

AHEAD of the Northern Rockies Newsletter

August 2017

Published by Kathy Meier, Past President and Board Representative

Welcome to Our New President, Mika!

Newly-elected President

AHEAD of the Northern Rockies wants to welcome our newly-elected President, Mika Watanabe. Mika is a Disability Services Coordinator at the University of Montana. In this role, she coordinates reasonable accommodations and support services to students with disabilities. She collaborates faculty members and their departments to ensure equal access to those students.

Watanabe joined Disability Services for Students in 2002. She is a member of the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD), the national professional organization for disability services providers in postsecondary education. She organized the new International Initiative and served as a co-chair of Member Development committee for AHEAD.

On the international level, Watanabe collaborated with NGOs, governmental agencies, and universities in Japan to conduct UM and disability services related outreach, research, and student service in a number of cities across Japan.

Watanabe holds a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Montana.

AHEAD Conference Report from Trudy Carey

Trudy Carey, Director of Disability Services at MSU Billings recently attended the national 2017 AHEAD Conference July 17-21 in Orlando and provided us with a recap of the conference sessions that she attended.

Pre conference sessions on Monday, July 17, and Tuesday, July 18, were followed by the three-day conference ending on July 21. The morning of July 22 was open for meetings by special interest groups and hot topic discussion groups.

Presentations on important and emerging issues were offered as stand-alone sessions to allow for large audiences. This format is new to the conference. The following topics were addressed.

- Legal Year in Review, Version 2.0; Paul Grossman & Jo Anne Simon
- Animals on Campus: Best in Show; Scott Lissner & Irene Bowen
- From Helpless to Heroic: Exploring Disability Bias and Microaggressions; Amanda Kraus

- Accessibility 101; Terrill Thompson & Gaier Dietrich
- OCR Year in Review; Representatives from the U.S. Office of Civil Rights
- Being There: Attendance modifications & assignment deadlines; Jamie Axelrod
- Working with Students on the Autism Spectrum; Lisa King & Jane Thierfeld-Brown
- Socially-Just Disability Awareness Programming; AHEAD's Standing Committee on Diversity

A strand of conference sessions addressing a specific topic enabled attendees to concentrate in one particular area of interest. These included the following:

- Focusing on Students in Health Science and Professional Schools (Medicine, Nursing, etc.)
- Focusing on Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary Education
- Intentionally Leading a DS office: It is YOUR Business!
- Research and Data-Based Practices.

Joann Simon and Paul Grossman emphasized some specific legal cases from the past year. These include *Dudley vs. Miami University* and *Shank V. Carleton College*. Take-aways from these cases include Title IX information that states that rape victims will have PTSD, and consequently materials about a DS office should be included along with information about other support services given to victims of rape.

Dudley vs. Miami University addressed services for students who use media in alternative formats and other assistive technology, specifically students with vision or hearing impairments. In order to make sure that these students have access, a representative from DS needs to meet with every student in these categories to develop an accessibility plan and check in with students once a month at the students' request.

In other DOJ cases, it was determined that documentation should be reasonable, limited to what is pertinent to the needed modification, and considerable weight can be put on IEPs and 504 plans to develop a continuity of accommodations. The recurring theme is that extensive documentation puts a burden on the student and may not be necessary.

Handouts for the sessions, which primarily includes power points, are available for view at [AHEAD Conference 2017 Conference & Registration Information](#). Look for the "Handouts" link under "Resources."

Next year's AHEAD conference will be July 16-21, 2018, at the Albuquerque Convention Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The annual AHEAD conference offers a wealth of information along with networking opportunities. Since each DS office deals with its own specific issues, it is impossible for one person to attend the conference and glean information that is relevant for every DS office in Montana. Please encourage your budget officers to fund conference attendance for at least one person from your institution. Current and relevant knowledge in the field is worth every dollar.

CAMI Conference Report from Karen Davis

Karen Davis from Blackfeet Community College attended the The Center for Accessible Materials Innovation (CAMI) conference held in Atlanta, Georgia in July, 2017. CAMI is supported by a First in the World grant (Project #P116F140452) from the Fund for Post-Secondary Education, U.S Department of Education.

The conference goals were to learn about the CAMI Textbook and Assistive Technology, to review essential student participants' information in C-Port, to preview CAMI activities for the coming year, and to learn more about accessibility to support ALL students with disabilities.

A first in the world grant for college students with printed-related Disabilities at Minority serving Institutions, [The Georgia Institute of Technology](#) created the Center for Accessible Materials Innovation (CAMI) to develop creative solutions that will improve the retention and graduation rate of students with disabilities who face accessibility barriers, with a focus of the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI).

One of the main challenges CAMI will address is that 31 percent of students with disabilities are likely to drop out, while others will take a longer graduate, compared to non-disabled students.

CAMI will undertake these initiatives during the grant period:

[Research:](#) CAMI's current research study explores the academic experiences of students with print-related disabilities

[Training:](#) Focuses on accessibility issues related to instructional materials.

[National Task Force:](#) Dedicated to develop an application to display accessibility information about instructional materials.

AHEAD of the Northern Rockies Annual Conference Recap

Thank you to all who prepared for and attended the annual AHEAD of the Northern Rockies Conference which was held at Great Falls College MSU on June 8th and 9th. Sixteen of our members attended the conference which began with a brief annual business meeting and the newly-elected officers were announced for 2017-2018. The new Board officers are: Mika Watanabe, President, Trudy Carey, President-Elect, Cecelia Kuskie, Treasurer, Greg Gerard, Secretary, and Kathy Meier, Past President and Board Representative. The agenda included ways to increase our membership, to explore the future direction of AHEAD NR, and to make membership management such as conference registration and paying dues a seamless and easy process. Several members agreed to serve on 3 working committees to explore options.

Those working on the Future Direction of AHEAD NR Committee explored was that our affiliate can merge with other affiliates or to collaborate with [Montana College Access Network](#) (MCAN). From this committee's work, AHEAD NR is excited to announce that we will be partnering with (MCAN). MCAN is comprised of non-profits, agencies, and organizations that seek to improve Montanan's lives for post-secondary access. We will join their annual conference in the spring of 2018. Collaboration with MCAN will provide members of AHEAD NR with networking opportunities that are beyond disability services. Furthermore, this partnership will give AHEAD NR opportunities to increase its membership. The Board of AHEAD NR will keep its members informed about the upcoming spring conference.

The Membership Recruitment Committee is still working on this task, and we will keep you updated on their work. In the meantime, Kathy Meier agreed to reach out to the tribal colleges and inform them the benefits of joining AHEAD NR.

The Membership Management Committee assessed online payment tools, and their work culminated in the implementation of online payment options on the AHEAD website. Further information is provided in this newsletter.

AHEAD NR Board sincerely appreciates Kathy Meier's dedication and leadership for this association. She was instrumental to organize and hold this 2017 annual conference.

Pay Membership Dues Online

AHEAD of the Northern Rockies is excited to introduce you to a new online payment system. You can use your debit or credit card to apply for membership or to renew your membership.

Here is how to pay:

Step 1: On the [Join Us](#) page, choose a membership application.

- For an individual membership (\$40), select "Membership Application."
- For the institutional membership (\$100) up to three persons, select "Institutional Membership Application." You can add an individual by paying \$20 per person.

Step 2: Complete the selected application.

Step 3: Select a payment option.

For an online payment, complete your transaction by selecting an appropriate membership type. Although AHEAD NR still accepts payments by check, we recommend the online payment option as it offers a convenient and speedy transaction process.

Conference Survey

A survey was taken after the conference to determine what topics our members would like to see at future conferences, and these included: CAS Standards and program assessments, deciphering diagnostic testing, motivational interviewing, helping students with brain injuries, transitioning students from high school to college, developing student metacognition, service animals vs. therapy, emotional, or companion animals, and assistive technology.

MonTech

Anna-Margaret Goldman, Director of [MonTech](#) reached out to many Disability Service providers across the state over the past few months. Montana's state assistive technology program. MonTECH provides free device loans, demonstrations, an equipment exchange, and partners with RDI out of Great Falls to offer a financial loan for assistive technology. Feel free to reach out to the staff at MonTech with any comments or questions.

Contact Us

For questions or to learn more about AHEAD NR, please contact Kathy Meier, Board Representative, at [Katherine Meier](#) or 406-771-4311.

Looking for Resources, Training or Upcoming Conferences?

Check out these great resources for additional information for resources, training, and upcoming conferences.

Resources and Training:

[The NCCSD Training Center](#)

The NCCSD provides two minute trainings, webinars, webcasts, online demand content, publications, and reports to download.

[NCCSD Publications and Other Products](#)

NCCSD provides posters and brochures that you can download and share. Research highlights and a list of AHEAD publications are also provided on this website.

[ATHEN](#)

Access Technology Higher Education Network is a network of higher education professionals committed to improving accessibility for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Check out the recent legal news, Google Apps and Accessibility links and more!

[Think College! College Options for People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

This website provides publications, training, and other topics of interest.

Conferences:

[Accessing Higher Ground](#) Conference registration is now open for accessible media, web, and technology training and will be held November 13-17 in Westminster, CO.

[Dream College Disability](#) provides a listing of various conferences including The Annual International AHEAD Conference, PEPNet2, Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability, Society for Disability Study Annual Conference, State of the Art Conference on Postsecondary Education and Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.

If you know of any other resources that can be shared with our affiliate please contact [Katherine Meier](#).

Board Members 2017-2018

Mika Watanabe, President ▪ Trudy Carey, President-elect ▪ Kathy Meier, Past President & Board Representative ▪ Greg Gerard, Secretary ▪ Cecelia Kuskie, Treasurer