Minutes

In attendance: Eva Larrauri, Andres Aguirre, Stephanie Goldfarb, Evonne Osorio, Trula Nicholas, Beth Boland, Laurie Ford, Karolyn Barnes, Alexa Burns, Kathe Matrone.

Guest: Dona Fuerst, Training Manager, WA DVR
Student Guests: Cheryl McDonald, Judy Glad, Kim Foster

Not in attendance: Kurt Johnson, Teresa Pitt, Pam Prichard, Sheila Hoover, Keith Klinger, Cathy Cottingham, Michael Graham, Teresa Pitt, Connie Salo, Erica Johnson.

Review of Minutes for Approval – approved, with change of Eva Zittleman’s name to Eva Larrauri.

Beth introduced Karolyn Barnes, representative from the VA. She has been on the committee since summer, but this was her first meeting. She also introduced the new Representative from the WWU Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation, Trula Nicholas. Trula is replacing Jackie Baker-Sennett. Beth also introduced Dona Fuerst, Training Manager from WA DVR and three student observers: Kim Foster, Judy Glad, and Cheryl McDonald.

Member Updates:

- TACE – (Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Program) – Laurie Ford. Many things reported at the last meeting are still true. They are in the middle of a motivational interviewing project in Alaska. Discussion is under way about additional training to bring counselors to the proficiency (3rd) level.

  Job development training is going on now. This is a good resource for continuing education credits for graduates of the master’s program.

  150 people attended the Program Evaluation summit. Audiotapes of all presentations are available through the National Clearing House of Rehabilitation Training Materials. Videotapes of Dr. Patton’s sessions are available, and they are outstanding.
Ethics training will be offered online 4 times per year, once per quarter. The TACE is working with WA DVR to develop training on how to work with offenders. Distance Education classes are available on assistive technology for non-AT experts, and medical aspects of diabetes. Other medical aspects materials will be made available in the future.

RSA conducts reviews of state agencies, TACE then works with those agencies to resolve issues that come up. They are also providing ethics training for the VA.

Laurie Ford is happy to be a resource to students for specific questions or topics. One of the students asked if TACE could provide internships in training. Because the internship would not be related to counseling, this would not fit the requirements for a rehabilitation counseling internship. However, perhaps it could be part of an internship experience that was divided between a couple of different agencies.

- University of Washington – no report.
- CCER (Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation) – Kathe Matrone. The ADA Information Center is in its last year of a 5-year grant. They have begun the planning process for developing a new grant proposal, which would start October 1. They are waiting for priorities to be released by NIDRR so they will know what the emphasis needs to be. It appears that all ADA centers will be funded. The ADA Information center has affiliates in each state. The regional office is in Washington. They provide technical assistance and information about the ADA and other laws pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

CCER is working with the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at University of Washington on a grant from the Centers for Disease control to organize a conference on head injury. CCER would do the logistics and conference planning. The conference would take place the first week in June, and it is anticipated that 1500 people will attend.

- Alaska DVR – no report.
- OVRS (Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services) – no report. They are still interested in having interns, but they are having some financial issues.
- WA DSB (Department of Services for the Blind) – Eva Larrauri. DSB is still separate from WA DSHS. They remain a small department, rather than being moved under the umbrella of a larger department. Their staff have some furlough days, but not as many as DSHS staff. Funds from employee retirements offset some of the costs, so staff only have to take 3 furlough days. They are also using SSDI reimbursement funds to help with budget. The reduction in funding resulted in a cut in deaf/blind services support ($150,000). 55 individuals were
impacted. They are now funded by the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, under DSHS.

A new case management system was implemented last September. It is still being fine-tuned, to make it work smoothly.

Staff training has been completed on the McCarron Dial, and the CDES assessment, which is specifically for individuals with blindness. Staff also completed training in Motivational Interviewing, which is working well.

- WA DVR – Andres Aguirre. DVR is still under a hiring freeze. They have been requesting a hiring exception when a position becomes vacant, in order to retain current staffing levels. They have approval to fill some positions. Most are VRC 3’s, and one VRC 2. A VRC 2-in-training is working on meeting the requirements for VRC 2. A VRC 3 has one year experience and assigned duties that makes them a lead with community partners or in the absence of a supervisor. They have received approval to hire a supervisor in Silverdale. They are in the process of developing a blanket request to retain current staffing levels so they don’t require exceptions. Nine retirements are coming up in the next 18 months, and they really need to be able to fill those positions.

DVR is taking layoff days (10 days in a year), consistent with DSHS. This only impacts 40% of DSHS staff. There has been an additional 6.3% across-the-board reduction, which has resulted in 2 additional layoff days for those already taking 10 days. Those who had been exempt must now take 8 days off. A $620,000 reduction in state funds means they can’t match the full federal grant. There are implications when other departments’ budgets are cut, such as mental health or addictions treatment, as this means DVR clients to not have access to other services that are needed for their success.

WA DVR has not been in Order of Selection since 2008. Elimination of General Assistance-Unemployed is a concern, because DVR cannot provide daily maintenance. Disability Lifeline (replacing GA-U), requires those who are able to benefit to be referred to DVR. They are working on an assessment tool to determine who is most likely to benefit.

Students interested in working for WA DVR should submit their resume to Dona Fuerst and keep it current. Dona said she prefers skills resumes, including “soft” skills (ability to meet deadlines, problem-solving, etc.). An employer will decide in the first 5 seconds whether they want to read more of a person’s resume. Students must also go to the Department of Personnel website and fill out a profile and keep it current.

- Private Rehabilitation – no report.
SRCA (Student Rehabilitation Counseling Association) Student Updates – Evonne Osorio. Instructor presence in online classes: no comments or complaints this quarter. Students seem to especially appreciate how Dr. Martz has been handling it. Real time discussion might be helpful.

There have been no additional concerns about instructor availability during finals week, but this is finals week, so it may be too soon to know. A place to post questions to instructors online has been helpful - when instructors use it.

Internships – The efforts of Jessica Wunschel and Judy Glad have resulted in some new resources for students, and SRCA is taking on the extension of their efforts. Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP’s) can be used as Practicum/Internship sites, but it is harder to find one where the student can do counseling. Eva Larrauri is willing to be a resource. There is a network of alumni set up through the WWU Alumni office.

This quarter there is one instructor who is a Ph.D. but not a CRC. Students feel they need instructors who have exposure to the field of disabilities. Beth responded as to the limited availability of rehab counseling Ph.D.’s. Auburn University is considering establishing a distance Ph.D. program, which could increase the pool of qualified candidates. Diana Jones, WWU HS faculty, is also a resource for finding internships.

Veterans Affairs – Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VA-VR&E) – Karolyn Barnes. The program employs 35 people in 5 offices around the state, plus an office in Seattle. They are under a hiring freeze, and a 2-year freeze on raises. The VA is going to be requiring a CRC. The VA can provide internship opportunities, if the individual is able to move for a job. Go to USA Jobs to see postings. Plan ahead, at least 6 months, if you want to do an internship at the VA.

Program Discussion

- Background checks – Beth. The department now has approval to contract with backgroundcheck.com. Depending on how soon this can begin, current students may be contacted before they begin Practicum. The cost to the student is $40. The check is national, not just statewide. The information is used for advising, not for admission decisions or screening out.

- Essential functions for students – Since Erica Johnson is on maternity leave, there has been no feedback from her. This will be on the agenda next time.

- Curriculum changes/revisions – Beth. Some curriculum changes have been approved by the Woodring Curriculum Committee and are awaiting approval from the Graduate Council. Beth has changed her mind since the last meeting, and Case Management will stay. Occupational Information and Job Placement will be combined. Rehabilitation Research is being moved back to the first quarter, to help with writing papers for their other classes. Human Growth,
Development and Disability has been added. It will be offered winter quarter. It seems logical to look at “normal” development before RC 585 and 586, which address what goes wrong. Taking 8 credits per quarter helps people who need to go full time, but it means state employees can’t use the tuition waiver. Winter admissions will no longer be taken. No electives are included. The program will be completed in 8 quarters instead of 9. Every CORE standard is now in the curriculum. Graduates can take new classes as non-matriculated students. Check with Alexa for information on how to register.

Beth invited Dona Fuerst to attend the meeting, to discuss how we can create better connections with DSB and DVR. Dona could come in to the Med Aspects class to cover deafness, and maybe Eva Larrauri could come in and talk about blindness. The two of them could address how they serve shared clients. They could also talk about practicum/internship opportunities at their agencies. Dona could also come to the case management class and talk about what is unique to state DVR agencies. Don Alvashere from WA DSB was suggested as someone who could come to the research class and talk about program evaluation.

Students commented that they would also like exposure to issues relating to the VA. There could be DVR involvement and possibly a CRP in the Occupational Information and Job Placement class. Kathy Powers was suggested. Other areas students would like more emphasis on: motivational interviewing, accommodations, and tribal programs.

- RSA Scholarship – Beth. We received a new grant, which started October 1. Most of the new students are on it. Andres Aguirre said L&I does not have a working relationship with DVR in Washington, so it would not qualify for RSA payback. Beth distributed a flyer on the RSA Scholarship that is given to prospective students.

- Mental Health Licensure – Rehab Counseling is now an approved course of study to apply for the Licensed Mental Health Counselor credential. Alexa passed out some information. This could widen the scope of practice for rehabilitation counselors, and increase potential sources for income. More information will be passed along as it becomes available.

- WWU is searching for a new Dean for Woodring College of Education. Beth can provide more information to anyone who is interested. The Interim Dean is Mike Henniger, current Associate Dean. Sheila Fox is stepping up to be Interim Associate Dean.

Next Meeting: April 15, 2011