Meeting Minutes - September 25th, 2020

CT AHEAD Roundtable Meeting – Accommodations in the time of COVID-19

Jen called the meeting to order at 10:00am (25 in attendance)

- Jen introduced Board Members and Board made announcements
  - Meeting recorded for later viewing
  - Membership forms can be submitted now, payment can be made by end of year
    - Form located on Membership page (at the bottom)
    - Email form to Tracy Carlson (trcarlson@hartford.edu)
  - 5th Board Position will be sent to members for voting [results of voting included here]
    - Digital Information Officer position approved October 2nd – Bylaws updated
    - Morgan Sutton Elected into position October 19th, and will hold position for remainder of this term and continue through next term
- Acknowledgement of how difficult the year has been
  - Moving to remote work, campuses preparing to reopen, keeping accessibility in mind
  - Increased social unrest in the country
- Reminder that our work should be viewed through an anti-racism lens
  - Ongoing work will continue – November 13th, meeting devoted to intersectionality
  - CT AHEAD created a formal statement on understanding the relationship between race and disability in our education system
  - Send any resources for sharing with members to board@ctahead.org

Discussion on implementing accommodation in the time of Covid

- Testing Accommodations Discussion:
  - Safety measures in testing centers with proctors
  - More faculty providing alternative means of testing
  - Using online testing methods – learning how to extend the time in LMS
  - Without testing centers, space is limited due to campus Covid procedures
    - Challenging for faculty to reserve rooms for providing their own accommodations
    - Trying to help faculty provide alternate means of assessment other than "timed in-person exams"
  - Student struggles with online testing
    - Distraction reduced settings for exams (control of their environment)
    - Anxiety/intimidation over "begin watched" through the online testing system
  - Including UDL information on accommodation letters
  - Helping faculty determine what are essential course requirements
- Clear Masks Discussion:
  - Procurement issues – waiting for campus coordination
  - Who should have access (faculty, "front desk" workers, etc.)?
  - Concerns over FDA approved, fogging, how to distribute
  - Offices have available for when requested
  - Types of masks folks have ordered:
    - The ClearMask
    - Rafi Nova
    - S&H Uniforms

- Mask Exemption Request Discussion:
  - Health Center coordinating exemptions
    - No exemptions authorized – no mask alternatives equitable
    - Option is to be remote
  - Legal Counsel standing behind no exemptions appropriate
    - CDC guidelines/recommendation back-up this stance
  - What to do when exemption request is adequate and no alternative is possible (hands-on work required on-campus); suggestions included:
    - Waiting until mask requirements lift from CDC
    - Accommodation of allowing student to repeat previous material at no cost – as audit – in order to transition back into program
    - Set up cameras/filming in order for student to stay refreshed / up-to-date on current progression in program
- Equipment Loan Procedures Discussion:
  - How to change procedure:
    - Request forms are all online, students can request before arrival
    - Website lists what is available and how to use
    - Contactless pick-up or mailed to students
    - Students keeping pens over the summer to keep using in the fall
    - Training on technology and pens over Zoom
  - General seeing fewer need / requests for equipment loans
    - Recording of classes for rewatching
    - More information relevant to course material shared on CMS (PPTs, etc.)
  - Discussion over recording concerns
    - Letter of accommodation can include agreement statement
    - Statement about recording being a note taking device (explaining what this means)
    - Adding to student handbook – recording agreements for all students
    - Addressing confidentiality of other students
      - Everyone takes note or no one
      - Note taker assigned to take notes without names for distribution
      - What is the purpose of note taking? – This is the way this student takes notes
      - Faculty should include statement in syllabus or it should be a non-issue
- Tutoring Support Discussion:
  - Support has moved online
  - Increased resources provided online
  - Accommodation of "extra appointments" or more flexibility over tutoring limits
  - Advocate for one-on-one or additional hours
  - Help get students connected to resources
  - Provide direct academic support through accommodations office
  - Is it really content support they need, or coaching / skill support?
  - Use student internships to provide peer-to-peer support
- Participation Discussion:
  - Not having the camera on
  - Knowing - what does participation look like?
  - Not only disability related, but "letting people into personal lives"
  - Allowing flexible participation based on faculty and student discussion and agreement
  - Faculty are struggling to teach via Zoom and engage students
    - Provide real-time feedback to assist
    - Encourage dialogue between students and faculty
    - Facilitate conversations as needed
  - Helping students understand how to use Zoom for engagement

- Live Captioning Discussion:
  - Challenge – who pays for this? (based on who needs it?)
    - Is this an actual student need (accommodation)
    - Is this a faculty preference (departmental/institutional)
  - Universal design access
    - Campus licenses
    - Free programs (Google, PPT, Microsoft, etc.)
  - Creating steps for individuals/offices to follow, rather than "bouncing" from one office to another for the support
- FM/DM Units Discussion:
  - Issues/concerns around shared devices
  - Use of universal design access in classrooms (microphones)
  - Resources:
    - CREC: Soundbridge
    - National Deaf Center
  - Question of where to rent units from when audiologist isn't involved?
- Office Safety Protocol Discussion:
  - Virtual vs in-person meetings (with safety measures)
  - No walk-ins allowed
  - Virtual "drop-in" times
  - Letters are generally being emailed
- General Student Challenges Discussion:
  - Isolation / how to keep students engaged
  - How to support each other as staff
  - Learning how to efficiently use technology as they continue to adapt

Resources added to Members Only Website
- Universal Design language and essential course requirements language for accommodation letters
- Email language regarding accessibility changes due to Covid
- Email language in response to faculty with recording concerns
- Meeting archives

Meeting ended 12:00pm

Respectively Submitted,

Crystal Rose Hill
CT AHEAD Secretary