I am sending him]

6. I wrote to Bill Scheuerman about :

whether we might we have a meeting of representatives (not necessarily delegates) from campuses who are interested in setting up campus disability committees? He said “yes.”

whether we might do a program about our disability survey, and involving people with disabilities in union activities at some future AFT meeting? Or other organization? And an article about it in the new journal, which I think is called American Academic? I'd love to have somebody else on the committee to do this, but would help or do it if no one else would. He said “yes.”

I asked about sending the report to the Chancellor and he wrote “Let's let the dust settle at SUNY before approaching the Chancellor. I think but I'm not certain that we already gave a copy to Richter.”

IV. Old Business

1. Regarding the distribution of the press release re: Disability Survey.

Pam Wolfskill suggested online tag saying printed copies, and large print copies, are available from UUP. Sally will ask Communications and Tom Kriger. Diane McFarland suggested distributing them to student governments and student disability coordinators, as well as campus affirmative action officers.

??? Committees to let me know????

2. Committee website. Report and demo from Pam Wolfskill. Discussion.

The draft is at: http://www.uupinfo.org/constituencies/disability/uup_ada.html

People should send Pam links to other sites and corrections/suggestions for the web page by Feb. 10.

Sally will send her a copy of the checklist used by some of the campus committees so it can be linked to the web page. Sally will write annotations for some of the other links

Pam noted that she like the uniformity of committee checklists when all use the same basic template.

3. Meeting/ training session for representatives from each campus interested in setting up disability committee (McFarland suggestion).
4. Diane McFarland agreed to coordinate a meeting of people interested in forming chapter disability committees. She suggested putting out a call for people in the spring and then having people appointed or volunteering over the summer and having the meeting in the fall.

The meeting would be a ½ day meeting - maybe on Thursday before the DA. Then in the spring of '06 there could be a followup meeting.

Sally will confer with Bill Scheuerman and Eileen Landy about this and report.

V. New Business

1. Possible forum and program. Ken Kallio suggested that a faculty/professionals forum deal with the issues of teaching or other relations with students who have disabilities.