

Report from the Disability Awareness and Literacy Committee

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Members:

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Background and Mission: This committee seeks to encourage disability literacy across campus and to promote an understanding of disability as a central component of human diversity.

The committee's aim is to integrate disability visibility into the university curriculum, scholarship, and community as a means of understanding human experience in our contemporary world.

To implement this rationale, the committee's main goal will be to raise the profile of disability as a previously underrecognized way of understanding human diversity, to be included with other urgent areas of inquiry and identity in DEI such as race, class, and gender. Without critical attention to these issues, we further marginalize a part of the population, and thus not serve the whole OU community.

Actions:

Advocating for increased attention to disability throughout the university, including the creation of new means of sharing work-in-progress and promoting collaboration across centers, departments, and units

Collaborating with multiple units to develop a **curriculum** at undergraduate and graduate level

Educating through presentations, workshops and events to the university and the surrounding community on issues of disability literacy

Creating **partnerships** with OU offices and campus resources to support accessibility and other disability visibility issues

Barriers to address:

- Students' lack of access to multi-dimensional support in and out of the classroom.
- The need to fully incorporate disability into DEI measures and discourse throughout the university
- The scarcity of courses at the UG and Graduate level focused on issues around disability.
- The lack of a center for the study of disability on campus that would integrate all units.
- The need for more community engagement and partnerships to connect the university community to the larger community

Accomplishments:

To address these desired actions and barriers, we met monthly, and first, we finalized our mission and vision, and then, shared our interests and expertise related to the group's mission and vision. Based on those meetings and discussions, we divided in 4 working groups. We used this year to gather information from University offices and committees and met with different leaders to understand how different offices address disability issues on campus to help us understand the barriers to address in our committee.

Based on those conversations and discussions in our monthly meetings, each group articulated their goals for the 2023-2024 year and beyond.

Educational Campaigns working group:

The educational campaigns subcommittee's goal for 2024 is to gain an understanding of disability support services offered on campus that benefit students, as well as faculty/staff and to familiarize faculty with OU resources.

1. As part of our work, the subcommittee will concentrate on syllabus construction and language. We will work with CETL and DSS to create a syllabus that consistently introduces language to inform students with disabilities how and where to get help. The goal is to familiarize faculty members with available services so they can confidently share them with their students in their syllabi and classrooms.

2. As part of our work, we plan to collect all of this information in one space, such as the Employee Resources Network (ERN), and communicate these resources with OU faculty through campus communications, as well as to educate new faculty members during orientation.

Policy Analysis working group:

1. Will scan OU policy documents to prioritize which need revision vis a vis ableism
Completed this task for many policies on campus and will continue in the next AY with a focus on IT travel and Research policies
2. How do faculty get accommodations? The working group will meet with Chad and HR to understand the resources available; Possible outputs include creating a flow chat that can be used in Faculty orientation, training department chairs, etc.
The task started; will continue in the next AY

New Awareness and Initiatives working group:

This group identified the following list of topics that will be prioritized in the next AY:

1. Accessibility at OU events:
 1. Physical accessibility-ramps, wheelchairs
 1. Sign language interpreters
 1. Closed captioning or other support for hearing impaired
 1. Can we add to Chris Reed's OC reservation form?
 1. Need communication with event planning teams
 1. Need funds to support events and accessibility measures
2. Mental Health Awareness:
 1. Mental Health First Aid training to raise awareness and provide training to faculty
 1. Looking into badges for email signature lines
 1. Need release time for classes and training for Staff
 1. Need funds to cover cost of training (have to recertify every three years)
 1. Incentivize faculty to participate:
 1. Stipend
 1. Count for service
3. Accessible Classroom and meeting materials:
 1. Funding for equipment
 1. Training for Faculty, Staff, etc. in accessible design and standards
4. Physical Space and Campus Accessibility
 1. Funding for structural changes, door openers, etc.
5. Housing Accessibility
 1. Funding for equipment, furniture, door openers, etc.

Curricular Initiatives working group:

This group identified the following list of topics that will be prioritized in the next AY:

1. Memo on including disability as a diversity for general education classes (US Diversity in particular)

Submitted to the General Education Committee on March 6, 2024. Will follow up in next AY

2. Badges on disability literacy - investigate badge system and compile a list of courses

To be completed in next AY