

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County

Task Force on Disability

Monday, April 20, 2015

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members in Attendance

Paul O'Hanlon, Aurelia Carter-Scott, Joe Wassermann, Karen Warman, Sara Goldstein, Janet Evans, Rich McGann, Katherine Seelman, John Tague, Gabe McMoreland

Task Force Members Absent

Jeff Parker, James C. Noschese

Also in Attendance

Sharon Clark, Janelle, Chris Myers, Tracy (intern)

Welcome, Introduction, and Announcements

The meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members in attendance as well as other individuals present. February's minutes are reviewed and motioned to be passed. Mrs. Evans seconds. Motion passes. Mr. Tague informs the Task Force that the Treasurer's report will take place at the May meeting.

Disability Agenda 2000 Retrospective: Education

Mr. O'Hanlon gives the floor to Dr. Seelman who states that the focus of people with disabilities and education should be on physical and technical participation on campus by students with disabilities. There needs to be improvement in the transition from higher education to careers. Disability resources should be available to create an atmosphere of continuous evaluation and progress.

In the Classroom

- University of Pittsburgh and UPMC disability resource centers are separate entities. Once people leave the academic setting of medical school, it falls on UPMC
- There should be online training for professors to handle student with special accommodations because they have too much time taken up already; online and case-by-case is the best method
- The facilities director at Chatham University explained the large developments the University has made in the past five years to overcome an estimated 1,200 deficiencies on campus
- Panelist Josie Badger expounds on her experience going from small, private schools to large, state schools. A lot of buildings will be accessible but only in certain areas, often forcing you to go out of your way

- Accessibility needs to be integrated into the foundation of higher learning. Pitt does an excellent job of making their web content and class work accessible. Through the Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education (CIDE), faculty members are able to make their class materials accessible. It is an excellent way to get different accessibility strategies into the classroom
- Professors should be encouraged to explain what they draw on the board when they use it. For math, science, and economic classes specifically so people who are visually impaired can better understand the material
- Make all kinds of media accessible, whether it is a video, PowerPoint, or guest lecturer
- Peer counseling program would provide a way for people with disabilities to share their experiences with others and give them an outlet as well as make connections that may help post-graduation
- Emotional support animals do not have any support under the ADA but they do under the Fair Housing Act. When and where is it acceptable to have them in the classroom however is a very controversial point and varies place to place

Employment after Graduation

- Large challenge regarding the will of people to disclose their disability in terms of employment. The panel suggests a workshop that teaches students that it's alright to disclose their disability. The fear around it is that they will not get a job, or even an interview. How can we eliminate that fear?
 - Someone suggests that having a panel discussion between people in careers with disabilities and post-graduates with disabilities would be beneficial to lessen the fear associated with disclosing information
- There should be more education for guidance counselors. For instance, does a student belong in a two-year or four-year program? Which program would better fit their needs?
 - Some guidance counselors and admissions offices go above and beyond to make sure accommodations are met. This is the model we need to extend to other Universities
- Mr. McMoreland explains that internships are a great way to give people with disabilities experience to face challenges that they would eventually see in a career

Presentation from City of Asylum

Discussion started by two representatives from City of Asylum concerning a music and theater production that focuses on the history of world economic standards to Pittsburgh. It will involve the disability community in order to tell a collective story. They request help for the workshops and want to know how they can accommodate everybody. The goal is to have two or three performances and to help spread awareness.

Mr. O'Hanlon asks about whether they are looking for hidden, physical, or other kinds of disabilities and the speakers reply that they are looking for anyone who is willing to participate and that they can accommodate. The workshops will take place on May 25th.

New ADA Icon

Chris Myers, Richard's intern, has been working with Mr. McMoreland and Dr. Seelman on the new ADA logo similar to the new one in New York. At the previous Task Force meeting, it was discussed to try and use the new logo on a trial basis. The goal is to create an updated icon that removes some of the stigma of disabilities as the nature of disabilities has changed over the years.

Mr. Myers states that he and Mr. Meritzer are in contact with a group called Triangle who started the new icon project and operate in New York City. When contacted, they may possibly give some more direction and aid to the cause here in Pittsburgh.

Mr. O'Hanlon recommends finding a small way to incorporate the icon, such as on Port Authority buses that are wheelchair accessible and see if there is any significant difference. In terms of parking lots, police enforcement will need to be increased to effectively tell how the new icon does a better or worse job preventing people from parking in the spots reserved for those with disabilities. Mr. Meritzer informs the Task Force that the icon got the most recognition on ADA social media in Pittsburgh. It is decided that the next step in finding out what the next step in from the New York project and find the appropriate way to incorporate it.

The meeting is adjourned at the conclusion of the discussion on the ADA icon.