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THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

President's Commission on People With Disabilities

**Executive Summary
2015**

**Respectfully Completed by:
Anita Jackson, Co-Chair
Pamela Rohland, Co-Chair**

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 now includes 25 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.

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	Faculty Co-Chair, 2 yrs.	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	Staff Co-chair, 2 yrs.	Disability Services for Students
Susan	Roush	Member	Physical Therapy Program
Bridget	Ruemmele	Member**	Plant Sciences
Earl	Smith III	Member	Deans Office, Arts and Science
W.Michael	Sullivan	Member	Plant Sciences
Christine	Sullivan	Member	Office of the Controller

**Dr. Ruemmele was Faculty Co-Chair from 2013 to 2014

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 in Academic Year 2014-15:

- The PCPD conducted 4 official meetings and several preparatory meetings from September 2014 to May 2015 with additional Task Force meetings and activities.
- Task Force I conducted awareness presentations and workshops during Diversity Week 2014. Topics and presentations included:
 - My Struggles Define Me.
 - Whisper Sweet Nothings
 - Celebration! The Arts and Disability
 - Youth in Transition and Employment: What to expect in the work world.
 - Autism: A Shared Disability, A Shared Responsibility.
- The Commission met with the Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Thompson to review her goals and expectations, to express the goals of the Commission and to guide the Commission's annual meeting with President Dooley.
- On March 2, 2015 the Commission met with President Dooley to present priorities and recommendations related to:
 - Transportation and Parking: disability parking, point-to-point transportation, full-campus parking evaluation, etc.
 - Safety and Evacuation: plan of evacuation for each building, areas of refuge design, surveillance technology, buddy system, etc.

- Curriculum and Online Accessibility: closed caption outsourcing versus in-house solutions, enhanced universal design through effective pedagogy, accessibility policies related to purchasing media, etc.
- Task Force II met on April 9, 2015 with leaders from Communication and Marketing, Community Equity and Diversity, Instructional Design/Online Learning, Media Services, and Disability Services to discuss the importance of captions for online films for marketing or for courses.
- In progress: Develop and publish a website to display the goals, mission, executive summaries and approved meeting minutes. (web.uri.edu/pcpd)

Future Directions:

- Recruit undergraduate student member to be recommended for appointment by the president.
- Develop prioritization and step-wise fashion of implementation for the recommendations made by the Commission on March 2, 2015.
- Conduct a comparison of the URI population of students, faculty and staff with disabilities to regional land-grant peer institutions.
- Refine and further define the role of the PCPD in relation to the implementation of the recommendations presented at the March 2, 2015 meeting. (e.g. training and education, awareness building, consulting, advising, etc.)
- Collaborate with various departments and offices to seek funding for implementation of the Commission's recommendations.