# Meeting Minutes April 22, 2023 PACDI Meeting

* Welcome - President Kevin M. Guskiewicz - (Tracy Leahy)
* Introductions – PACDI members
* Opening Thought/Quote – (Brooke Jeffery)
* PACDI History, Recent Restructure, Future – (Tracy Leahy)
  + History
  + Recent bylaw revisions
  + Future initiatives
* Report Overview – Opportunities, Challenges, Recommendations
  + Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities – (Michael Hudson and Shelby Gombosi)
    - MSU national leader: Historical roots and innovation before legal guidance building from student and persons with disabilities voice (Tower Guard and RCPD Founding).
    - Student growth 40% since pandemic but 5-15% annual being normative – staff growth is slower.
    - Innovation through private support for our work with 18 endowments and major gifts bringing RCPD 18% (4) of our staff via private partnerships.
    - $80k in student scholarships this year.
    - Partnership with Colleges and Departments aid access and innovation: Engineering, Education, Business, CAL, CNS, REHS, ADA Coordinator Digital Access Team.
    - Challenges we are actively engaging as supported by PACDI:
      * Data Systems Modernization
      * Securing ASL interpreters
      * Facilitating additional spaces for testing accommodations
        + Q) How easy is it to replace the data system?
        + A) We have a request for proposal our currently. If the funding were approved today, we would get started right away allowing six to twelve months for full replacement.
  + Digital Accessibility Team – Dennis Bond
    - The Digital Accessibility Team works closely with Educational Technology, Libraries, RCPD, and other accessibility-adjacent units. We own the Digital Accessibility Policy and run the Digital Accessibility website which contains a basic accessibility checklist, tutorials, training, an issue reporting form, a list of liaisons, and the policy itself.
    - MSU’s Digital Accessibility Policy is based on an industry standard that is also used in the new Department of Justice regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Once published, the DOJ will require us to meet WCAG 2.1 within 2 years. We are aiming for 2.2 by the end of 2025, and MSU has been requiring 2.0 since the year 2009.
    - Each Major Administrative Unit at MSU has a Digital Accessibility Liaison who serves as a point of contact for compliance. We coordinate liaison meetings, provide metrics and dashboards, and require an Annual Self-Review of each unit. Liaisons also encourage digital accessibility awareness and training for employees in their units.
    - PACDI Recommendations regarding Digital Accessibility:
      * Digital Accessibility Team – Publish dashboards (behind an MSU login) showing university wide digital accessibility metrics related to culture, trainings, websites, courses, and videos. (work in progress)
      * Digital Accessibility Team – Develop mandatory digital accessibility training based on employee role. (starting on this now, targeting fall)
      * Educational Technology - When appropriate, encourage the use of the centrally supported LMS in all courses.
      * Educational Technology - When applicable encourage colleges and others providing academic content to conduct annual accessibility reviews of courses.
      * Continued meeting and collaboration between units responsible for digital accessibility to include the Digital Accessibility Team in OCR, RCPD’s Assistant Director of Assistive Technology, the Accessibility Coordinator for the Libraries, Educational Technology, and the Center for Teaching and Learning to coordinate sharing of information, resources, and trainings to enhance digital accessibility at MSU.
        + Q) Are we leading the way in digital accessibility?
        + A) We always try to stay ahead of where we are required to be.
        + Q) What is the D2L platform?
        + A) It’s the main course management platform run by the university where people upload files. It has a checker, named Sparty, that can tell the user about the accessibility of their materials.
  + Student Perspective – Brooke Jeffery
    - Students are encouraged to attend courses and meetings in person.
    - Incentives are offered for students who attend meetings in person.
    - During Covid, courses and meetings were held remotely, yet there is resistance to holding classes and meetings remotely post-Covid.
    - Encouraging in-person attendance at meetings and courses and discouraging remote or hybrid attendance is detrimental to people with disabilities.
    - While free IT support and technology for hybrid and remote options is available for courses, for extracurricular meetings the same support and technology comes with costs that may prohibit some units from offering hybrid and remote options.
    - PACDI can assist by supporting a statement to units recommending remote or hybrid meetings when possible and noting that negative inferences should not be drawn by hybrid attendance at meetings.
      * + Q) Can you elaborate from a student point of view?
        + A) There are different experiences between undergraduate and graduate students. Two main issues are accommodations not being implemented by faculty – a lot of times faculty don’t know better or haven’t been educated on this. Also, events have really ramped up now post-pandemic and their needs to be support for students to attend them remotely.
        + Q) As a professor, I don’t know how to help students when they come to me and disclose an issue. My Chair doesn’t know either. How can faculty have guidelines to help?
        + A) The student’s accommodation letter directs both faculty and student how to implement their accommodation(s). You can look at ‘Faculty Resources’ on the front page of the RCPD website. There’s a D2L training that faculty can participate in.
  + Staff Perspective – Stephen Stofflet
    - Raise awareness of disability resources and accommodations available for employees.
    - PACDI recommendations
      * Evaluate and consider conducting benchmarking surveys to determine how MSU compares to other Big 10 Universities as it relates to the percentage of employees, faculty and staff who identify as having a disability or seek accommodations to perform essential job functions.
      * Coordinate with campus partners like RCPD, and the ADA Coordinator to advance a campaign to raise awareness of disability and accommodations for employees with disabilities.
    - Beginning campaign to connect with unions and coordinate training with Accommodation Specialist from Office of Employee Relations regarding employee accommodations.
  + Student Life & Engagement Perspective – Diane Barker
    - REHS (Residence Education and Housing Services) and RCPD (Resource Center for Students with Disabilities) have committed to an ongoing partnership that integrates each area strategically into processes, timelines, policies, and communication.
    - Specific team members from RCPD and REHS handles these requests.  This unique partnership has yielded a more seamless student and staff experience when addressing over 500 student requests with 1 or more accommodation requests annually.
    - REHS continues to strategically manage housing processes, communications with RCPD and room inventory to ensure no student is turned away for any accommodation request.
    - A cross operational team inclusive of RCPD, SLE, IPF, ISPM, OCR could assist in coordination, engagement on projects, planning, and process.  Students travel through a single campus experience.
    - In July 2019, Culinary Services (CS) opened THRIVE in Owen Hall.  MSU’s first dining hall certified to be allergen free for 8 major food allergens, it is nationally recognized and has led the way in this area.  It is now open 7 days a week and certified for 9 major allergens and gluten (eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, wheat) and gluten.  This project emerged from a growing need with more students and community members having allergen challenges.  CS dietitian Kelsey Patterson and RCPD work together to identify who needs assistance and help them find solutions.  There were over 400 allergen and other diseases needing dietary accommodations this past year.  Thrive at Owen is one part of the solution.  CS also uses OrderIT, a custom-built order ahead application for students registered with RCPD, RCPD/CS Referral form and working together to solve issues and training over 400 culinary team members on allergens.  CSU is currently working with REHS and RCPD on streamlining this process to offer housing close to Thrive for students who have reported food allergies or dietary restrictions.
    - SLE has 3 major Capital projects that they are very involved in.  In May 2024 Campbell Hall renovation, new construction of a Student Rec and Wellness Center and a Multicultural Center are in process.  All will meet code for accessibility for new building or renovation.  Gender inclusivity has also been a focus.
    - Challenges are resources (monetary and people) - staying ahead of increasing requests from our students, being able to accommodate combined requests from a student and honor their desired selections.
    - PACDI recommendations
      * Evaluate and consider funding for enhanced technology, including digital signage, new apps, and a new order management system.
      * Evaluate and consider funding for one additional full-time dietician, based on student demand, and supports by other Big 10 programs, who employ at least 2 dieticians.
      * Partner with RCPD and the ADA Coordinator to raise awareness of available services for students needing dietary accommodations.
        + Q) Have we encountered students living in inaccessible accommodations (i.e. only one elevator in the building, and that breaks down)?
        + A) Now that we have started the Campbell Hall renovations, there are only two residence halls that are not ADA compliant – and we monitor who can and can not be placed in those halls.

* Questions from the President
  + Do you have any questions for the Committee?
    - * + Q) How often does the committee meet?
        + A) We are scheduled to meet monthly during the academic year. This year we ran into several holidays, and we are reevaluating the meeting day for next year to avoid holidays.
        + Q) How will the committee play a role with respect to the recommendations made in the report?
        + A) The report will be shared with the presenters and their leadership. As the year goes by, we will have a progress report to submit with next year’s report.
        + Q) Do you ever hear from students’ parents?
        + A) Often! We would like to find a process or protocol to elevate parent concerns and respond to them and not pass them from unit to unit.
* Questions to the President
  + Did you have a similar committee at the University of North Carolina?
    - There was not a standing committee that met regularly. I am really impressed when I learned about this committee and may recommend it to UNC.
  + If not, how were challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities communicated to you?
    - There were two different offices that manage accommodations.
  + Would you like changes to the format or information included in the report?
    - The format is good. I often like specific examples, especially from the students.
* Sub-Committee to plan next year’s meetings
* Committee meeting days/times
  + Please complete survey if you have not already done so
* Next meeting – September 2024