



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Hiram G Andrews Center (HGAC) Ad hoc Committee Meeting Minutes for April 26, 2023 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

William Del Toro Vargas (P) Julia Grant Barol (P)
Paul Fogle (P)

Lynn Heitz (P)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Cheryl Novak, James Whitonis

Hiram G Andrews Center (HGAC) Staff Present: Jill Moriconi, Chris Zakraysek
Christopher Miller

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Mr. William Del Toro Vargas called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM after quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Lynn Heitz for approval of the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

HGAC Updates, Discussion of HGAC actions to make curriculum accessible for Blind individual, Discussion regarding HGAC data that was previously provided regarding student employment rates

- Ms. Jill Moriconi, Mr. Chris Zakraysek, and Mr. Christopher Miller provided a

presentation on HGAC updates and topics members previously requested. Spring Graduation was held in-person on April 21, 2023, with about 35 graduates. The HGAC Annual Autism Awareness Walk, and Resource Faire was held recently with more than 400 participants. HGAC is working with various post-secondary schools on articulation agreements that would enable HGAC students to transfer credits toward a 4-year bachelor's degree program. Mount Aloysius College entered into an articulation agreement that would allow HGAC graduates to transfer about 60 credits from the HGAC Network Technology program into a bachelor's degree program. HGAC recently came to an agreement with the Cambria County Assistance Processing Office to be housed on the HGAC campus. Currently working on a pilot program with three Intermediate Units statewide to conduct driver evaluations with customers. Looking to offer Driver's Education virtually and behind the wheel training in the customer's community.

- HGAC is fully committed to making Commonwealth Technical Institute (CTI) programs more accessible. HGAC's Vocational Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT) is available to provide alternate formats, training materials, and other materials provided in CART. Recognizes that is not enough but a partnership with Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) has begun to provide a complete review of all equipment for assistive technology and vocational evaluation. BBVS also provides accessibility training and consulting for HGAC staff. Next steps include evaluation of all CTI program curriculum, materials, classroom equipment, and keeping Council members updated on their progress.
- Ms. Heitz inquired and recommended accessibility for programs in automotive mechanics, plumbing, HVAC, and other trades.
- Ms. Moriconi agreed that expansion of these opportunities is important and will require further evaluations, equipment, and trainings for HGAC staff and curriculum.
- Ms. Barol suggested starting with a pilot project for individuals interested in a particular program rather than a program in its entirety and building from there.
- Gathering employment rate data begins with collecting an employment survey and contact information from students a month before graduation. Employment rates averages for CTI between 2016 and 2020 for each term was between 73% to 84% which is much higher than the National and State averages of 38% and 36% respectively, according to the Department of Labor.
- Business Services and Outreach Departments have undergone several enhancements in an effort to see upward trends in employment. Career Services staff has been increased. An 8 to 16 week externship program has been established with local employers to assist students with developing soft skills and On-the-Job Training. Other career services include portfolio development, professional photography, work readiness workshops, interview preparation expansion, and job placement determination during student orientation.
- Ms. Barol inquired if there is follow up to provide further supports and determination efforts for those who are not employed after graduation. Inquired if HGAC may provide housing to students without disabilities and how many students without disabilities participate with CTI.
- HGAC staff reported that they maintain communication with graduates. Career Services Department continues to provide services to graduates including

information on job leads, lifetime resume service, and maintain a partnership with OVR counselors.

- Ms. Jill Moriconi reported that they can provide housing for students without disabilities. The number of current students without disabilities can be provided at another time but is not a large amount. HGAC is continuing to provide outreach efforts, CTI is a school for anyone interested in attending, approximately 8 students that are not receiving VR services will be attending CTI this Summer, and they are seeing a trend upward in those numbers.
- Mr. Fogle inquired if a fee for service program could be developed for students without disabilities.
- HGAC does provide a fee for services program. HGAC is considered proprietary meaning that they must operate between July 1 and June 30, no capital expenses may be outside of that realm, revenue must be included within those 12 months along with expenses. Proprietary requirements for HGAC include that it remains fee for service and each year fees are established for all services. HGAC partners with Milton Hershey School and works to enroll students who are non VR customers. An invoice is created for Milton Hershey or whoever the payer may be. In the past students have been self-pay and went through student loan and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process. HGAC continues to ensure that tuition rates are comparable to other community colleges to remain competitive for students that are not VR sponsored. HGAC welcomes suggestions to help get the word out and the perception that HGAC has a narrow scope in students without disabilities is not accurate.
- Ms. Barol recommended sending information to the 500 school boards across the state and allowing school board members to ask questions about HGAC services.
- Ms. Moriconi reported that they do have a listserv for all school districts for their Career and Transition Faire, but it is not with the school boards.
- Mr. Fogle inquired about what curriculum is offered that is Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) related.
- HGAC offers a number of programs that are STEM including Networking Technology, Nurse Aide, and Medical Office Assistant.

Finalize planning for In-person visit / tour of HGAC for PaRC members

- Members and HGAC staff confirmed planning for a visit and tour of HGAC for the morning of June 20th with overnight / travel on June 19th. This will coincide with the HGAC Summer Academy. Staff was asked to provide invitations to Full Council to attend in addition to committee members.

Planning for HGAC Presentation for PaRC Full Council meeting on May 17th

- Members and HGAC staff confirmed planning for a Full Council Meeting presentation for the afternoon of May 17, 2023, and to include information provided to the committee during a previous meeting.
- Members agreed to hold the next committee meeting on July 12, 2023, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Heitz to adjourn. Ms. Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.