Western Washington University  
Graduate Program in Rehabilitation Counseling  
Advisory Committee  

November 30, 2012  
EVCC - Gray Wolf Hall, Room 105  

Minutes  

In attendance: Susan Bonnell (representing CCER and TACE), Jana Finkbonner, Dona Fuerst, Kurt Johnson, Eva Larrauri, Kathy Powers, Elizabeth Boland, Lori Magnuson, Alexa Burns  
By Phone: Andres Aguirre, Teresa Pitt, David Ritacco (representing OVRS)  
Guests: Brenda Boles, DVR Contracts Monitor, Thomas Krabbenhoft, HSR Dept. Manager  
Not present: Karolyn Hannem, Cathy Cottingham, Laurie Ford, Sheila Hoover, Keith Klinger, Kathe Matrone, Trula Nicholas, Erica Johnson  

Welcome and Introductions  

Minutes: Since the Advisory Committee meeting on February 22 was with the CORE site reviewers, minutes were not taken. This is because the site reviewers wished to meet with the Advisory Committee, separate from the faculty and staff.  

- Beth Boland introduced Lori Magnuson, new full-time non-tenure-track instructor for the rehabilitation counseling program. Lori has been teaching in the program as an adjunct instructor and just completed her Ph.D. at University of Iowa. She previously worked as a trainer at CCER.  
- Alexa Burns, the Program Coordinator, is retiring the end of February. The position is being reconfigured to full-time, supporting both the Everett Human Services and Rehabilitation Counseling programs. Lilla Bodo, who has been the Program Coordinator for the Human Services Program, is shifting to part-time and will be based in Bremerton, as Program Coordinator for the Human Services Distance Program.  
- Beth congratulated Jana Finkbonner on being named Tribal VR director of the year.  

Member Updates:  

- CCER (Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation) and TACE (Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Program) – Susan Bonnell. RSA issued a RFI (Request For Information) on how best to provide services to state agencies. Laurie Ford will send out more information next week. It is hoped that as many people as possible will respond with their recommendations. Some time will be spent at the end of the meeting to discuss this further. TACE is providing training on the following topics: medical aspects of disabilities, therapeutic management, Work Strides®, improving services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, motivational interviewing, and serving individuals with criminal histories. Katie Cissell, CCER trainer, is retiring December 14. The Northwest ADA Center recently hired Michael Richardson. There is currently a position open on the Washington DVR Independent Living Council.
• **University of Washington – Kurt Johnson.** The doctoral program in rehabilitation sciences recently admitted its 4th cohort of Ph.D. students, including 2 rehabilitation counselors: one from San Diego State, and the other from University of Northern Colorado. They have also added a post-doctoral fellow in rehabilitation counseling from Maryland. Lori Magnuson is also a half-time post-doctoral fellow. Kurt has a report on the average debt load of students graduating from University of Washington. For masters’ students at UW, it is $40,000 for all of their higher education. He suggested that we may be able to get some similar data from WWU to use in reapplying for the Long Term Training grant.

• **Alaska DVR – Teresa Pitt.** Alaska has received some reallocation funds. A portion of the funds will probably be used for training. Three counselors have retired. Alaska has reached its highest rate for meeting the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) goal for eligible staff. They were able to hire one CRC. Currently, 89-90% meet the CRC requirements. They are getting funding for a paid graduate intern position, probably in Anchorage. Teresa is the contact person. She would like to start talking to people three months before they need to start their internship. The position will be posted with State of Alaska through an open competitive process. It is listed as a generic Graduate Intern 2 position. Teresa will send what information she has.

• **OVRS (Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services) – David Ritacco.** OVRS is recruiting for some positions in administration, including a budget manager and a performance analysis manager. They are looking for people who understand how the program budget operates, as well as the rehabilitation counseling aspect. He suggested that budgeting on client caseloads would be helpful to add to the program curriculum.

• **WA DSB (Department of Services for the Blind) – Eva Larrauri.** The budget is pretty healthy, thanks in part to reimbursements from Social Security for successful rehabilitations. DSB has been limiting Independent Living Program services, but this will be looked at again. For employment outcomes, the goal was 154, and they achieved 147. They served 1300 individuals last year. This is due to better outreach, a full counseling staff, and not a lot of turnover. This year they are focusing on outreach to minority groups, especially Asian-Americans and Latinos. DSB is still #3 in the nation in terms of quality of service: average wage, $22.48; 20% of employment outcomes have health insurance; 19% have paid holidays; only 10% have no benefits. They have an opening in the north region for a VRC 3. It is posted on the DSB website. The position requires 2 years’ experience and will primarily serve north King County.

• **WA DVR – Andres Aguirre and Dona Fuerst.** [Dona] Today is the last time for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing training. It has been extremely well-received. They have finished the training sessions on serving customers with criminal conviction histories. Motivational Interviewing is now required for all staff, including IT, fiscal technicians, etc. They are getting ready to do another train-the-trainer session on Motivational Interviewing. They did case reviews this summer and revised Advanced Best Practices to cover case documentation. The onboarding document for new staff has been completed. It includes assignments to find things in files, meet with Community Rehabilitation Providers, get to know the people in IT, etc. This document could be tweaked for Rehabilitation Counseling Program interns. There is a possibility of expanding the training unit. Training that is currently in the planning stage includes: personality disorders, clients with dual diagnosis, and cognitive impairments. There is a steady stream of students contacting Dona about internships. [Andres] At the end of the Federal Fiscal Year, WA DVR met the majority of Federal standards. They need to
improve upon two: the rate of successful rehabilitations (54.4% vs. the goal of 55.8%); and the wage ratio (need to investigate further what it’s about). They are doing well both budget-wise and overall. Future issues: what is going to happen with Congress, and the new governor’s proposed budget. There has been a decrease in applications. They need to do more outreach, and identify additional referral sources. There is a vacancy for Area 2 manager (south King County to the Canadian border and the San Juan Islands). Paul Vertrees is the new manager for Area 3. Positions currently open in the State Office include a program manager, a program evaluator, and program specialists in mental health and best practices. They are working on getting a Deaf-Blind specialist, to be based at Mercer Street. Andres will be meeting with 8 Tribal VR programs to do a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). WA DVR having is a Section 107 review in late March. RSA will be sending information to partners to gather information.

- **Veterans Affairs – No report.** Karolyn’s message said that David Boyd would like to meet with our students to talk about working for the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program. She will act as go-between to get this set up.

- **WWU-HSR – Beth Boland.** The Department has added the MEd program in Continuing and College Education, and the RN to BSN program for individuals who are already registered nurses to get their bachelor’s degree. The Human Services program is strong, with more applicants than they can accept. This year Human Services admitted two cohorts in Bellingham, one in Everett, and one by distance. Four faculty searches are under way: Director of the RN/BSN program; two Human Services faculty; and a Director of the CCE program, to replace Sandy Daffron, who is retiring. The search will soon begin for the Program Coordinator in Everett.

- **Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation – Jana Finkbonner.** The Samish tribal program has a new director, T. J. Larrick from Mount Vernon. The tribes in Washington hosted the CANAR (Consortium of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation programs) conference. It went well. Jana is working on establishing a ticket to work program. Last year the Lummi Tribe got a one year extension on its grant to provide rehabilitation services, which will probably be extended for another year. Twenty-eight tribes are eligible to apply for funding this year, plus some new ones. The number of tribes whose funding is ending is increasing each year, and it is uncertain what will happen. NW Indian College is starting a human services BA program. Jana would like it to include a strand that covers vocational rehabilitation. Beth volunteered to serve on an advisory committee to assist with that, if it comes up.

- **Private Rehabilitation – no report.**

- **Community Rehabilitation Providers – Kathy Powers.** Orion Industries has stable relationships with contracting agencies: DVR, DDD, etc. Kathy wants to talk with DVR about how CRP’s can ramp up to be better skilled. When she hires job developers, she selects people with sales background. The challenge is getting them into the rehab world. She would like to see CRP’s be included in training done by DVR, DSB, the VA, etc. Who are their providers and how skilled are they? Orion can take interns again, now that two employees have graduated from the Rehabilitation Counseling MA program.

**Program Discussion**

- **CORE Accreditation Review Results – Beth.** The report from the site reviewers was mostly positive. She is still negotiating regarding their concerns about program
evaluation. As a site reviewer herself, she does not think there needs to be one overall report covering all aspects of program evaluation. They also had a concern about the academic advising ratio of 20:1. This is easy to address now that Lori is on board. There was a suggestion from CORE to add a tenure track line. Beth has been discussing this with the Dean.

- **Results of Most Recent Exit Survey** – Overall, graduates are satisfied. Content areas that were seen as needing strengthening: family issues and workers compensation. The program mostly met graduates’ expectations. They felt well prepared for practicum and internship. They also felt prepared to take a job upon graduation. 100% said they would recommend the program to others.

- **Student updates – summary of current students**. See handout.

- **Charge to the Advisory Committee** – The Committee was asked to provide feedback on what they see as the program’s charge to the Advisory Committee. This came out of the College’s accreditation review process, in which it appeared that nothing had been put in writing regarding this. Input included the following: to advise on whether the program is preparing graduates who meet the hiring needs of employers in the field (skills and qualifications to do the job); to provide feedback on how the work environment is changing as they evolve; to serve as a link to practical trends; to be a bridge to opportunities for practicum and internship. Beth will draft a statement and submit to the Advisory Committee for review.

- **RSA Request for Information**
  Discussion points for keeping the regional function for TACE’s and Long Term Training Grants, capacity building, tribal programs, grant-writing programs, in-service training.
  - In-service funds can provide agency-specific training and can build in TACE training
  - Keep TACE’s regionally focused, negotiate individualized services, value for the money spent.
  - Deafness/blindness – could lose focus if it is folded in, different skill set.
  - Pre-service programs – potentially a way to increase diversity in programs, reduce debt load for students, which reduces pool of qualified candidates to work at state agencies. Make sure employment numbers are collapsed to show all graduates who enter qualified employment (not just in state agencies)
  - Capacity building grants – are more than just consulting on grant writing, but they are getting all the nuances that come from RSA about what they are specifically looking for. Grant staff also receive OMB training, budgeting, and grant management.
  - Clearing House – use it to find out what has already been done. Central resource. Lots of people forget it’s there. Responsibility to submit materials prepared through grants.
  - Give information to Kathe. She will send out talking points to agencies in the region.
  - CRP’s and tribal programs work in partnership with DVR and do benefit from the TACE.

Next Meeting – to be announced.