

Community Advisory Council Meeting

March 27, 2024, 12-3pm NOTES

Agenda Summary

12:00-12:20	Welcome and review agenda.
12:20-12:25	Brief questions about pre-meeting updates.
12:25-12:45	Membership and votes.
12:45-1:20	Accessibility work at UVM.
1:20-1:30	Take a break.
1:30-1:40	Icebreaker!
1:40-2:50	Breakout groups: Membership and accessibility work.
2:50-3:00	Discuss how meeting went.

Detailed Agenda

12:00-12:15 Welcome.

- The council started the meeting at 12:05.
- David led introductions.
- VOTE: Do you approve minutes from December meeting?
 1. Matthew moved to approve the minutes. Skye made a second.
 2. The December minutes were approved with 6 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstentions.
- The table below show which members were present.

Name	Present
David Frye, Co-Chair	Yes
Melissa Houser, Co-Chair	Yes
Hasan Ko	Yes

Name	Present
Matthew LeFluer	Yes
Kristofor Medina	Yes (joined at 12:25)
Kirsten Murphy	Not present
Lindsey Owen	Not present
Skye Peebles	Yes
Persephone Ringgenberg	Not present
Michael Shor	Yes
Total 6 out of 10	60% of members

CDCI Personnel Present: Audrey, Adrienne, Winnie, and Jesse

12:15-12:20 Review agenda.

David shared the main topics for today's meeting:

1. Briefly take questions about pre-meeting updates and video.
2. Council membership
3. Accessibility work at UVM
4. Breakout groups on membership and accessibility work.

12:20-12:25 Pre-meeting updates and video.

Mel described the new pre-meeting updates video this month.

- The goal was to give updates like these outside CAC meeting. This gives more time for discussion during CAC meeting.
- Member feedback on the video:
 - Michael shared that the format was good. He would also like a reminder email 24 hours before the meeting.

- Skye liked the video. She also liked the written transcript.
- Matthew said the video was in plain language and professional. Important to make our work professional because it helps how others see our work.
- Mel asked if council members had questions about what was in the video:
 - Adrienne is leaving CDCI and Vermont this summer.
 - White House event called Communities in Action.
 - Next AUCD conference is November 3-6, 2024.
 - Planning 50th anniversary for CDCI Fall 2024.
- Members asked Adrienne to share more about her plans. Adrienne shared this Fall she will be a new faculty member at Appalachian State University. This is in North Carolina. Very rural area, like Vermont. She will be one of five faculty members in new [Occupational Therapy program](#). She is excited to work with one of her favorite professors. She is sad to leave CDCI and work with CAC. Really enjoyed working with CAC in her role as core function coordinator. Will take lessons learned here at CDCI to support students in North Carolina. Hope to stay connected to CDCI in her new role.

12:25 – 12:45 Membership

Mel introduced the topic of increasing membership for CAC.

- June Bascom is no longer on CAC. She retired March 22. Developmental Services will recommend a new member soon.
- Kris Medina joined the meeting! He shared that this is the first meeting he's been able to join in several years. He lost his employment and community support with the pandemic. He spends 24/7 with his mom, and happy to see the council members again. Members welcomed him back.
- Mel asked if council members have ideas for recruiting new members:

- Matthew shared need to consider our process. Want to make sure we are welcoming and don't pressure people.
- Mel asked how we could better connect with new groups?
- Michael said would be helpful to make the CAC more visible to others. Need to have people who know about formal disability services AND people who are not. Need to have people from different cultural groups too. This includes racial diversity and other kinds of diversity. New members are helping lead new conversations on CAC.
- Skye seconds everything Michael said. She noted most CAC members are in Montpelier, Burlington, and Waterbury. Skye is in southern Vermont. Could recruit in southern and eastern parts of the state. Also good to have more youth on CAC. Thinking about Think College.
- In chat Mel asked if we could do recruitment at Green Mountain Self-Advocate meetings. Skye said good idea. Could someone from CAC come to a GMSA meeting to talk about the council and CDCI?
- Adrienne asked how current members were invited to join? People invited to add notes in chat. Two members shared it was through current CAC members.
- Mel shared that three members terms are ending.
 - Persephone and Michael's first 3-year terms have ended.
 - David's second 3-year term has ended. Members only have 2 3-year terms, but the council can decide they should stay. David had said he is willing to serve longer if that is what the council wants.
- Jesse reminded the council they may have up to 20 members.
- Mel asked Michael and David to leave the meeting and then called three votes for new 3-year terms.
 - Persephone: Yes 4, No 0, Abstain 0

- Michael: Yes 4, No 0, Abstain 0
- David: Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 0 (One member joined the meeting before David's vote).

12:45 – 1:20 Accessibility work at UVM (JESSE)

Jesse shared accessibility work CDCI has been doing since the last CAC meeting.

- At the December council meeting Audrey presented things we want to do to improve accessibility. We can't do them all right now, so we asked the council to help us choose. The council recommended CDCI focus on accessibility at UVM.
- The purpose of this part of the meeting is to share updates about our accessibility work at UVM. I will tell you about what we have done and want to do next.
- **Jesse asked everyone:**
 - Please ask any questions and share feedback.
 - We will have even more time during small groups to share feedback.
- **CAC requested clear ways for people with disabilities to work with CDCI.**
 - Jesse told council members they can contact people at CDCI anytime.
 - Core function coordinators are discussing how to create clearer ways. One idea is to create an internship. Important to have funding for this.
 - Matthew shared it is important to review the budget. This is something he's doing with other groups. He would like to be involved in the budget conversation at Center.
 - Mel shared: I love that idea. This comes up often at the UVM Autism Collaborative meetings, where community partners are seeking

concrete opportunities to be deeply involved and don't currently have a pathway for that.

- Michael: Like that this is getting more concrete. Need to be flexible about timing. Both being able to offer variable hours for people and to hire people quickly. Need to also provide supports for employees. Made comment that some recruitment and hiring.

- **CAC asked CDCI to supporting teaching at UVM.**

- Jesse shared the Center for Teaching and Learning provides support for faculty teaching courses. Faculty were asking them how to support neurodivergent students. They reached out to Bryan Dague and I and we offered resources and recommended the 2019 documentary "Autism Goes to College." We asked UVM to purchase the film and CTL has held a few screenings. [They are leading another film event on April 22.](#)

- Few members shared in chat this is "wonderful" and "terrific."
- Matthew asked how can we share this information with others? How can we use this to help others to improve?
- Michael shared that it important for people with disabilities to have time to give feedback and input. May not be as useful to have short trainings.

- Through our disability studies graduate certificate we know about accessibility issues. It is difficult to apply for degrees and programs. It is difficult to register for courses. There is a new head of the Graduate College and we are sharing recommendations for them.

- **Research**

- Need to apply for grants with roles for people with disabilities.
- Also supporting grants and research of other faculty at UVM. Winnie is working on an.

- Reminder from the pre-meeting video: Contact Jesse if you are interested in going to AUCD conference. Also contact him if you have an idea for presenting at AUCD conference.
- **Accessibility on campus**
 - We have been working on different things and many are coming together now.
 - Audrey continues to create amazing resources, tell stories, teach, and model accessibility. Thank you!
 - Adrienne has focused on providing support and training to people at CDCI through our monthly meetings
 - Jesse has been working on making disability and accessibility part of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - UVM has been reviewed for ADA accessibility. Report soon, and CDCI has been invited to join a group to help plan what is next. Audrey has agreed to represent CDCI on that group.
 - Michael said important to not eliminate more parking on campus. Makes it difficult for engaging people on campus.

1:25 – 1:35 Break

1:35 – 1:45 Ice breaker

- David shared March is [Developmental Disabilities Awareness month](#). He also said Friday is Disability Awareness Day at the Vermont state capital.
- David wants council members to answer: “What would you like to see different in our world.”
- Michael: Wish it was clear and simple to get good support for everyone.
- Mel: Wish there were more COVID safe public places to go to.
- Adrienne: More opportunities to celebrate our differences and how unique we are.

- Audrey: Hinesburg is planning a local park. I wanted to be involved but could not understand the documents shared for public comment. They were not in plain language. Public meetings and documents need to be accessible.
- Skye: Seems to be more opportunities to share accessible summaries. Also offering transportation help for town meetings. Love that it is a group of citizens leading this. Want to see this kind of work celebrated more publicly and in the news.
- Kris: Our support staff need to be paid a more livable wage to attract people. Kris shared he has had amazing people support his education, employment, and opportunities in community.
- David: Service agencies need to have sufficient budgets. Every year disability advocates must go to the state house to ask for more funding. It's unfair that clients must fight for this and go without.

1:55 – 2:40 Break out groups

CAC members choose a small group discussion on: (1) Increasing council membership, (2) Accessibility work at UVM, and (3) 50th Anniversary celebration ideas. The notes below were taken by CDCI staff in each of the three small groups:

1. Increasing CAC membership.

- Could we create a simple flyer to share with folx? Jesse shared we have an old one.
- Group discussed what could go on the flyer:
 - What is CDCI? What is the council?

- Need to clarify do not need to be a student or to have gone here to join. Recognize that many have had poor experiences with UVM or other universities before.
- We are welcoming anyone at UVM.
- No experience needed. Anyone can apply. We really want your ideas. We need to learn from your lived experience.
- Matthew said needs to be emotional and up to date.
- Mel suggested a quote from a current CAC member.
- What about attending a GMSA meeting to talk about CDCI and CAC? There are monthly meetings and quarterly board meetings.
- What about tabling at the GMSA conference? 2nd day there is 600-700 people. Hasan could share his experience being on the CAC.

2. Feedback on accessibility work at UVM.

- **Systemic accessibility:** (including physical things that are systemic).
The idea of parking is both: an acute physical ally thing and a systemic issue. Most places Michael goes, parking is not a problem for me, but at UVM it is an issue.
- Here's a thought: I think there should be a review of mandatory entrance exams in all programs. Is there a legitimate rationale for them? They should be an option for proving you know a thing, but there should be alternate ways to prove it. They can be a barrier. 504 is explicit in that they should create equal access and where they don't, they should be regulated.
- Another thing is documentation requirements for disabilities need re-examining. They should be variable depending on the substantialness and obviousness of the situation. There's not that much evidence that neurodiversity changes, so people wanting fresh documentation becomes a barrier.

- **Attitudinal issues** fit the frame in general. Moving away from the “proof” mindset, and conflict theory to ... requests for help shouldn’t be seen as attempts at exploitation.
- **There needs to be a willingness to address problems retroactively.** For example, the whole way that case law has been framed around disability issues is that if you don’t ask for an accommodation and something goes wrong, it’s fair to penalize you. But you can’t anticipate what you need, and that burden shouldn’t be on people with disabilities. If something comes up last minute you should get a chance to explain. UVM and most colleges are hostile to that in general, and sometimes make a big point about that.
- But the fact is that any disability that makes life less predictable needs to be accepted or accepted retroactively. It makes a lot of things a lot easier if you don’t have to try to figure out in advance.
- **Registering for courses?** In general, the whole web interface needs to be simplified. For example, when you search for a course, you get different information on different pages. It is hard to navigate. It is hard to find the information you need. It is also hard to sign up for courses. At Vermont State Colleges, Michael thought he’d registered for a course and hadn’t, and then couldn’t get in.
- Another barrier is limitations on taking undergraduate work as a graduate student. That was an issue because if you didn’t already have the background, you couldn’t get it. Some prerequisites were impossible to do in the program. Even more confusing is sometimes prerequisites could be removed, but it was not clear how.
- Not everyone needs a 101 course on something and should be able to test out.
- **Costs are presented poorly.** Eligibility for financial aid is presented poorly and it’s not clear how to calculate the final cost.

- The University needs a policy of not holding people responsible for their payroll mistakes. Unexpectedly asking people to pay more money later because the university made a mistake is not ok. There should be a grace period.
- Another thing they should do is minimize fees vs tuition, plain language it out. Include fees with tuition so it's not confusing. Include them in financial aid packages. Not necessarily cheaper, just simpler.
- Fee calculators would make things a lot easier for people with disabilities to determine whether they can afford UVM courses.
- Pell Grants are only for students up to 25 years. Put equal resources into things for people who are older and in different positions.
- There are barriers for part-time students to attend UVM. First, historically universities are biased against non-loan financial aid for part-time students. Second, limited parking at UVM is difficult for part-time students. Together this encourages more full-time students who need to live in Burlington. This makes it harder to find places to rent and raises prices. UVM should be more supportive of students who need to commute.
- ***Streamlining all the online processes.*** Streamline the payroll system. It could be readily fixed.
- What about having graduate programs elsewhere in the state? Working with another campus in the state? Williston campus? The whole way the campus is set up is difficult for people to be involved in things.
- Parking is a big problem. When buildings are built, there needs to be new parking as well.
- There should be places you can rest in every building. This would help physical access.

- Another physical access is reasonable temperature control in all spaces, and quiet climate control
- These are all kind of universal design and seem useful for all community members at UVM.
- It's an overwhelming space. UVM has always felt a bit big. Think College students have mentors who help them navigate the campus, and I wonder what they think about how the campus feels.
- Parking, near-term: there needs to be a clear policy for non-mobility impaired parking accommodations. People should be allowed to share parking permitted vehicles. These are fairly low impact policies.
- Another thing is for UVM to have a conversation about is residential parking. Some of local streets are not fully occupied by residents.
- Need comfortable ergonomic workstations at different spaces on campus.
- An advocate available for people to help navigate.
- On the graduate level, it should be possible to have the ability to separate advisors from people you're working with on a day-to-day basis without cause "no fault". Need advisors who aren't gatekeepers. It could make things a lot safer in terms of marginalizing forces as well. There needs to be more understanding of the mental health issues that come about as an impact of that. There should be a process for allocating support resources.
- Another thing would be having the ability to remove courses that you did badly on from your transcript.
- ***Student Accessibility Services.***
 - The SAS has been unwilling to make time accommodations mandatory for professors and notify professors before they arise. it should just be possible to record classes across the board unless there's a compelling reason not to. Syllabuses should be

available online regardless of whether you're signed up for a course. It should not require overhead for this.

- It's great that CDCI is going to be a resource for the CTL: the faculty don't know what they don't know until you've met a situation where you must change. It's a total paradigm shift for faculty, on the most part. Like any other culture shift, it needs a push, and CDCI is the push.
- One other point: Michael has run into several situations where people were openly hostile to disabilities, and there needs to be some thought around accountability in those situations. If it's not quite discrimination but creates a hostile space for people with disabilities, or is a microaggression based on disability, how to remedy? Is there even awareness of how often this happens? Do people know there's a mechanism for holding employees accountable? Are people comfortable holding other people accountable for ableism? there should be opportunities for people to shift and grow. Hey, can UVM deal with the personnel issues around these kinds of things.
- ***Bias vs. Microaggressions: where/how to get support?*** There need to be more mechanisms for functionally protecting people. If you make a formal complaint, there's no mechanism for keeping a person in the program while the issues were being resolved. there's a lack of protections, and a lack of thought around restructuring. When there's so few endpoints for safety, it's hard to engage in the mechanisms that are there. It can damage relationships. As much as possible, hold people in community. Have that as a goal. There are different ways to call people out and protect victims.
- UVM is huge, and people are full-time, half-time, adjunct, and people need the information on a regular basis and as needed.

3. 50th anniversary event ideas.

- Model after GMSA Voices & Choices Conference:

- Very welcoming
- Fun
- 1/2-day, overbite at hotel, dinner and dancing, full conference day
- Surrounded by other people with disabilities
- Is there are venue that could host the event?
 - Not impressed with experience at Lake Morey
 - Was impressed with Killington Resort facilities including sauna, swimming pool (we also talked about Smuggler's Notch but concluded we were most likely all thinking of Killington); Topper may have recommendations
- Attending could be part-time or full-time with the culminating activity in the evening
- Interest in dinner, music, and dancing.
- There are some local inclusive dances/groups that host
- Thinking about fun online/hybrid activities
 - Talent show
 - Games
 - Art
 - Music

2:40 – 2:50 Return to full council

Council members and CDCI staff shared information from small groups. Notes from those groups are share above.

- Accessibility work at UVM
 - Michael shared a lot of feedback with Audrey and Skye. Wish had more time to talk about teaching.
 - Audrey shared it was a great conversation. Shared a few highlights:
 - Bringing people to campus is a real challenge. Often hard to park close to buildings is not an option.
 - Can be difficult for people with disabilities to become students. Want UVM to extend

- Kris shared that he did not disclose his disability when he applied to UVM.
- 50th anniversary
 - Matthew shared importance of making hybrid and fun!
- Council Membership
 - How can we be more inclusive?
 - Can we create a flyer that is welcoming? Talked about information important to include in the flyer. Matthew shared he wants flyer to be compassionate and humanizing. For example, “You’re part of something bigger.” Don’t just ask for new members.

2:50-3:00 Process and Next Meeting

- David asked for people to share what worked in today’s meeting. And share what should be changed.
- Matthew said meeting went well. Important to have plain language agenda before the meeting.
- Adrienne shared she liked how much time there was for conversation. Thought members did a good job making space for everyone’s comments.
- Michael second what Adrienne said. Enjoyed the conversation and pace of meeting.
- Kris shared it was great to see and hear everyone!

Meeting ended at 3pm.