**SmSUFA Disability Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes**

Monday, October 30, 2017

10:30 AM

ST 202

Present: Kris Cleveland, Teresa Henning, Maria Kingsbury, Stephen Kingsbury, Marilyn Strate, Marianne Zarzana

# Current status of SmSUFA DAC

Over the course of the meeting, committee members discussed and clarified the purpose of the SmSUFA committee, which is to inform and support faculty who may need reasonable accommodation. In the short term, that translates into

* + - informing ALL faculty about their rights to reasonable accommodation under ADA
    - working to make the process for requesting reasonable accommodation clear and accessible
    - suggesting guidelines for faculty-sponsored/attended events and spaces to better accommodate faculty with visible and invisible disabilities

# Overview of Statewide DAC Meeting of October 6, 2017

Maria gave an overview of the IFO’s DAC meeting of October 6, 2017, from noon-4pm in St. Paul. In essence:

* Because this committee is so new, each campus is still working out how to best use the resources of the committee to meet the needs of its faculty. All campuses are still in the process of establishing short-term goals and making their presence known to faculty and potential faculty.
* To support those efforts, the IFO has a website for the Disability Advocacy Committee (<https://www.ifo.org/disabilities-advocacy-committee/>), and sent out a “Did You Know” to IFO members announcing the group(s) and its purpose.
* Other campus administrations—and even faculty on other campuses—have not been as supportive of the presence of the DAC as SMSU’s has been.

# Reasonable Accommodations Forms from Minnstate

An item of concern that arose in the IFO DAC meeting was the forms that are currently required by Minnstate of faculty requesting reasonable accommodation. Right now these forms ask faculty to release all medical records to the administration. This is not legal. The only medical documentation faculty \*need\* to provide to their employer under ADA is a note from a medical doctor stating the need for reasonable accommodation and detailing what that accommodation is.No medical condition needs to even be named. Kathryn Engdahl, IFO Labor and Equity Officer, is currently in conversations with folks at the federal Equal Opportunity Employment Commission in an effort to formally challenge these forms.

In relation to this item, the committee discussed how difficult it was to even know the process of who to go to when faced with requesting reasonable accommodation.

**Action items:**

* Invite Nancy from HR to explain administrative process/expectations
* Create document/booklet/flowchart of “what to expect” when requesting reasonable accommodation
* Create dedicated DAC web space. This page can also include other resources for faculty, including SWISL contact information, etc. (Update: Maria has contacted Jeff Kolnick regarding a web space off the SmSUFA Committee Page, and it is in the works.)

# Other campus concerns

Throughout the meeting, various campus concerns arose. We discussed:

* Commencement
  + Difficulty of attendance for faculty with mobility limitations
  + Temperature regulation
  + Acknowledgement (or lack thereof) of ASL interpreters
* Food at faculty events
  + Few choices for folks with gluten, sodium, sugar, dietary restrictions
  + How do we even know what restrictions people have? Broad survey? Announcement with meeting/event invitation to contact so-and-so with dietary restrictions?
* Overall campus mobility concerns
  + Student recently had door malfunction and fall on her mechanized chair, damaging it to the tune of $1500.
  + Student Access Club working on overall audit of potential campus mobility concerns—how can we fold this into our agenda?
  + Elevators are ill-placed and, if out of commission, onerous to use.
  + A canopy into FA to facilitate better access for folks with mobility issues has been proposed—not sure what its status is presently, but it probably requires funding.
* Receiving guidance from Student Disability Services on campus—they have their services and accommodations drawn up—can we learn from and adapt these accommodations for faculty use?
* Teresa and Marianne both suggested that upcoming courses they’re teaching may intersect with the work of the DAC—and we’ll welcome all of the help and feedback we can get!
* Faculty education regarding ADA: Can we get on a Professional Development Day to discuss procedures, once they have been codified?

**Action items**:

* Request meeting with Chartwell’s representative to discuss options/accommodations that can be made to campus catering
* Marianne offered to talk to Lloyd White, former faculty member, to gain further perspective on mobility concerns
* Contact faculty members of Commencement Committee to see what accommodations can be made for faculty with mobility issues
* Contact Jeff regarding being on Fall 2018’s Professional Development Day
* Contact Pam in Student Disability Services for support documentation

# Delegate Assembly resolutions proposals

Maria reported that the IFO DAC is currently planning on proposing 2 resolutions at Delegate Assembly in March, 2018. The language is still in the works, but one deals with preferential hiring for people with disabilities, and the other ensures that websites serving faculty are ADA-compliant.

Further suggestions for resolutions are welcomed!

# Other

* + Maria requested that DAC members consider being an “alternate” in case a reasonable accommodation issue arose on campus and she were unavailable; all chairs of DACs are requesting this on their various campuses.
  + Kris found out that she is officially the “Camps Ergonomic Consultant.”

**Action item:** Teresa will report out from this meeting to Faculty Assembly on November 9th. We will hope to have minutes posted publicly by then. Thanks, Teresa!

Addendum: Though she was unable to attend the meeting, DAC member Julie Walker had these thoughts to share based on questions Maria proposed:

* *What kinds of training/communication do you think would help faculty understand their rights under ADA?*

*I think starting with definitions of what is covered under ADA (mental health, diagnosed or not, etc) may be helpful, including an anonymous session on “is this a disability” or some flow charts of “is this covered under ADA” or things like that might be useful. Specifically we could anticipate issues folks on SMSU’s campus may be facing that they aren’t asking for help with (e.g., mental health support) but maybe that they could ask for help for.*

*I also think as Disability Advocacy committee I’d like to see us draft a quick something to drop in mailboxes of staff once a semester (1/4 sheet would probably be fine) to remind folks about the free mental health services (up to 3 visits each year) covered by SMSU. Seems like a way to get visibility and positive connection to services to campus by Disability Advocacy group. Possibly get printing costs sponsored by counseling and testing since we don’t have a budget?*

* *What are some things that we as faculty can do to improve accommodation on our campus?*

*I think we could ask for accessibility plans for how we make sure all interviews are scheduled in ways that show accessibility of the campus. Like how do we make sure all interviews happen in accessible places, what places on campus are currently not accommodated, etc.*

*I think we could also address hearing accommodations, making sure that all faculty use microphones for all-university things, all performance things, etc.*

*Finally, having accessible bathrooms throughout campus is a big thing, but we’ve talked about that. I had to step back from the aggressive pace of that project to keep my sanity, but it’s still on my radar.*