

**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)
February 2-3, 2017
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Auditorium
4800 N. Lamar St
Austin TX 78756**

Present: Martha Garber, Chair, Coppell
Joyce Taylor, Vice Chair, Houston
Matt Berend, Abilene
Neva Fairchild, Carrollton
Rene Gonzalez, Alton
Paul Hunt, Austin
Susie May, Austin
Karen Stanfill, Houston
Crystal Stark, College Station
Joe Tims, Justin

Absent: Troy Myree, Houston
Casey Hertel, Abilene
Jim Brocato, Beaumont
JoAnne Fluke, Abilene

TWC Reps: Larry E. Temple, Reagan Miller, Cheryl L. Fuller, Ron Ayer,
David Norman, Belinda Salazar, Michelle McCall, Corey Turner,
Brian Owens, Karen Latta, Adam Leonard, Michael Kirkland,
James Farris, Geoffrey Miller, Alfred Reyes, Leo Jaimes,
Carolyn Bennett, Carline Geiger

Guest: Christina Bryant (TIBH), Kristin McEntyre (TWIC)

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Martha Garber, Chair.
Members were introduced.

Committee Meetings

The following committees met with their members: Policy, Procedures and Personnel Development; Membership and Education; and Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment.

RCT COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment Committee, Joe Tims
Chair
 - The committee discussed the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Customer Satisfaction Survey FY 2017 Quarter 1 Results. This report was included in the binder for both Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) General and Blind services.
 - Corey Turner reported for both VR Blind and VR General Services and gave a summary of the results from the open and closed cases.
 - James Ferris and Geoffrey Miller reported on the ongoing research on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
 - James Ferris and Geoffrey **will provide their report/notes to Lisa Godwin to distribute to the RCT Members.**
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development Committee, Karen Stanfill,
Chair
 - There was a discussion about Comprehensive System of Personnel Development CSPD that provides the committee with the number of counselors meeting CSPD requirements, those in progress and the number of counselors who do not meet the CSPD requirement. The IT system that tracked this information did not transfer over in the move to TWC. So we did not have these numbers to review. David Johnston of TWC is checking on the status of this report. **Recommendation** that the RCT send a

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letter to TWC to request that they set up a database to capture the numbers needed for the CSPD staff as required for the State Plan. It will include the new hires, terminations and the educational progress toward the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) requirements.

- **We would like to make a Recommendation that Elizabeth Atkinson from TWC be invited to the RCT meetings to give an update on the VR training.**
- There were four Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) decisions to review. Two of them were found in favor of the client. It was noted in these cases that they talk with staff about how they could make improvements in these situations. **There was a question regarding whether there was a requirement that these decisions go into the client file. Karen is going to review the regulations and get back to the committee with an answer to that question.**
- There were several policies that were reviewed that had financial restrictions that have been in place since at least the 1980's, including the fee TWS-VRS will pay for tutoring and the amount TWS-VRS will pay for vocational training. **The committee will review these and make recommendations.** It was mentioned that the agency is aware that these policies need updating.
- The committee reviewed some of the guidance between the new WIOA measurement goals vs VR policy that initiated timeframes to complete an associates and bachelor's degree. The committee will discuss this and follow up with recommendations.
- Cheryl Fuller confirmed that VR counselors may attend training that is held outside of TWC with proper approval.
- Education & Membership Committee, Susan May, Chair
 - Recruitment is top priority.
 - Currently there are three vacant positions that need to be filled. These positions are all representative of Business,

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Industry and Labor. The forth position for this represented group will expire in October this year. The committee will contact someone at People's Disability Council, Gaby with the Governor's Office, and Melinda Paninski at TWC to seek suggestions for recruitment of new members. Susie May is going to talk with a manager at Starbucks.

- Joyce Taylor will help recruit for the TWIC representative position that will become vacant in October this year.
- The other position that will become vacant in October is the Disability Advocacy Representative.
- **Lisa will arrange a conference call with the committee and Melinda Paninski and Robert Mejia to discuss recruitment.**
- **Lisa will arrange a conference call with Gaby at the Governor's office and the committee to verify positions, reassignment for this year, and if they have received any applications for the RCT.**
- Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair
 - The Council will start thinking about upcoming nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Nominations will be collected in May for August elections.
- RCT Brochure
 - The Committee reviewed the 2nd draft of the RCT Brochure and made additional edits. **Lisa will email these requested edits to the Communications Department and schedule a conference call with them to discuss.**
- Training for the RCT members was discussed and the committee will review and update previous training material as needed. The training will resume in May, starting from the beginning of the training materials.

Public Comment

- There were no public Comments.

NCSRC/CSAVR Conference report from Neva Fairchild

- Neva gave a report about her experience in attending the NCSRC/CSAVR Conference. These conferences are held twice a year and are attended by a member to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and VR Directors from each state. The SRCs are mandated by federal regulations. However, their individuality varies from state to state.
- There was talk about the responsibility for each member to insure that they are speaking out for the group that they represent. For example I am the Community Rehabilitation Program Representative, so it is my duty to speak out on their behalf.
- WIOA was discussed and there is still a lot of confusion among all states.
- Attending this conference, I realized that there are a lot of differences between states' SRC structures and reporting. In review of the Annual Report, Texas came out very favorable.
- I realized that the SRC has a large network of people from every state that are willing to work together. You have people you can call if you need help.

Planning and Review Committee, Neva Fairchild, Chair

- Carline Geiger gave an update on the Combined State Plan.
- The RCT had an opportunity to review and make recommendations on the draft plan. Responses to these comments are being drafted.
- There are several sections that the RCT reviewed that had missing data. We are still awaiting data and that will be sent to the RCT for review and comment very soon.
- The draft will include comments that were received during the Public Hearings.

RSD and BSD Director's Report, Cheryl Fuller, Director of Rehabilitation Services Division and Interim Director of Blind Services Division

- Ms. Fuller provided a report titled Rehabilitation Services and Blind Services First Quarter FY 2017 Report to the RCT. This report was included in the binders. It is made up of three sections:
 - A summary of Rehabilitation Services and Blind Services performance overall and for the goals contained in the new WIOA CSP.
 - A summary of the most recent Customer Satisfaction Survey results for both divisions.
 - Highlights of one or more VR strategies that support implementation of the VR goals.
 - Goal Area 1 - Target Population – Outreach to Individuals Making Subminimum Wage in Sheltered Workshops. We conducted a pilot in Region 1 and Region 2 during the month of December to reach out to these customers. We received helpful information from this pilot and made adjustments to the packets that were used. It is too soon to have results of this program but we are continuing to gather data. **Carline will email these documents to Lisa Godwin to forward onto the RCT Council for review.**
 - Goal Area 2 – Students with Disabilities and Goal 3 – Partnerships – The current activities are Summer Earn and Learn and Pathways to Careers Initiative. There are five initiatives as a part of the path. The first two are Summer Earn and Learn and Charting the Course. These are statewide. The last three are The Career Pathways Academy, Explore STEM and Transition Planning for Students in Private and Homeschool Settings. These are not statewide, but more project-based. **Cheryl will send**

information on the 5 Initiatives to Lisa Godwin to distribute to the RCT.

- Ms. Fuller gave an update about the combination of the designated state unit. We are taking a phased approach. The first phase was to combine the state office in December 2016. The second phase is to combine the regions in March 2017. The last phase will be to combine the field offices by October 1, 2017. Physical combination (aka co-location of Blind and General Services staff) may occur in some parts of the state where co-location of VR staff with the Workforce Solutions Offices is not scheduled in the near future, but the 10/1/17 date will primarily be an organizational and operational combination. The Commission provided guidance to on the importance for counselors to have a private office to maintain confidentiality with customers. This is a priority as we move forward. The staff continues to work hard, and I appreciate that. It is important that we retain specialization in serving all disabilities.

Public Hearing for DSU Combination Update

- Comments from the five public hearings that were held in January:
 - Austin had low attendance from the public. The main concern was how important it is to offer specialization of service to the customers.
 - Harlingen had low attendance from the public.
 - Houston had the largest attendance from the public. Some of the comments were regarding services, regarding location and then being able to provide the centers what we need.
 - Dallas had no one that identified themselves as a customer of VR services. Most of the people that spoke were professionals in the field of either disability or workforce.
 - Lubbock's biggest concern was with the Blind Children's Program.
 - Comment was made that previous public hearings had been held in the afternoon and had larger attendances. These meetings were scheduled in the mornings. The other comment on low

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attendance was that the locations were not familiar to the customers we serve. There were 17 written comments. **These comments will be summarized and shared with the RCT.**

TWC Director Update, Larry E. Temple, TWC, Executive Director and Reagan Miller, TWC, Deputy Director of Workforce Solutions

- Mr. Temple announced that there is a hiring freeze. The only exception for hiring is for imminent public safety jobs. The reason for the freeze was a shortfall in the budget. There was a question regarding how many VR counselor positions are vacant, and the answer was 149 vacant positions (but don't have the exact number of just counselors).
- Good news about the budget and the hiring freeze is that we were not asked to reduce FTEs. We are asking for general revenue for three exceptional items: increase the funding for the JET Program, Adult Learning, and Work in Texas.
- We are tracking 750-1,000 bills, and so far we have not seen anything that really relates to VR.
- TWC issued an RFP for benchmarking for the things that the Sunset Committee pointed out. Focus groups talked to consumers, counselors and the community about experiences with TWC VR. **Mr. Temple will share this report with the RCT when it is available.**

Adjourned at 4:00 PM

Day Two

Welcome

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Martha Garber, RCT Chair.

Rehabilitation Council of Texas

www.twc.state.tx.us/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas

RCT Bylaws

The RCT bylaws are in the process of being updated. Joyce Delores Taylor is leading this project. Joyce presented suggested changes to the bylaws in a word document with track changes to the council and asked that they email her and Lisa Godwin any suggestions or comments to the changes. The updated bylaws will be voted on at the next RCT Meeting in May 2017.

Discussion on VR Performance, Evaluation and Reporting, TWC Director of Operational Insight

Mr. Leonard provided a document, February 2017 Update for Rehabilitation Council of Texas, that was included in the binders.

- WIOA Performance Accountability Update
- SYF2016 Vocational Rehabilitation Results
- TWC Reporting to the Legislature
- DOI Partnership with Program and Business Areas

Questions were answered throughout the presentation.

Liaison Reports

Reports were provided to the council members prior to the meeting and are included in the meeting packet.

- TWIC report provided by Joyce Taylor
- CAP Council report provided by Karen Stanfill
- PRN no report available from JoAnne Fluke
- TEA report provided by Susan May
- SILC report provided by Jim Brocato

Old Business

- Executive Committee – On-going – Joyce Delores Taylor will lead a group to revise the RCT Bylaws. Martha Garber, Neva Fairchild and Karen Stanfill volunteered to serve on the group. The revised bylaws have been presented to the RCT and will be voted on in the May meeting.
- Consumer Satisfaction Committee – On-going review the Consumer Satisfaction results and Needs Assessment.
- Membership and Education Committee – On-going – continue to work with the Governor’s office on appointing new members.
- Membership and Education Committee – On-going - work with Melinda Paniniski and Robert Mejia TWS to gain contacts for business group recruits. Set up conference call.
- Membership and Education Committee – Carried Forward - Joyce will lead a conference call with Gaby in the Governor’s office to get an update on appointments and reassignments.
- Membership and Education Committee -On-going IRI Chapter Review. We will hold a 30 minute training for the council starting in May 2017.
- Policy, Procedures, Personnel Development – On-going review Impartial Hearing results, follow up on TWC’s policies on developing VR goals and review all policy manual revisions.

New Business

- Approval of the November 2016 RCT Meeting Minutes. Motion to approve minutes as amended was made by Neva Fairchild, and Paul Hunt seconded the motion. No further discussion, motion passed unanimously.
- New for To-Do List
 - Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee - will hold a conference call with the RCT to go over the Needs Assessment

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- Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee - Geoffrey Miller will provide his notes to Lisa Godwin to be distributed to the Council.
- Policy, Procedures, Personnel Development Committee - Recommendation that the RCT send a letter to TWC to request that they set up a database to capture the numbers needed for the CSPD staff as required for the State Plan. It will include the new hires, terminations and the educational progress toward the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) requirements.
- Policy, Procedures, Personnel Development Committee - There was a question regarding whether there was a requirement that the IHO decisions go into the client file. Karen is going to review the regulations and get back to the committee with an answer to that question.
- Policy, Procedures, Personnel Development Committee - There were several policies that were reviewed that had financial restrictions that have been in place since at least the 1980's, including the fee TWS-VRS will pay for tutoring and the amount TWS-VRS will pay for vocational training. The committee will review these and make recommendations.
- Policy Committee - Karen will provide a report on the literature review that the committee did with regard to the need for counselors to hold a master's degree.
- Lisa Godwin will update addresses and phone numbers on brochures and webpage.
- Lisa Godwin is to follow-up with Elizabeth Atkinson from TWC to invite her to the RCT meetings to give an update on the VR training.
- Lisa Godwin will arrange a conference call with the Membership & Education Committee and Melinda Paninski and Robert Mejia to discuss recruitment.

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- Lisa will arrange a conference call with Gaby at the Governor's office and the Membership and Education Committee to verify positions, reassignment for this year, and determine if they have received any applications for the RCT.
- Lisa Godwin will email the requested edits for the RCT Brochure to the Communications Department and schedule a conference call with them to discuss the changes.
- Carline Geiger will email the pilot for subminimum wage packet documents to Lisa Godwin to forward on to the RCT Council for review.
- Cheryl will send information on the 5 Initiatives to Lisa Godwin to distribute to the RCT.
- The public hearing comments will be summarized and emailed to Lisa Godwin to distribute to the RCT.
- Lisa Godwin to follow-up on: TWC issued a RFP for benchmarking for the things that the Sunset Committee pointed out. Focus groups talked to consumers, counselors and the community about experiences with TWC VR. Mr. Temple will share this report with the RCT when it is available.

RCT Coordinator Report

- Current balance for travel is \$29,333.63. Current balance for operating expenses is \$17,625. Detailed report was provided in the binders.

Adjourned at 12 Noon