



TO: ACCES Committee
P12 Education Committee
Higher Education Committee

FROM: Kevin G. Smith *K.G. Smith*
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SUBJECT: Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for
Students with Disabilities

DATE: September 1, 2016

AUTHORIZATION(S):

Margellen Cea
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

To provide the Board of Regents with updated information on the work activities of the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (Council).

Reason(s) for Consideration

For Information.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Board of Regents ACCES, P-12 and Higher Education Committees at their September 2016 meeting.

Procedural History

The New York State Disability Services Council recommended the establishment of an Advisory Council in a meeting with Commissioner John King and Regent Christine Cea during their 2013 fall meeting. The implementation plan for the development of the Advisory Council was presented to the Board of Regents at its December 2013 meeting.

Background Information

The Council serves in the advisory capacity to the Regents regarding the needed supports and services for students with disabilities to succeed in college. Co-chairs are Regent Christine Cea and Tamara Mariotti, Immediate Past President, New York State Disability Services Council. The Council's membership includes Department staff from the Offices of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES), Higher Education, and P-12 Education and a representative from the following constituency groups:

- New York State Disability Services Council
- State University of New York (SUNY)
- The City University of New York (CUNY)
- Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
- Association of Propriety Colleges
- Proprietary School Council
- ACCES State Rehabilitation Council
- New York State Commission for the Blind
- Regional Bilingual Education Resources Network
- Parent Group
- Independent Living Centers
- NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
- New York State Office of Mental Health
- Disability Rights New York
- Transition specialists
- Learning Disability Association
- Student Advocate
- Students enrolled in postsecondary education

(See Attachment A for Council member listing.)

The Council held its first meeting on October 24, 2014. Guiding principles were developed and the following operating parameters were established:

- The full Council will meet twice per year, once each in Albany and New York City.
- Four committees were established: Fiscal, Data Collection, Legislation/Regulation and Technical Assistance; and the committees will meet at various times throughout the year.

Committee Activities

Each of the four Committees met throughout the year reviewing SED program activities, analyzing data and listening to representatives from community and state programs providing support to students with disabilities. The committees identified short and long term goals for improving access, participation in and completion of postsecondary pursuits for students with disabilities.

The following is a summary of the issues being explored in the respective committees:

Fiscal Committee: While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requiring that state and federal institutions be accessible to students with disabilities was signed into law in 1990, many students with disabilities continued to be challenged by inaccessible buildings and programs on college campuses. Physical barriers coupled with staff unfamiliar with reasonable accommodations and ADA requirements are major impediments to the postsecondary success of students with disabilities.

The Fiscal Committee is researching and evaluating the funding streams available to address the reasonable accommodation issues impacting students with disabilities at institutions of higher education. Potential considerations include:

- Expanded support for reasonable accommodation needs of students with disabilities;
- Increased training for faculty awareness and sensitivity of disability issues; and
- Increased college preparation programs to help students with disabilities transition to college life.

Data Collection Committee: This Committee recognized that information on various studies impacting students with disabilities is being collected via multiple systems and by several offices within SED and across the state. However, the resulting data are not shared across programs. The ability to connect these information sources will serve to help in determining the number of students entering postsecondary services; identifying successful model programs; improving services to students and their families; and identifying gaps in services. The Data Collection Committee is exploring options for connecting these independent data sources.

Legislation/Regulation Committee: This Committee will promote the increased use of the existing Reader's Aid program and review and support new legislation and regulations to expand the eligibility requirements for the Reader's Aid program.

Reader's Aid, as overseen by ACCES-VR and administered at the local level by postsecondary education disability service coordinators, provides funding for reader and note taker services to students enrolled in postsecondary education who are blind and/or deaf. Current legislation requires eligible students to meet the legal definition of blindness and/or present with a profound hearing loss (70db). Approximately 200 students in 31 institutions of higher education (IHEs) are participating in this statewide program.

The Committee is exploring the feasibility of expanding the current legislation to:

- Include students with other print disabilities (e.g., learning disability and traumatic brain injury);
- Increase the per student funding allocation; and
- Include the procurement of Assistive Technology to assist students with disabilities in the postsecondary setting in successful completion of coursework.

Technical Assistance Committee: One of the goals of this Committee is to develop a plan for the creation of a “one stop” resource guide containing information on the transition process, available services and supports for students with disabilities. This guide, which would be available to employers, families, students, schools (P-12), college faculty and state agencies, would:

- Be web-based;
- Contain up-to-date information; and
- Allow for easy navigation across multiple service websites.

Related Regents Items

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1213accesd2%5B1%5D.pdf>

Recommendation

With the support of the Board of Regents, the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities will continue its work on the development of recommendations for the improvement of students' with disabilities access to, success in and completion of postsecondary endeavors.

Attachment

New York State Education Department
Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities

Council Members:

- **Chair:** Regent Christine Cea, Member of the Board of Regents, New York State Education Department
- **Co-Chair:** Tamara Mariotti, Immediate Past President, NYS Disability Services Council
- Paula Possenti-Perez, Director, Syracuse University, **New York State Disability Services Council**
- Elizabeth Droz, Ph.D., Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, **State University of New York (SUNY)**
- Christopher Rosa, University Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, The **City University of New York (CUNY)**
- Susan Nesbitt Perez, Ph.D. Vice President, Outreach and Financial Aid, **Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities**
- Donna Stelling-Gurnett, Executive Director, **Association of Proprietary Colleges**
- Michael J. Hatten, Chairman/CEO, New York Automotive and Diesel Institute, **Proprietary School Council**
- Roger Purdy, Director, Disability Support Services, LeMoyne College, **ACCES State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**
- Peter Herrig, Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, **New York State Commission for the Blind**
- Vacant, **Regional Bilingual Education Resources Network (RBERN)**
- Susan Barlow, Parent Network of Western New York, **Parent Group**
- Mariko Sakita, Founder and President, Project Job, **Parent Group**
- Lourdes Rosa-Carrasquillo, Esq., Director of Advocacy, Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY), **Independent Living Centers**
- Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, Director, Employment and Meaningful Activities, **NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities**
- Laura Davis, Mental Health Program Specialist, Bureau of Program Coordination and Support, **New York State Office of Mental Health**
- Erica Marie Molina, Esq., Client Assistance Program (CAP) Director, **Disability Rights New York**
- Patricia Desatnick, Transition Coordinator/Special Education Teacher, Freeport High School, **Transition Specialist**
- Michael Helman, LDA of Western New York-Main Campus, **Learning Disability Association (LDA)**
- Sheila Steinhof, Educational Specialist, Steinhof Educational Services (SES), **Student Advocate**
- Melanie Hecker, Systems Advocate, YOUTH POWER! **Student enrolled in postsecondary education**

New York State Education Department Council Members:

Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services

- Kevin G. Smith, Deputy Commissioner
- Debora Brown-Johnson, Assistant Commissioner
- Dora Lee Stanley
- Suzanne Pearson
- Richard Rose

Office of Higher Education

- John L. D'Agati, Deputy Commissioner
- Stanley Hansen

P-12 Education

- Jhone Ebert, Senior Deputy Commissioner
- Angelica Infante, Deputy Commissioner
- Joanne LaCrosse
- Juan Vargas
- Leigh Mountain
- Kristen Desalvatore