



TO: Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) Committee

FROM: Kevin G. Smith 

SUBJECT: Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities

DATE: May 4, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

To provide the Board of Regents with information on the recommendations from the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (Council) for improving access to, success in and completion of postsecondary pursuits for students with disabilities.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For discussion and approval.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Board of Regents ACCES Committee at the May 2017 meeting.

Procedural History

The Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities was established on December 16, 2013.

Background Information

The Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Regents on policies and practices to improve the transition of students with disabilities to postsecondary education and training, fiscal resource needs and disability-related accommodations and supports that will assist a student to succeed in college. The Council Co-chairs are

Regent Christine Cea and Tamara Mariotti, Past President, New York State Disabilities 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-Special Education and a representative from several constituency groups. (See Attachment A for Council member listing.)

Committee Activities

The full Council meets twice a year and has met six times since the first meeting in October 2014. Four sub-committees were established: Fiscal, Data Collection, Legislative/Regulation and Technical Assistance. Each of the sub-committees have met various times throughout the year reviewing SED program activities, analyzing data and listening to representatives from community and state programs providing support to students with disabilities as well as students with disabilities who described challenges and successes in pursuit of their postsecondary endeavors. As a result of these efforts, the committees identified short and long term goals for improving access to, support during and the successful completion of postsecondary endeavors for students with disabilities.

Recommendations

The Department is committed to working with the higher education community to share best practices on effective programs and services for students with disabilities across all institutions of higher education in the State. Here are some of the key strategies the Council recommends for improving access, opportunity and success of students with disabilities in postsecondary education.

Fiscal Committee:

Recommendation: Based upon the needs and ongoing challenges that have been identified by the Council membership, initiate a discussion with the appropriate representatives of the State University of New York, the City University of New York, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU), and the Association of Proprietary Colleges (APC) to support them in meeting the reasonable accommodation needs of students with disabilities:

- To provide needed funds for degree granting institutions of higher education (IHE) with academic programs registered with the NYS Education Department;
- To support faculty and staff at the institution to receive Disability Awareness training; and,
- To support a mechanism for the Department to provide technical assistance to IHE campuses.

Rationale: Currently, only institutional support is available to assist postsecondary institutions in providing academic supports and aids to students with disabilities. This outreach would seek to build support for and reinforce the provision of academic services and aids, disability awareness training, summer transition for incoming college students with disabilities, and data collection on students with disabilities. A consensus across the

higher education sectors on meeting the needs of post-secondary students with disabilities will serve to improve student access and success.

Legislative/Regulation Committee:

Recommendation: Revise legislation to expand the eligibility requirements for the existing Reader's Aid Program resulting in: increase to annual aid cap per student, expanded eligibility to include non-degree granting proprietary schools in New York State, provide eligibility for students with learning disabilities and other print disabilities and authorize the use of up to half of the funds for purchase of assistive technology.

Rationale: Since enactment in 1936, the Reader's Aid Program has provided funding of up to \$1,000 per student to colleges and universities to use on behalf of their students who are blind, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing. This funding has been used to date to help meet the costs of note-takers, readers and interpreter services. By limiting funding to be spent by schools to note-takers, readers and interpreter services, the current Reader's Aid Program fails to address fully the challenges of today's student as they seek to integrate changing technology with educational goals. By using existing funding to increase the per student award to the Reader's Aid Program for the first time in 70 years, participating schools would be better equipped to meet the soaring costs of support services, including interpreter services for their eligible students.

Data Collection Committee:

Recommendation: Expand SED transition data collection:

- To connect with postsecondary institutions (SUNY/CUNY) to link education data.
- To require Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision (BPSS) to enhance their data collection by including specific data elements on student outcomes.

Rationale: Postsecondary level data lacks sufficient information regarding students with disabilities. There are no data on the transition of K-12 student to postsecondary and data from non-degree granting proprietary schools are not required and therefore, not collected. Having these data will help to ensure Students With Disabilities (SWD) are being served, ensure appropriate services are provided, identify successful programs, and improve overall services to students and their families.

Technical Assistance Committee:

Recommendation: Identification and support of a sustainable "Multiple Systems Navigator" cross-system resource containing information on the transition process, available services, and supports for students with disabilities.

The "Multiple Systems Navigator" cross-system resource would:

- Guide high school and college students, and/or the adults who support them;
- Provide simplified online access to resources available across the multiple state agencies;
- Contain up-to-date, organized information on services available in NYS; and,
- Allow for navigation to vetted national, local, or nonprofit resources serving Transition Aged Youth.

Rationale: Because available information on resources is currently scattered, individuals with disabilities, their families, and educators often struggle with identifying resources that would promote academic success for an individual's needs. If NYS agencies pool their efforts to market their available resources consistently and efficiently, it will facilitate improved communication with the public while increasing the visibility of ongoing efforts to support all involved in helping students with disabilities succeed in achieving higher education goals. The Office of Children and Family Services (OFCS) currently has a system, developed with grant funds, that SED could consider for further development.

Related Regent's Items

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

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/916accesp12hed1.pdf>

Recommendation

Support the Advisory Council's postsecondary recommendations and forwarding of these recommendations to respective SED program areas for consideration for implementation.

Attachment A

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, Past President, NYS Disability Services Council
- Paula Possenti-Perez, Director, Syracuse University, New York State Disability Services Council
- Nazely Kurkjian, Coordinator of Disability, Diversity and Nontraditional Student Services, State University of New York (SUNY)
- Christopher Rosa, University Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, City University of New York (CUNY)
- Susan Nesbitt Perez, Ph.D. Vice President, Outreach and Financial Aid, Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York
- 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)
- Lauren Corp, 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
- Barbara Glassman, Executive Director, INCLUDEnyc, Parent Group
- Karen Thayer, Executive Director, Southern Adirondack Independent Living, 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
- Dr. Richard Rose
- Suzanne Pearson

Office of Higher Education

- John L. D'Agati, Deputy Commissioner
- Stan Hansen, Assistant Commissioner

P-12 Education

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