



**Accessibility Task Force
Inaugural Meeting
October 31, 2024
President's Conference Room, Green Hall
9 a.m.
Meeting Summary**

Attendees: Evans Boateng-Boakye, Andrew Davies, Paul DePace, Erin Earle, Markeisha Miner, Robin Santini, Nina Schiarizzi-Tobin, Dorca Smalley, Terry Wild

I. Introductions

All task force members were present and participated in the inaugural meeting. Student Senate is expected to name an undergraduate student representative in the near future. Task Force members introduced themselves and shared why service on this task force is meaningful to them personally and professionally.

II. Governance

a. Accessibility Task Force Composition

Each member was nominated by a member of the President's Executive Council or President's Stewardship Council.

b. Charge

Task force members reviewed the charge, including members' responsibility to gather and disseminate information to the various constituencies represented. Members identified ways in which the task force's charge could be further clarified, including areas that could be confirmed as part of its envisioned scope including:

- i. Gathering data to establish the current baseline of students, faculty, and staff who self-identify as being members of the disability community;
- ii. Broadening the listing of external entities whose work the task force may need to consider beyond the Governor's Commission on Disabilities;
- iii. Sharing feedback from campus constituents regarding prioritization of compliance initiatives for decision making office's consideration; and,
- iv. Defining success and setting KPIs.

The Offices of Equal Opportunity and Institutional Research collect baseline data. Additional self-disclosed data will be gathered through the snap climate survey. Committee members discussed how current the self-identification information is and how self-disclosure rates may vary for students, faculty, and staff.

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c. Terms

Members discussed 1-year terms for student members and 2-year terms for faculty and staff members. The task force agreed by consensus to re-assess the duration of members' terms in May after having an opportunity to work through some aspects of the initial charge. Members noted that priorities, personnel, and perspectives may need to change once the initial tasks are completed.

d. Notification of Meetings and Quorum

The task force agreed on the threshold for quorum being set at two-thirds, or six of nine, members to conduct business. The task force discussed and agreed that a majority vote would be required to advance recommendations.

e. Meeting Minutes or Meeting Summaries

Task force members discussed and agreed that transparency regarding meeting agendas and summaries is critical. Follow up with the Office of General Counsel is required regarding the format and appropriate forum for documentation of the task force's work.

f. Membership Removal and Resignation Procedures

The task force discussed and agreed upon the need for regular and consistent attendance.

g. Code of Ethical Conduct

The task force discussed the need for its meetings to provide space for candid conversations with ground rules for respectful and engaged dialogue across difference. A draft Code of Ethical Conduct will be presented at the next meeting for the task force's consideration.

h. Accessibility Task Force Priorities

Task force members discussed identifying accessibility concerns and prioritizing them for the group's further consideration. The task force's observations given experience based on their roles at the University and the constituencies they represent fall into the following categories:

- i. Reducing/Eliminating Physical Barriers: Building access, navigating university spaces during inclement weather, etc.
- ii. Providing Faculty/Staff Support: Access to information about available resources for new faculty and staff during the onboarding process as well as support for instructors, supervisors, and managers charged with implementing approved accommodations.
- iii. Enhancing Student Experience: Accommodated students' treatment in instructional environments, including graduate student support. Enhancing accessibility in extra-curricular activities is necessary to address any gaps between the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive culture and independent student organizations' practices.

III. Updates/Announcements

a. Disability Employment Awareness Month Event

The Disability Advocacy Group's Walk and Roll Disability Employment Awareness Month event, held on the Quad on October 9, was co-sponsored by the Division of Administration and Finance and the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity. Participating community partners included the

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Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disability and the Ocean State Center for Independent Living, among others. The event emphasized the ability for people with disabilities to be successful in a variety of careers and equipped attendees with practical skills to navigate the interview process.

b. Campus Comprehensive Plan

The Campus Comprehensive Plan is being developed with assistance from Sasaki, an external firm. Accessibility of University facilities and landscapes is a key consideration. Sasaki is hosting sessions with University constituents. Planning committee representatives will share updates with this task force.

c. RI Governor's Commission on Disability

The Governor's Commission' is working to address physical barriers at state agencies, including the University, following a survey that was completed in 2023. There are associated annual budget allocations to enhance accessibility. URI has requested \$2.5 million over the next 5-year budget cycle. The task force will receive updates on the planning group's efforts, including restroom and elevator assessments. Input from this task force will be helpful to future planning and prioritization efforts.

IV. Next Steps

The Task Force's next monthly meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible and materials will be shared one week in advance, including a list of all task force members.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:10 a.m.