Northern Arizona University Commission on Disability Access and Design logo

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

12:00-1:30 pm, ZOOM meeting

<https://nau.zoom.us/j/614292760> Meeting ID: 614 292 760

1. Meeting started at 12:00 p.m.
2. Call to Order
   1. Roll call and introductions
   2. Judy Montoya, Pam Powell, German Fermin, James Ingram, Dorianne Pollack, Jamie Axelrod, Chris Lanterman, Jane Gilbert, Sean Kugler, Don Carter, Judy Manor, Gabe Montaño, Heather Williamson, Calvin Legassie, Mathew Van Shoick, Jill Young, Robert LeMoyne, Jennifer Huber, Kathy Mahosky, Lauren Copeland-Glenn, Amy Lipschultz
   3. Approval of minutes from March meeting
      1. German motioned to approve minutes from the CDAD March meeting. Judy and Sean seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously
   4. Jamie thanked everyone for attending the CDAD meeting and for working hard during this unprecedented time
   5. The Disability Resources office is open, though many people are working from home
3. Diversity Awards Nominations
   1. A survey will be sent out to listserv for commissioners to vote
4. Co-Chair Nominations
   1. CDAD is looking for folks interested in co-chairing the commission. It is a great opportunity to take on a leadership role in this area, to help with input to the administration, and to be part of the Commission on Commissions. It’s a chance to contribute back to the community and help direct things. If you are interested or can think of someone who might be interested, please reach out to Jamie or Dorianne
      1. A part of Gabe’s goal as the Diversity Fellow is to empower the commissions and create positions that have influence and power. As a co-chair, you will be able to both learn a lot and contribute a lot to what’s going on at NAU. The hope is that the fight for diversity and inclusion is not just left to a single individual
      2. Jamie’s commission appointment is ending this year, so the commission is looking for someone to co-chair with Dorianne
5. Epic Fail event – update
   1. The first Epic Fail event occurred last December, and students wanted to put it on again. Health Promotions set it up so it could be done virtually. The event was held on the 9th
   2. Jamie: There are a lot of resources being shared about supporting student’s mental health. There is a lot going on for everyone right now, and it’s important to remember that academic activities may not be on the top of everyone’s minds right now
   3. Matt gave an update for NAU Counseling Services
      1. The first week Counseling Services backed off on new intakes. For the last week or two they are a fully functioning center again
      2. Services are solely telehealth right now. Counseling Services has HIPAA approved programming
      3. The biggest issue that Counseling Services is facing is that counselors are not allowed to do mental health services across state lines. Students can still be contacted, but the service must be a consult or crises in nature, not ongoing
      4. Counseling Services is doing a lot of anxiety management workshops. The first week or two people seemed to be doing okay, but it seems there has been an uptick in anxiety. The longevity of the circumstances is causing a rise in mental health issues
      5. Jamie: If you are engaged with students who are having difficulty, know that CHS is working and available to support students.
6. Update to Diversity Awards Celebration (event will take place in the fall)
   1. Gabe: Awards will still be given, but the celebration will not occur this spring. We are proceeding with getting nominations. The hope is to move the event to the early fall, assuming we will be back on campus by then. It is unclear how likely that will be
      1. The plan is to announce winners by the end of the semester
   2. Jamie: CDAD will be sending out a select survey through the listserv so commissioners can vote on the nominations. The survey will be sent out within the next day or so. The hope is that voting will be done by the middle of next week. Please watch out for the survey in your emails
   3. There will be an announcement in NAU news, and awardees will be listed the CUAI website
7. Commission on Commissions meeting update
   1. The Commission on Commissions met last week. The president joined for thirty minutes, and attendees were able to ask questions
      1. One thing that was focused on was how the commissions could continue to support the institution at this time. How is this pandemic effecting the groups that the commissions help to represent?
      2. The commission offered its support and assistance for NAU. There was recognition that the commissions can have a large role in welcoming folks back to campus or creating a welcoming environment if things continue online
   2. Other topics of discussion:
      1. Big things coming up related to diverse groups on campus, ranging from the zoom bombing that happened at the LGBTQ event, to the impact of this crisis on our Native American communities, to the concerns in the disability community about how choices are made in an overwhelmed medical system
      2. Students going home to unsafe or unhealthy environments, and concerns around academic performance in these environments
      3. Jamie: Unfortunately, these are times when discrimination rears its head more clearly.
         1. Commission discussed hosting an event or forum to talk about this aspect of the pandemic and how it has created a situation in which many of these attitudes and behaviors come to light. Why? Where does it come from and what that means for us with the work that we do? How do we take this time to move the needle forward around diversity and inclusion?
         2. Jamie: Any thoughts on ways we can address these discrepancies in an educational light?
         3. Jill Young: My program is primarily online. There isn’t an enormous change in what we do, but the issues in the background can play into student success. I think we can recognize that these are ongoing and persistent issues that are just exacerbated right now
         4. Dorianne suggested doing a once a month forum for people who need to connect to resources or other people
         5. German: Cline Library has equipment for students to check out. They’ve relaxed the rules about who can come in and get support; faculty and staff are now allowed to come in for support
      4. Heather: CHER faculty are looking at our county’s data and the ways we can flatten the curve. Heather received a note from the executive director of the ARC of Arizona. They got funding from the Arizona DD counsel. They will be releasing small grants to community organizations to figure out how AZ can best support people with DD during the crisis
      5. Dorianne: Another thing discussed at the meeting was the disparity between students who have access to technology and students who do not. That might be something NAU can address in advance of something like this happening again
      6. Childcare falls disproportionately on women. There has also been a recent reported uptick in DV
   3. Please let Gabe or Lauren know if you have any thoughts about events or resources that can be shared on the CUAI website. It would be great to have everyone engaged in some type of forum or discussion as things move forward
   4. Jamie talked about his experience in the COVID task force and stated his appreciation for all of the work that faculty did to move their courses online. Jamie also acknowledged ITS for opening up the resources that NAU had available
      1. Jennifer: Has anyone heard about issues regarding accessibility and equity among staff/faculty with disabilities or are we doing ok with that?
         1. Jamie: We’re doing our best when we’re aware of issues with the tools that are being used (creating alternatives or changing the job duties that are being assigned)
      2. Chris expressed appreciation for all of the work Don and German have done around issues with accessibility
      3. There are still challenges around digital accessibility
      4. Jamie thanked Sean for all of his work with vendors across the nation
8. Meeting with the President and how CDAD can help
   1. President Cheng gave an update on where things stand currently. The main takeaway was that this is a fluid situation and NAU has to decide on future operations based on what the local and federal health officials are sharing. Everyone is hopeful that NAU will be able to resume normal operations on the fall, but that is depending on what happens with the pandemic
   2. President Cheng was asked about providing for faculty resources to help them ensure accessibility in their course offerings. The current understanding is that everyone with a summer course will be assigned someone to help with instructional design
9. Approved OCR at-home work
   1. A team is being put together to work on remediating content in Ally. For staff who have no work, this project will provide an opportunity for remote work. The team is starting off by taking a look at scanned documents on BBLearn that are not accessible or usable in the many ways our students engage with content, and then remediating them with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. OCR is used to take scanned documents and turn them into a text-based version that is more accessible and usable. The software is available for anyone at NAU to use. For the spring semester there are around 20,000 documents that need to be remediated, so there will be plenty of opportunity for work
      1. Once documents are remediated the team will ask faculty if they will replace inaccessible scans with the remediated files
      2. If you know of anyone who needs work, please tell them to reach out to Jamie
   2. Sean: Publishers have been providing many textbooks as e-texts. Some of the e-text readers have had assistive technology features enabled for all students
   3. Lauren: This could be the start of putting together a team of folks who understand remediation of documents
   4. Lauren thanked Jamie for putting this project together
   5. Jamie has been tracking overall accessibility of BBLearn. NAU accessibility scores have dipped during this quick transition and so much of it is related to the documents that have been put up
10. Center for University Access and Inclusion Website-support the commissions through the COVID crisis – articles, online events (to stay connected), and any other resources we think are supportive
    1. CUAI is looking for resources to support the campus community through this crisis
       1. If anyone has any ideas, please let Lauren know
       2. Chris: Did the President discuss any type of parameters that would be important to understand about what we can put up? She has been very adamant about not straying from NAU.EDU/Coronavirus
          1. Jamie: President Cheng didn’t express any concerns about what type of information we put out there. If there is anything being communicated involving recommendations, they would want that to be coordinated through public affairs
          2. CUAI wants to look at communities needs, resources available, considerations moving forward etc.
    2. Dorianne: During the Commission on Commissions meeting, there was discussion about how people in the commissions can support students, faculty and employees. The commission asked to be included in the decision-making process, so important information can be shared about student needs. President Cheng was receptive to that request
    3. Jamie: Another thing that the commission stressed is that the more transparent the administration can be, the more helpful it is to the campus community
    4. There is a proposal for a commission on global diversity to help support our international community. What are the impacts of the decisions we make for those individuals, or our faculty and staff here on visas? NAU needs to support those communities as we see a rise in xenophobia around the globe
    5. The president was thankful to hear commissions were still active
11. Old/New Business
    1. German: NAU recently rolled out the LOUIE chatbot. Students can get answers to FAQs. There was also a review around the accessibility of the chatbot
    2. Jamie: There has been a lot of good support from the institution, especially around captioning. DR used to do all of the captioning for the president’s videos, but they have recently been doing all of the captioning on their own. Discover NAU programs have been moved online. People have been doing a good job of keeping accessibility in mind, and taking on new responsibilities
    3. Chris: The DSP was sent out last month. Do we know more about how and when it is going to be rolled out more broadly or publicly? Any components of it that might be coming up?
       1. Lauren: It is still the intention to roll it out this semester. The diversity fellows part will be pushed to late summer/early fall. In terms of having a slick design for the rollout, marketing will be working on it over the summer, but the DSP will go live in the next couple of weeks
       2. Jamie proposed that the diversity fellows get training around accessibility and be part of a group of accessibility champions around campus
    4. Jennifer suggested creating a quick and easy tutorial about accessibility for faculty moving to online learning
       1. Jamie stated that he would be happy to pass on resources
12. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.