

THINK BIG  WE DO™



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

President's Commission on People With Disabilities

**Executive Summary
2014**

**Respectfully Completed by:
Pamela Rohland, Co-Chair
Bridget Ruemmele, Co-Chair
November 2014**

Introduction:

The President's Commission on People with Disabilities (PCPD) was established September 2013 by President David Dooley, and was based on the proposal prepared by the "Working Group to Establish a [President's Commission on People with Disabilities]" in July 2013. The PCPD includes 30 persons, including representatives from the student population, staff, faculty, and administration who are concerned about issues related to all types of accessibility for people with disabilities at the University of Rhode Island. Members are appointed by the President.

Committee Membership:

Includes presidentially appointed representatives, from various facets of the university: Faculty, Staff and Student representation is included.

First name	Last name	Position	Department
Stephen	Baker	Member**	Director, Public Safety
Tamara	Bolotow	Member	CCE Instr. Support and Disability Services
Annette	Bourbonniere	Member, Student Advisor	Graduate Student, Environ & Nat Res Econ
Meredith	Clark	Member	Graduate School of Oceanography
Betsy	Cooper	Member	College of Business Administration
Meada	Daly-Cano	Member	Graduate Student, Psychology
Paul	DePace	Member	Capital Projects
Mike	Donohue	Member**	Public Safety
Nancy	Doyle-Moss	Member	College of Nursing
Joanne	Eichinger	Member	School of Education
Robert	Ferrell	Member	Alumni Relations
Leonard	Gerber	Member	Nutrition & Food Science
Roxanne	Gomes	Member	Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Anita	Jackson	Member	Pharmacy
Laura	Kenerson	Member	Human Resources
Mary Jane	Klinkhammer	Member	Counseling Center
Joanne	Lynch	Member	Admission
Leslie	Mahler	Member	Communicative Disorders Program
John	Merrill	Resigned	Oceanography
Adam	Moore	Member	School of Education
Joannah	Portman-Daley	Member	Online Learning and Teaching
Tanya	Roberts	Member	Media & Technology Resources
Pamela	Rohland	Member, Staff Co-chair, One year	Disability Services for Students
Susan	Roush	Member	Physical Therapy Program
Bridget	Ruemmele	Member, Faculty Co-Chair 2 years	Plant Sciences
Earl	Smith III	Member	Deans Office, Arts and Science

W.Michael	Sullivan	Member	Plant Sciences
Christine	Sullivan	Member	Office of the Controller

****Newest members**

Goals and Mission:

The PCPD shall work to ensure an inclusive, universally designed, and welcoming community in terms of safety, well-being, and education for students, faculty and staff who have disabilities.

To accomplish the mission of the PCPD, in the context of social justice, the PCPD will identify issues of concern, best practices, and solutions related to accessibility of the entire community of people with disabilities at the University of Rhode Island. Many issues will be based on state and federal laws of ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008) and Sections 504/508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Issues, best practices, and solutions will be submitted to Naomi Thompson, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, for Community, Equity, and Diversity, who will advocate for these issues at the highest level of the senior leadership team.

Specifically:

1. encourage a climate to celebrate differences and abilities among all people at URI, while affirming the many outstanding contributions of people with disabilities to the campus community;
2. identify major topics of concern for people with disabilities;
3. propose policies, programs and training so that URI's ongoing dialogue of social justice and civil rights continues to include issues related to disability;
4. collaborate with all areas of the university community to recommend accessibility, safety, and universal design of buildings, the curriculum, programs, and services;
5. advise primary URI administrators on issues of disability;
6. monitor the effectiveness of proposed/implemented policies and initiatives;
7. communicate progress of these efforts to the administration and surrounding community; and
8. submit to the senior leadership team and their designees, recommendations that would enhance inclusion and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

Sample Activities of the Commission to Date:

- The PCPD conducted 11 meetings from September 2013 to December 2014.
- Goals prepared by the PCPD Working Committee served as the starting point for prioritizing issues of concern.
- The commission members chose commission leadership and letters of appointment have been distributed.
- Specific University Manual language describing the purpose, mission and goals was designed by consent of the members. The document, formatted to be consistent with

language of other Presidential Commissions was forwarded to the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity for inclusion in the University Manual. The University Manual is being edited at this writing.

- Two task forces were created to address the first two goals of the commission:
 - Increase awareness on campus of issues affecting people with disabilities, and
 - Identify and suggest recommendations for addressing class and campus access issues affecting people with disabilities.
- The task forces have met and brought to the entire commission suggestions and / or plans of action for their respective missions.
- The commission arranged topics, speakers, and videos for part of 2014 Diversity Week program facilitated by the College of Pharmacy.
- The commission has discussed and is preparing a report for presentation to the appropriate University Administration personnel regarding class and campus access issues.
- The commission members reviewed the Campus Security video, “Run Hide Fight-URI Emergency Preparedness” and have discussed some issues related to people with disabilities that may still need to be addressed. Mary Jane Klinkhammer wrote to President Dooley a very insightful letter that was endorsed by two Commissions (President's Commission on the Status of Women, and this commission, PCPD).
- Members have addressed some issues of online accessibility, especially regarding students or participants who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, and are collaborating with the particular departments to increase universal access of online courses for persons with disability.
- Members have discussed parking and transportation as particular areas of concern for inclusion and accessibility for persons with disability; there have also been concerns about signage and way-finding. Addressing these issues will help not only community members but also visitors to our campus.
- The Commission has met with the Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Thompson to review her goals and expectations, and to express the goals of the Commission.

Future Directions:

- Plan a meeting with President Dooley and Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Thompson for early 2015 to update them on progress to date, addressing

particular issues of concern.

- Develop and publish a website to display the goals, mission, executive summaries and approved meeting minutes.
- Collaborate with various departments as needed to establish funding and staffing for accessibility concerns addressed above, in particular captioning for online videos and courses as well as for transportation and parking.
- Collaborate with various departments to establish funding and programs that address increased awareness about and celebration of the many positive contributions of people with disabilities to the URI Community.