

University Budget Advisory Committee
Minutes – 11/3/2022 Meeting

At-large faculty representatives present:	Laura Bylenok (Asst. Professor, CAS) – Chair Brad Hansen (Professor, CAS) Drew Delaney (Senior Lecturer, CAS)
College faculty representatives present:	Liane Houghtalin (Professor, CAS) – Co-Secretary Alexis Rutt (Asst. Professor, COE) Smita Jain Oxford (Senior Lecturer, COB)
USC representatives present:	Arin Doerfler (Senior Accountant-Fixed Assets) – Co-Secretary Ryan Snellings (Collections Manager)
Athletics representative present:	Patrick Catullo (Director of Athletics)
Student representative present:	Ellelyshia Ardo (SGA)
At-large faculty representative absent:	Dan Hubbard (Assoc. Professor, CAS)
USC representative absent:	Kim McManus-Carini (Operations and Finance Coordinator)
Guest:	Jessica Machado (Director of Disability Resources)

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm. Summary of discussion:

1. After announcing that the meeting would be recorded and that the recording was not to be shared outside the committee and after having the attendees offer brief introductions, Dr. Bylenok invited Ms. Machado to give an overview of the Office of Disability Resources and its budget and to tell the committee if there is any area of need in its budget for which UBAC might be able to advocate. Dr. Bylenok stated that the most helpful thing this committee can hear is what an office needs in the coming year, how much that might cost, and a rationale for the need—*i.e.*, how will it benefit the university.
2. Ms. Machado began by thanking UBAC for its advocacy last year. Disability Resources was awarded the opportunity to hire two new staff members, and she felt this opportunity was in large part due to UBAC's advocacy.
3. Ms. Machado went on to report that her office is continuing its search to fill those two positions (an office operations and testing manager position, and an access consultant position) and that so far both searches have failed, likely in large part due to the salaries offered. She stated that she does not know what UBAC can do about the situation, but UMW's salaries simply are not competitive with those of its peer institutions. In general, ODR has found candidates who do not already possess all of the required skills and training to be considered well-qualified and will likely need to hire individuals who will take some time to be trained for their roles and responsibilities.
4. Ms. Machado allowed that having just been given two staff positions, Disability Resources is in reasonably good shape in terms of its needs and budget. There has been an increase in students with sensory disabilities that require the captioning of videos, audio recorders, smart pens, and so on, but so far Disabilities Resources has been able to meet these needs. Rather than ask for more things, therefore, Ms. Machado wanted to look more broadly at UMW and what the institution might need in terms of improving accessibility overall.
5. Ms. Machado stated that a **constant accessibility need is transportation around campus**. Navigating UMW's campus can be physically very challenging due to its hills and historic nature. Many other universities provide transport services for individuals with disabilities. Doing so is not an ADA-required accommodation: personal transportation is considered a

personal responsibility. Providing transportation would, however, be very helpful to students, staff, and faculty with mobility issues, whether the issues are lifelong or temporary (such as occurs with sprains and broken legs). Staffing and determining who will oversee a transportation initiative (not necessarily the Office of Disability Resources) will be the biggest challenges in providing such a service.

6. Ms. Machado noted that the state funds awarded to UMW this past year for equipment and classroom furniture (\$480,000) and the state capital funds awarded to make the campus more accessible (\$11.2 million) are not going to the Office of Disability Resources, but that Disability Resources is trying to help with establishing priorities for the University: transportation should be one of those priorities.
7. Dr. Bylenok and Mr. Catullo asked who is responsible for spending the \$480,000 and the \$11.2 million. Ms. Machado replied that the \$480,000 is going through the Office of the Provost and may have some flexibility in terms of what it can be spent on that could include transportation and that the VP for Administration and Finance & CFO has formed a committee (and asked her to be on it) to discuss the \$11.2 million.
8. Ms. Machado went on to share some **new items related to Disability Resources**. **First**, UMW has a new ADA Coordinator, Dr. Ruth Davison (full title: Director of Compliance and Title IX/ADA Coordinator). Ms. Machado wanted to point out that Dr. Davison has no budget, which will make bringing people to campus, providing ADA training, purchasing tools, etc., difficult.
9. **Second**, often Ms. Machado is asked about providing an ASL interpreter or live captioning at large-scale University events, but Disability Resources has no funding for that. We should be building accessibility into everything we do. Dr. Bylenok asked whether the answer is just “no,” when someone calls to have such support at an event. Ms. Machado confirmed that Disability Resources cannot fund such support and said that she does not know what happens after the call. It appears that in general such support just is not happening. A few years ago, before the pandemic, Ms. Machado asked Procurement to pull the numbers on how much had been spent on closed captioning, and the amount was very small. She doubts that it increased during the pandemic.
10. Dr. Bylenok asked if the new ADA Coordinator works directly with the Office of Disability Resources, or separately, and if she is part of the new committee that will discuss the \$11.2 million designated for campus accessibility. Ms. Machado replied that Dr. Davison is not part of the Office of Disability Resources, that she reports to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and that she is co-chairing the new committee to establish priorities and plan for individual accessibility projects. Ms. Machado further confirmed that UMW has never had a line in its budget for accessibility needs for the University. This has meant a scramble when something as simple as an automatic door opener needs replacing or maintenance. Dr. Bylenok noted that **budget items for accessibility might in sum include funds for training, tools, maintenance, and support for events**. Ms. Machado agreed with the list, noting that the items do not represent direct student accommodations, but that they greatly impact the accessibility of our campus. Dr. Bylenok asked if there was any way to funnel some of the money for student accommodations to these accessibility items. Ms. Machado replied that she had had conversations about that with Tim O’Donnell when she reported to him, but the need for the student accommodations funds is unpredictable from semester to semester, so spending them on general accessibility in the fall semester might mean a shortfall for direct student accommodations in the spring. When there is accommodations money left over, it gets pulled back into the institution and likely covers overspending in another area.

11. Ms. Machado then turned to her **third** new item related to Disability Resources. When faculty ask for a video to be closed captioned for a class, then the University has a resource that could also be used by other faculty and that should be made available to other faculty. She would like to see UMW utilize a video cloud platform such as Kaltura through which faculty could search for and use already remediated videos.
12. As a **fourth** new item related to Disability Resources, Ms. Machado wanted to draw attention to the useful web tools concerning accessibility provided by Syracuse University.
<https://www.syracuse.edu/life/accessibility-diversity/accessible-syracuse/>
These tools include the digital accessibility tool kit developed by the IT department at Syracuse University, and funds could be devoted towards developing such a tool at UMW.
<https://itsaccessibility.syr.edu/resources/toolkit>
These could serve as models for UMW going forward. Partnering with different departments or divisions, such as IT, would help make accessibility a focus across campus. This might require additional staff in IT. Ms. Machado also shared a website run by the University of Virginia,
<https://accessibility.virginia.edu/>
UVA has a Coordinator of Academic Accessibility who is devoted to making both the digital and the physical environments work when it comes to accessibility in the academic experience. As at Syracuse University, many departments are partners in accessibility.
13. Dr. Bylenok expressed appreciation for the higher order of thinking about the future of accessibility at UMW and asked whether these things were something Ms. Machado saw happening through her office or through that of the ADA Coordinator. Ms. Machado replied that it will probably happen through both units working together.
14. As a **fifth** new item related to Disability Resources, one which required partnering with Professor of Geography Steve Hanna, Ms. Machado pointed to the Accessibility Map on the UMW web site. The map indicates accessible routes and marks barriers to accessibility. She would like to see an even more developed and useful accessibility map that would work with a screen reader to help the blind and visually impaired navigate the campus. Ms. Machado noted that our buildings do not have addresses, which adds another layer of difficulty for the visually impaired who want to use GPS to locate a building. Funds could be devoted towards increasing the navigability of the campus through the development of an app or by creating addresses for individual buildings on campus so that technology can be used to enhance access for people with disabilities.
15. Dr. Bylenok asked where Ms. Machado thought these many projects would fit into the budget. Could an enhanced accessibility map, for example, fit into something like a budget that would include also training tools and maintenance? An enhanced accessibility map tied to GPS seems connected to physical accessibility, so could making one come out of the \$11.2 million designated to address accessibility on campus? Ms. Machado replied that Geography faculty such as Steve Hanna and Jackie Gallagher have expressed interest in the project, but a financial incentive is necessary to provide appropriate compensation for the additional workload.
16. Dr. Bylenok opened the meeting to Q&A. **Ms. Machado first summed up by saying that if there was one priority to take away from the meeting, it should be the need for transportation on campus, accessible vans or golf carts, for those with mobility issues. Dr. Bylenok said that she thought it also sounded very important to offer accessibility support for events.**
17. Dr. Bylenok asked whether filling the testing manager position in Disability Resources would mean that there would finally be a full-time testing center. Ms. Machado said that yes, then

the testing center could become operational. She confirmed that Disability Resources is not currently running a testing center, since it does not have the staff to do so.

18. Mr. Catullo asked Ms. Machado for a list of three to five top priority items and what they would cost. If she did not have the numbers in front of her, could she get them to the committee? He noted that if a student group, for example, was looking for accessibility options to enhance their club activities, perhaps there needs to be a pot of money at the University run by Disability Resources to hand out as needed. What would that number look like? Ms. Machado replied that she did not have the numbers, but the ADA Coordinator is the designated University official providing broad oversight concerning campus accessibility matters and would be the appropriate person to approach, particularly regarding a pot of money for accessibility support. There is a difference between an office serving students with documented disabilities, the function of which is to make sure that they receive appropriate academic accommodations and support, and an office responsible for equity and inclusion, the function of which is broader and goes beyond academic support. Ms. Machado wants to be careful about having her office take on the responsibility for giving out money for reasons other than the academic support of students with accommodations. She thinks, however, that it is a good thing to start documenting these conversations as well as the funds used for accessibility across the University outside of ODR and accommodations needs for students with disabilities. An accessibility budget, no matter the size, would allow for the start of manageable tracking of funds.
19. Mr. Catullo asked about the transportation issue (vans or golf carts) and if that was something her office would take on, or did she think it was for the University to do. Ms. Machado replied that different universities handled transportation differently and UMW still has to figure out what makes sense for our campus. She would be happy with it not being part of the Office of Disability Resources, because there are times when that office is not open. She noted that the campus police are always here. They manage parking, and at some universities parking and transportation go together. The campus police at UMW have provided some disability transportation in the past, just as they offer a safety escort, but their force has been cut quite a bit. They have done a great job in the past, and she thinks that given the right resources, they would do a great job at running transportation in the future.
20. Ms. Machado offered to share with the committee her research on quotes for accessible transportation. As for closed captioning and other items that belong to an accessibility budget, even starting with \$1,000 for an earmarked pot of money is better than nothing, because we could then track spending and how much is being used and go from there. Dr. Bylenok agreed that a specific pot of money allows tracking much more easily, because if money is being pulled a little bit from this department and a little bit from that, then there is no clear picture about what the actual need is.
21. Dr. Bylenok asked for confirmation that if requests for accessibility funding did not go through Disability Resources, did Ms. Machado think that they should go through the office of the ADA Coordinator. Ms. Machado was not sure, but indicated that it might be a start for the ADA Coordinator to have access to some “emergency” accessibility funds so that she could look for times when accessibility was not being offered, provide one-time funding, and say to the department organizing the event that in the future it was responsible for accessibility. Ms. Machado does not envision one pot of money being enough, ever, to fund accessibility for all of the events on campus. Dr. Bylenok pointed out that education would be key here, since this is the first time that she has even considered that departments would be responsible for accessibility at their events. Ms. Machado did not want to speak for the ADA Coordinator, but she thinks that training concerning expectations about accessibility

and opening the door to communication regarding accessibility needs will be important going forward.

22. Dr. Bylenok thanked Ms. Machado again for her presentation and her answers to the committee's questions.
23. After Ms. Machado left the meeting, the committee held a long-anticipated discussion concerning what the chair's invitation to a guest should ask him or her to do in terms of a presentation. The committee wants to be sure it understands the guest's top needs and the rationale for those needs. Dr. Bylenok reported that when she sends out the invitation, she asks the guest to give the committee (1) a brief overview of the budget in the guest's area; (2) what the guest anticipates in terms of the area's budget needs and what those needs are going to cost; and (3) a rationale about how fulfilling those needs will improve the University. The committee agreed that this message offers the essence of what we want and need to hear in order to write our recommendations. The committee also agreed that asking for the items to be prioritized, with an emphasis on the top three priorities, would be good. Ms. Oxford suggested that a time limit on each of the categories (perhaps a 10-minute limit on the overview and a 20-minute limit on the needs, their costs, and the rationale, leaving the rest of the time for Q&A). Ms. Doerfler reminded the committee that the guest's position can be difficult, since the committee's minutes are a matter of public record and the guest does not want to offend the administration. Guests want to show gratitude for what they do get. Dr. Houghtalin pointed out that in the past the committee did not typically ask for hard numbers, in order to allow for flexibility in the funding of requests. Maybe the University cannot give everything desired, but it can start to direct some money towards the need and see what happens. Hard numbers are useful, but if the need is there, the committee can still recommend funding without setting a hard figure for it. Dr. Bylenok responded by agreeing with the idea of time limits. She also agreed that while figures are useful, we can make recommendations without them. The ideas for what we should say to guests when inviting them will be useful next year. As for this year, we have only one more guest before we need to turn to writing our recommendations.
24. Dr. Bylenok pointed out that the Administration wants our recommendations on December 1st, but that we only have November 17th and December 1st to meet and write them. Discussion ensued about other possible meeting days, but it was determined that it was hard enough to find a day and time when we could all meet, so we should simply stick with Nov. 17th and Dec. 1st for the whole group to meet. We should also, however, count on "homework."

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Liane Houghtalin
UBAC Co-secretary