DRAFT Department of Rehabilitation DRAFT

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DHHAC)

**MEETING MINUTES**

March 10, 2022

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

**MEETING LOCATION:**

**Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Central Office**

**Zoom meeting**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Callie Frye, Chair

Hugh Lafler

Michelle Bronson

Anthony Davis

Frank Lester

#### DOR STAFF

#### Peter Dawson, Acting Deputy Director, Specialized Services Division (SSD)

Michael Thomas, Assistant Deputy Director, SSD

Craig Rubenstein, Program Manager, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Section (DHHS)

Marnee Wafer-Hoecker, DOR Rehabilitation Counselor (QRP)

Michael DeNisco, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD), QRP, Fremont Office

Angelica Martinez, QRP, Merced Office

Tiffany Barlow, Program Coordinator, DHHS

Judy Spohn, Interpreter

Lorri Hoffman, Interpreter

Kathleen Munyer, Committee Analyst, SSD

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Welcome & Roll Call

Callie Frye, Chair

* The Chair welcomed the attendees and conducted a roll call.

**Review and Approval of December 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Callie Frye, Chair

* Callie called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting of the DHHAC.
* Michelle Bronson moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Anthony Davis~~.~~

Vote: Anthony, yes; Frank, yes; Hugh, yes; Michelle, yes. The motion passed.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Section Report

Craig Rubenstein, Program Manager, DHHS

* Craig reported that DHHS is scheduling monthly coffee chats with interpreters.
* Interpreters have learned that DOR will provide additional training for them and they can earn continuing education units.
* SSA interpreters who work for DOR can be put on a Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) list which makes them available to offer interpreting services for other districts.
* Coffee chats for RCDs will soon be scheduled.
* Craig is working on replacing Jeff Lubman, Program Coordinator, Southern District, DHHS, who retired at the end of 2019.
* Craig reported that there is no longer a Deaf Unit in the Inland Empire Unit; All services are under the “Hearing” Unit.
* Michael Thomas reported that the DHHAC can be very influential as a partner with DOR in providing services to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
* He reported on the advocacy provided by the Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) and gave examples of how the committee interacts with DOR to bring changes they deem necessary.
* Peter Dawson reported that the issues discussed today are extremely important, especially for high school transition students and whether the students earn a high school diploma or a certificate of completion.
* DOR needs to reach many more people who need our services.
* DOR needs to find a better approach on how to reach those people.
* Kathleen Munyer will soon be retiring and an announcement for the position has been posted.
* Kathleen plans to remain with DOR until a replacement has been hired and trained for the position.
* There are several vacancies for RCDs due to retirements.
* The position of Deputy Director, SSD remains open but the position has not yet been announced.
* A tentative offer has been made for the DHHAS Program Coordinator in Southern California.

DHHAC bylaws

Callie Frye, Chair

* Per the recommendation of Michael Thomas, Callie Frye appointed a taskforce to review the bylaws and make suggestions for changes.
* Callie Frye appointed Michele Bronson and Hugh Lafler to serve on a taskforce to review the DHHAC bylaws and make suggestions for updating them.
* The taskforce will send the revised version of the bylaws to the Committee Analyst, Kathleen Munyer, at least three weeks prior to the next meeting scheduled for June 16.

Recruitment for the DHHAC

Callie Frye, Chair

* Kathleen Munyer reported the current vacancies on the DHHAC:
* Late deafened;
* Deafblind;
* Professional preparation and continuing education for RCDs.
* Expert in the broad area of assistive technology.
* A discussion took place as members made suggestions on recruiting for the open positions.
* Craig Rubenstein reported that one of the greatest needs to fill is for an “Expert in the broad area of Assistive technology.”
* He offered to contact Sam Sepah who works for Google; Sam may know of an interested party.
* Craig will work with Frank Lester to contact Sam Sepah.
* Craig reported that he used to work with someone from California State University, San Bernardino and he will work on contacting that person for a possible referral.

**Motion:**

Moved by Hugh Lafler and seconded by Frank Lester:

* Move to establish a non-voting position on the committee for a RCD.

Vote:

Callie, no; Anthony, no; Frank, no; Michelle, no. The motion did not pass.

**Title IX Regulation Project**

Daisy Hughes, Attorney IV**,** DOR Office of Legal Affairs and Regulations

* Daisy Hughes reported that after an internal review, DOR identified necessary changes to regulations to guard against sexual and other forms of abuse.
* DOR is writing regulations to address and respond to such allegations.
* The framework of the changes identified are within Title IX of the Educations Amendment Act of 1972.
* Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funds. This includes vocational rehabilitation agencies.
* Title IX has regulations that specifically focus on prohibiting sexual harassment, including sexual violence such as rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.
* Title IX is well known in the context of colleges and universities in relation

to allegations of sexual misconduct such as those brought by one student against another student.

* DOR has identified needed changes and have the goal of more closely mirroring the policies, practices, and investigations conducted by colleges and universities.
* Summary of changes:
* DOR will change the title of Shannon Coleman, Chief of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to Chief of the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator.
* There is currently a resolution process in DOR’s regulations that covers all types of discrimination. Those regulations will stay in place and DOR will be adding a separate process for Title IX specific complaints.
* Some changes in federal Title IX regulations were made in 2020 makingit very specific for sexual misconduct and the investigations that handle sexual misconduct.
* The new regulations will require an additional level of review. The decision maker will be separate from the investigator and the Title IX Coordinator.
* Under the new regulations, the length of time for the process will take about 135 days because of the increased layer of review compared to the current regulations where the process takes about 110 days.
* DOR expects to post the suggested regulations for public comment in December of 2022.

**What is working to better serve the Deaf/Hard of Hearing in your network and/or what needs improvement?**

Callie Frye, Chair

* Craig Rubenstein reported that referrals need to be improved. Statewide, our numbers are down.
* A discussion ensued about the possibility of holding a forum(s) or webinar(s)

to welcome the deaf and hard of hearing and provide an opportunity to learn more about DOR programs. Parents of deaf and hard of hearing children should also be invited to attend.

* Angelica reported that many high school students are receiving a “Certificate of Completion” rather than a high school diploma. It is important that they stay in school to complete the courses required to earn a high school diploma.
* Frank Lester reported that a bill will be introduced to allow people with disabilities to have a path for receiving a high school diploma.
* Michael Thomas encouraged the members to bring solutions to DOR to address this issue and work together to bring the bill to fruition.

****Open Forum****

**Callie Frye, Chair**

* **Could DOR participate in a Back-to-School night?**
* **Angelica supports the idea.**
* Michael suggested that attendees encourage DOR young people, 16 and older to participate in Student Services. The consumer can get DOR services after the Student Services have been completed.
* Angelica Martinez reported that youth who are consumers of DOR should take advantage of Student Services.
* It is very difficult to contact schools.
* How to have access to schools? Michael Thomas suggested to request advice from Kevin Peaches.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.