Minutes

In attendance: Jana Finkbonner, Laurie Ford, Dona Fuerst, Kathe Matrone, Kathy Powers, Erica Johnson, Elizabeth Boland, and Monica Holmer

By Phone:

Guests: Nicole Harris (RC student representative)

Not present: Andres Aguirre, Cathy Cottingham, Nanna Hanchett, Karolyn Hannem, Eva Larrauri, Kurt Johnson, Teresa Pitt, Trula Nicholas, Tom Krabbenhoft and Sheila Hoover

Welcome and Introductions

• Introduction of members present.

Minutes: Beth asked committee to review minutes from June 14, 2013 meeting. Committee had a few revisions.

Member Updates:

• CCER (Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation) – Kathe Matrone
  o 2 people from ADA Center have retired and 1 will retire in February. They are preparing to hire for open positions.
  o Working with Aging and Disability Services to assist with hosting their state-wide TBI conference in May 2014 in SeaTac. The primary focus of the conference will be survivors and primary care givers.
  o Ongoing training series, including personality disorders and substance abuse, starting at the end of January 2014. This past fall there have been trainings for community rehab providers in Alaska. In Oregon, this past summer they assisted with trainings for working with individuals with intellectual disabilities for VR in regard to the DOJ lawsuit about sheltered employment and transitions. They have also completed a series of trainings on criminal histories and will be conducting this series in Oregon soon.
  o WA VR is contracted with the AT Project to do a series of 8 trainings around assistive technology in 2014. Kathe has been discussing with Kurt Johnson about the possibilities of offering several courses about transition TBI, AT needs, Autism and AT, etc. Beth asked if the courses would be recorded to be able to be used in RC courses in the future and Kathe will discuss this with Kurt.
- ADA is working with Oregon Health Sciences in Oregon at getting more into rural areas by offering community meetings to increase community engagement. The meetings have focused on health care access for individuals with disabilities. In May or June there will be follow-up meetings. In Alaska, also looking at how to get information about health care into the communities. They have also developed an online course about etiquette about working with individuals with disabilities for healthcare providers in Oregon.

- **TACE (Technical Assistance and Continuing Education) - Laurie Ford**
  - TACE was extended for another year after 5-year grant finished in September 2013. They are continuing to wait for more information from the RSA about funding for the future.
  - Continuing to have training for providers especially in Alaska. Now they are getting to the point in Alaska that they may need to identify who can provide these classes because of the demand. In Oregon, they are working to coordinate training for both staff and providers.
  - RSA site visit will be in January.

- **Alaska DVR – Teresa Pitt – no update.**

- **OVRS (Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services) – Sheila Hoover – no update.**

- **WA DSB (Department of Services for the Blind) – Eva Larrauri – no update.**

- **WA DVR – Dona Fuerst.**
  - Andres Aguirre was officially names Director, and now there is a search for a Chief of Field Services.
  - RSA 911 changes to the reporting requirements have caused their database to be revised and they are working to update it. Staff training for these changes will begin in February.
  - She is on a committee to create a curriculum for soft skills training. They have contracted through Center for Learning Connections to create and investigate curriculum that has already been created. There has been a survey of staff to identify which areas to focus on and the committee narrowed it down to about a dozen skills to focus on. There will be upcoming trainings in early 2014 around Washington State.
  - Looking at reviewing Rehab Academy to evaluate any changes needed. There are 6 classes that new counselors are required to take.
  - She just led a WorkStrides class that went very well.
  - Jana asked about the new RSA policy for VR counselors to have to select an ethnicity for individuals if they do not self-disclose. There will be training for VR counselors for how to ‘guess’ if an individual does not self-disclose.

- **Veterans Affairs – Karolyn Hannem – no update.**

- **Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation – Jana Finkbonner.**
  - Have 4 tribes that are in a 1 year extension with RSA funding and 2 tribes that may have to close due to RSA contract language regarding not having a land base. In January the tribes hope to hear more from the RSA with more clarity about this issue.
This year there could be 48 tribes up for renewal, as well as any new tribes who want to also seek funding.

- NWIC have hired instructors and are close to selecting a director for the Human Services BA degree program. They are continuing to develop curriculum and are looking at only having a minor in Early Childhood Education and not VR.
- Their office is preparing for the holiday season and being closed for 2 weeks.

- **Private Rehabilitation – Cathy Cottingham – no update.**

- **Community Rehabilitation Providers – Kathy Powers.**
  - They are working toward a new contract with DVR. Looking at feedback including CRP rates not increasing and labor tends (temp and contract hires are increasing).
  - Legislative session is upcoming so agenda items are being created. One bill that is in progress relates to VR, DD, and OSPI work together to reach transition students earlier. Also, there is a group trying to form a coalition that is cross-disability advocacy. They are trying to figure out how to work together to show how big the disability community is and the needs that need to be met. They are hoping to have this coalition formed by 2015. There is an upcoming advocacy day on Feb 26th relating to employment issues.
  - Mental health, Autism spectrum, criminal backgrounds

- **RC Students – Nicole Harris, 1st year student.**
  - Nicole spoke on the sense of community that the RC program has at both the 1st year and 2nd year level. She commented on what 1st year students are learning.

- **WWU Human Services Program – Trula Nicholas – no update**

**Program Discussion**

- **Student updates including recruitment & retention**
  - Beth introduced handout with a summary of current students.
  - Continuing to recruit for fall 2014 cohort.

- **RC program mission & objectives**
  - Beth asked members to review the RC Mission and Objectives. Members discussed several points and suggested a few changes.

- **Review of curriculum**
  - Committee members were asked to review the RC Course Descriptions. Beth gave an overview of when classes were offered as well as spoke more about each course.
  - For RC 582 & 589, Beth suggested that students could be required to speak to 2 VR counselors or case managers instead of 1, and 1 of the counselors would have to be a state VR counselor.
  - Beth discussed adding some additional family issues in RC 579 and perhaps RC 580. Committee discussed adding issues about transitions and working with different systems of support for individuals.
  - Erica discussed RC 583 and the opportunity students have to role-play counseling with a confederate at 3 times during the quarter.
Beth discussed how the curriculum related to the medical aspects of disabilities is separated into 3 separate courses: RC 586, 594, and 595. In addition, how to help students understand how to help a client who has multiple disabilities.

Committee introduced the question of how the culture of poverty is discussed in the curriculum because many individuals that rehab counselors serve come from poverty. They discussed how it could be included in 585 or 588 or 589, or perhaps a part of internship.

This year RC 587 is being offered as a hybrid class that will meet in person the weeks that RC 591 does not meet, and the alternative weeks will be online.

RC 595 may continue to be a hybrid course.

Kathy Powers asked about how students can complete Internship hours and work. Beth commented that it becomes difficult when students are not working in the field but for students who work in the field, instructors work individually with students to meet needs.

• Review of exit survey results
  • Only 8 students who graduated in Summer 2013 responded to the exit survey. Overall, results were positive. Beth will be comparing these results to previous graduates exit surveys. Beth mentioned areas that students identified as needs improvement as well as areas that were rated very high. There are several questions around Practicum or Internships. Students selected met expectation or above for almost all of these questions.

• Review of program recognition, support, & resources
  • We have full CORE accreditation.
  • The program was recently given the ability to open a new tenure-track position. Beth introduced search committee members. Review of applications will begin January 6, 2014. In late February and March, Beth hopes to have an informal lunch with Advisory Committee with the final candidates and committee members could also attend a teaching example at Everett Community College.
  • No first year students are on the RSA grant, but many 2nd year students are on the grant. 1st year students were given the opportunity to apply for the GENEX scholarship. Next fall there will be the opportunity for 2nd year students to apply for RSA funds. If a new grant is awarded, additional students would be able to be supported.
  • Beth asked for emerging trends in disability or employment issues. Committee members mentioned needed support dollars for individuals in the autism spectrum, the growing number of jobs that are temp or temp-to-permanent, criminal history, mental health (including PTSD, depression, personality disorder, etc), aging populations, back injuries, deafness, individuals who have a combination of disabilities that prevent them from successfully working with technology, and consequences of minimum wage increases.

• RSA Scholarship
  • Beth asked if committee members have any thoughts about when students should be given the opportunity to apply for the RSA scholarship because sometimes it can be detrimental for some students to start from the beginning of the program. In the past, if there has been funding, students could apply for the RSA scholarship from their first quarter in the program. Beth suggested that perhaps it would be after students
have successfully passed RC 583 (after 3 quarter in the program). Beth also discussed building in better stipends for students who complete a Practicum and Internship at DVR.

Committee members asked if not offering the funding from the beginning of the program would decrease the number of students in the program. Beth mentioned that all students who started the program this year did not have RSA funding. In addition, in the future the RSA grant may not be available and it might be good to not have RSA funding for students beginning the program.

- **Update on Practicum**
  - Erica discussed that there are 19 students hoping to complete Practicum in winter – 4 have yet to solidify an approved placement. Out of 15 approved placements, 7 students are going into CRPs, 1 is going to a VA program, 2 are going into Tribal VR programs, 4 in the private sector, and 1 in VR. The 4 students who do not have a placement are primarily in the Bellingham area.

Next Meeting – to be announced.