



DISCUSSION SUMMARY

MEETING OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY'S DISABILITY INCLUSION GROUP

Friday, November 25th, 2016

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Genesis Boardroom, Bruneau Centre for Research and Innovation, Memorial University

SUMMARY OF NEW ACTION ITEMS

- 1) **Ailsa Craig** will share her draft letter to Memorial units/departments (inquiring about course content relating to disability inclusion) with the DIG-MUN team for feedback;
- 2) **Chrissy Vincent** will look into the possibility of setting up a dedicated DIG-MUN e-mail address (perhaps inclusion@mun.ca);
- 3) **Barbara Neis** will follow up with Tina Hickey in the Department of HR about possibly providing a virtual connection to the Susan Scott-Parker session, and **Chrissy Vincent** will re-send the event information to Lorna Payne at Grenfell;
- 4) **Chrissy Vincent** will re-circulate the document she compiled listing Disability Studies programs at Canadian universities to DIG-MUN members;
- 5) **Chrissy Vincent** will re-circulate the accessibility plan for Carleton University to DIG-MUN members;
- 6) **Ailsa Craig** will work together with a small group of DIG-MUN members to begin the planning process for a mapping workshop, with a goal of early to mid-March for the event;
- 7) **Lorna Payne** will try to find an agenda (or similar information) for the Grenfell accessibility event and share it with the group;
- 8) **Chrissy Vincent** will send Angie Clarke (at the Marine Institute) an invitation to join DIG-MUN; and
- 9) **Barbara Neis** will put together a draft terms of reference document and share it with the group for suggestions and feedback.

This document briefly summarizes the discussions that took place at the second meeting of Memorial University's Disability Inclusion Group (DIG-MUN), held on November 25th, 2016. The meeting was chaired and facilitated by Barbara Neis (NL Provincial Co-Lead for the Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy). The following is a complete list of attendees, presented in alphabetical order by surname:

- Ailsa Craig (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, MUN)
- Steve Czarnuch (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, MUN)



- Jason Geary (Teaching Consultant, Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, MUN)
- Jane Gosine (Associate Professor, School of Music, MUN)
- Kathy Hawkins (Manager of Employer Supports and Services, Empower NL)
- Barbara Neis (NL Provincial Co-Lead, CRWDP)
- Lorna Payne (Coordinator of The Learning Centre, Grenfell Campus, MUN)
- Catherine Shortall (Program Policy Development Specialist, Disability Policy Office, Gov. of NL)
- Chrissy Vincent (NL Provincial Coordinator, CRWDP)
- Gabrielle Young (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, MUN)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting opened with a few words from Barbara Neis, NL Provincial Co-Lead for the Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP). She provided a brief overview of the CRWDP mandate as well as some background information about the formation of this particular group, whose intention is to promote disability inclusion at Memorial University and work toward the development of a Disability Studies curriculum for Memorial students.

The opening comments were followed by a brief round of introductions for the benefit of those who were new to DIG-MUN. We were very pleased to welcome five individuals who were completely new to the group and had not attended the inaugural meeting: 1) Steve Czarnuch, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science (jointly appointed to the the Faculty of Medicine) who is interested in engineering supports to assist persons with disabilities; 2) Jason Geary, a teaching consultant at the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) and a member of the MUN Advisory Council for Students with Disabilities; 3) Jane Gosine, an Assistant Professor in the School of Music who is interested in inclusive musical programming; 4) Lorna Payne, Coordinator of the Learning Centre at Grenfell Campus, which encompasses disability services for students; and 5) Gabrielle Young, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education who is interested the use in assistive technology by students with special learning needs as well as Universal Design for Learning.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Once all attendees had an opportunity to briefly introduce themselves, the meeting proceeded to a review of the notes and action items from the inaugural DIG-MUN meeting on May 6th, 2016:

ACTION ITEM #1: Chrissy Vincent will forward the Summary Report from the Roundtable on Inclusion to the members of DIG-MUN.

STATUS: The report was forwarded to group members immediately following our inaugural meeting.

ACTION ITEM #2: Angela Loucks-Atkinson will do some background research to figure out the differences between a diploma and a certificate.

STATUS: Unknown, as Angela was not present at this meeting to provide an update.



ACTION ITEM #3: Ailsa Craig, Anne-Marie Sullivan, and Kathy Skinner will discuss the possibility of funding a MUCEP student to compile a list of currently existing Memorial University courses that touch in issues of disability inclusion.

STATUS: Ailsa created a draft letter for circulation to all individual units/departments at Memorial University inquiring about any course content touching on issues of disability inclusion. She also informed the Faculty Council of Humanities and Social Sciences about the letter, so some units/departments are now aware of it and expecting it. The letter has not yet been distributed, as the process became stalled at the stage of funding a MUCEP student to carry out the work. Ideally, however, the letter will be distributed in the coming months and responses to it will result in a collection of course outlines for all Memorial University courses with disability-related content. It was noted by attendees that it will be important to include Grenfell campus in this effort, and also to ensure information is collected about which courses are available by distance education. It was also suggested that a special e-mail account be set up to which responses could be forwarded. ***(NEW ACTIONS: Ailsa will share her draft letter with the DIG-MUN team for feedback, and Chrissy Vincent will look into the possibility of setting up a dedicated DIG-MUN e-mail address – perhaps inclusion@mun.ca.)***

ACTION ITEM #4: Kathy Hawkins, Kathy Skinner, and Barbara Neis will discuss the possibility of initiating a program to boost disability confidence at Memorial University.

STATUS: Kathy Hawkins was pleased to report that *Empower – The Disability Resource Centre* has now formed a partnership with the Department of Human Resources (HR) at Memorial University, and they are working closely together to initiate a program for boosting disability confidence at Memorial. They have chosen to begin the process by looking at inclusive hiring – specifically external staff recruitment processes – and will be providing some training to front-line HR managers in January. The focus on inclusive hiring provides an easy starting point, and once the hiring piece has been addressed, they hope to turn their attention to the kinds of supports offered to employees once they are appointed. Once the program gets underway, they may also invite involvement from the various unions that are present on campus. Since forming this partnership, the Department of HR have also planned an event to bring members of the Memorial University community together with Susan Scott-Parker – an international expert in working with businesses on disability issues, whose four-day visit to NL is being hosted by *Empower*. This event will take place from 2:00-4:00 pm on Wednesday, November 30th. It was suggested that it may be a good idea for the event to have an option for virtual attendance, as there may be some individuals at Grenfell Campus who would be interested in it. ***(NEW ACTIONS: Barbara Neis will follow up with Tina Hickey in the Department of HR about possibly providing a virtual connection to the Susan Scott-Parker session, and Chrissy Vincent will re-send the event information to Lorna Payne at Grenfell.)***

ACTION ITEM #5: Mary Reid will make contact with representatives at University of Winnipeg and York University, and Angela Loucks-Atkinson and Anne-Marie Sullivan will make contact with a representative at Vancouver Island University in order to learn about how their Disability Studies programs got started.

STATUS: Unknown, as neither Mary, Angela, nor Anne-Marie was present at this meeting to provide an update. There was general agreement among attendees, however, that this kind of information would be very useful to have and all DIG-MUN members should make an effort to get in touch with any



contacts they may have at Canadian universities where there are Disability Studies programs. **(NEW ACTION: Chrissy Vincent will re-circulate the document she compiled listing Disability Studies programs at Canadian universities, so that DIG-MUN members can contact anyone who they may know at those institutions.)**

ACTION ITEM #6: Catherine Shortall will share the accessibility plan for Carleton University with the group, and Angela Loucks-Atkinson and Anne-Marie Sullivan will follow up with David Yi, a member of their department who currently has a grant to conduct some accessibility auditing at Memorial University.

STATUS: Catherine shared the Carleton University accessibility plan with DIG-MUN members shortly after the inaugural meeting, but since there have been a number of new members join the group since that time, it should probably be circulated again. Neither Angela nor Anne-Marie was present at this meeting, so it is unknown whether they followed up with David Yi. **(NEW ACTION: Chrissy Vincent will re-circulate the accessibility plan for Carleton University to DIG-MUN members.)**

ACTION ITEM #7: Ailsa Craig will spearhead a mapping workshop with students, community members with disabilities, and others in an effort to pinpoint the issues around disability inclusion that are most in need of attention.

STATUS: This has not yet happened, but Ailsa still hopes to make it a reality in the coming months. It was suggested that it might be a good idea to put together a small team of DIG-MUN members to plan the event, and start by developing a “vision document” detailing exactly what the workshop would look like. Ailsa explained that she views it as being much like a needs assessment, but rather than simply focusing on where the gaps are, it would also seek to document what’s already in place and how it can be expanded, improved, or built upon. There may be traction for this kind of an event in the wake of the critical review of the Blundon Centre, which was conducted just this past year (the final report was published in August and can be accessed [here](#)).

There was agreement among attendees that the workshop should include as many diverse perspectives as possible – students, faculty, staff, alumni, representatives of disability groups, and other community members should all be invited to attend. It was acknowledged that the ideal timing for the event would be different for these different target groups, but there was eventually consensus that early to mid-March might work satisfactorily for everyone. There was a great deal of discussion about the scope of the event, and whether it should broadly address accessibility and inclusion for all potentially marginalized populations or focus more narrowly on disability alone. Some attendees expressed reservations about broadening the scope too much, as disability issues might then get lost. Other attendees, however, pointed out that a broader scope would help attract more participation, particularly from individuals who feel that a discussion about inclusion is relevant to them but might not necessarily self-identify (or publicly disclose) as having a disability. In the end, it was agreed that it might be best to keep a relatively broad scope with a focus on accessibility and inclusion in general, but with space for separate discussion (via break-out groups, for instance) about what the specific needs might be for the different populations represented in the room.

It was suggested that if the event were formally called a “conference”, it might be possible to find some funding to help with the costs of it. This would be particularly helpful if it were to be held off-campus,



which might be necessary given the issues with parking that seem to be unavoidable for on-campus events. **(NEW ACTION: Ailsa Craig will work together with a small group of DIG-MUN members to begin the planning process for this mapping workshop, with a goal of early to mid March for the event. Jason Geary, Kathy Hawkins, Lorna Payne, and Gabrielle Young all expressed interest in being involved with this.)**

ACTION ITEM #8: Participation in DIG-MUN will be invited from representatives of all faculties and other relevant groups on campus.

STATUS: Targeted invitations were sent to representatives of all faculties and other relevant campus groups this past summer, with overwhelmingly positive response. There is now representation from all groups for which it was sought – see the end of this document for a complete list of DIG-MUN members.

ACTION ITEM #9: Chrissy Vincent will put in a C&C request for the creation of a dedicated DIG-MUN listserv.

STATUS: The DIG-MUN listserv was created shortly after the inaugural meeting, and is now in regular use by the group.

OTHER UPDATES AND COMMENTS FROM GROUP MEMBERS

Following the review of action items from the previous meeting, the floor was opened to meeting attendees for any other updates, news, or comments that they might like to share.

- **Ailsa Craig** reported that she has now finished developing her Special Topics Course in the Sociology of Disability (Sociology 3311), and it has been formally approved by the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (CUGS). She is hoping to be able to offer the course both in the classroom and online.
- **Lorna Payne** told the group about an event held on Grenfell Campus this past fall that was successful in generating a lot of interest. The focus of the event was accessibility (very broadly defined), and it included a panel discussion as well as a general brainstorming session about what might possibly be done to improve accessibility at Grenfell. It was open to the entire Grenfell community, and brought in approximately 50 attendees. Someone suggested that it might be useful for us to see the agenda for that event, and Lorna agreed that even though the event was relatively open in format and did not have much in the way of a structured agenda, she would try to track down anything that might be helpful and share it with the group if possible. **(ACTION: Lorna will try to find an agenda – or similar information – for the Grenfell event and share it with the group.)**

She also mentioned a colleague from the Marine Institute (MI) who she believes would be a wonderful fit for DIG-MUN. Her name is Angie Clarke, and she is the Director of Student Affairs at MI. **(ACTION: Chrissy Vincent will send Angie Clarke an invitation to join DIG-MUN.)**



- **Gabrielle Young** told the group about a mapping exercise that was recently done within the Faculty of Education to assess the Bachelor of Special Education program. She mentioned that she might be able to bring information from that exercise to the mapping workshop in March, and also bring some of her graduate students along with her.
- **Steve Czarnuch** mentioned that he is part of the curriculum review committee for the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, and would be very interested in finding ways to improve accessibility of course content and delivery within that Faculty. It is currently very rigid, and it is quite possible that good students may be lost because the program is not flexible in adapting to their needs. **Jane Gosine** then mentioned that there are many similarities within the School of Music. When it comes to performing on a musical instrument, some rigidity is unavoidable. She suggested, however, that it would be nice to see some course content that is focused on how music might be used as a tool to serve/benefit the disability community (and other communities as well).
- **Lorna Payne** suggested that in order to clarify our mandate, it might be useful for DIG-MUN to develop a terms of reference document. There was general agreement among attendees that this would be a valuable exercise, but it would need to be kept quite simple and broad in the interest of not limiting the group or undermining the potential for serendipity. **Catherine Shortall** suggested that it might be a good idea to include an eventual goal for Memorial University to have an accessibility plan. **Barbara Neis** agreed, and added that the terms of reference should touch on the promotion of inclusion and accessibility in relation to four fundamental areas – curriculum, teaching/delivery, hiring and retention, and research. **(ACTION: Barbara Neis will put together a draft terms of reference document and share it with the group for suggestions and feedback.)**

DISCUSSION ON LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Unfortunately, this portion of the meeting was cut short due to time constraints. **Barbara Neis** did, however, provide a quick introduction to the “social lab” concept as a possible framework for DIG-MUN going forward. A “social lab” brings together a group of committed individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives who are dedicated to working together long-term to address a common social goal. The group will experiment with different approaches and keep adapting their tactics until they find a way of successfully initiating change. It is a gradual process that results in very slow systemic change over time. This is a useful idea for conceptualizing how our group might be able to tackle the issue of disability inclusion and eventually bring about long-term institutional change at Memorial.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WRAP-UP

There were no additional comments from participants during the meeting’s wrap-up.



ALPHABETICAL LIST OF DIG-MUN MEMBERS AND AFFILIATIONS

- Bornstein, Stephen** (NL Provincial Co-Lead, CRWDP)
- Christy, Emily** (Executive Director, Coation of Persons with Disabilities NL)
- Cooke, Gordon** (Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, MUN)
- Cornish, Peter** (Director, Student Wellness and Counselling Centre, MUN)
- Craig, Ailsa** (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, MUN)
- Steve Czarnuch** (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, MUN)
- Day, Martin** (Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science, MUN)
- De Boer, Catherine** (Associate Professor, School of Social Work, MUN)
- Geary, Jason** (Teaching Consultant, Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, MUN)
- Gosine, Jane** (Associate Professor, School of Music, MUN)
- Hawkins, Kathy** (Manager of Employer Supports and Services, Empower NL)
- Hickey, Tina** (Employment Equity Officer, Department of Human Resources, MUN)
- Loucks-Atkinson, Angela** (Associate Professor, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, MUN)
- Maddalena, Victor** (Associate Professor, Community Health and Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, MUN)
- Massey, Jennie** (Director, Student Life, MUN)
- Neis, Barbara** (NL Provincial Co-Lead, CRWDP)
- Payne, Lorna** (Coordinator of the Learning Centre, Grenfell Campus, MUN)
- Pittman, Tracey** (Academic Labour Relations Officer, Office of Faculty Relations, MUN)
- Reid, Mary** (Director, Disability Policy Office, Gov. of NL)
- Ricciardelli, Rose** (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, MUN)
- Shortall, Catherine** (Program Policy Development Specialist, Disability Policy Office, Gov. of NL)
- Sitter, Kathleen** (Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, MUN)
- Skinner, Kathy** (Academic Program Administrator, Glenn Roy Blundon Centre, MUN)
- Small, Sandra** (Associate Professor, School of Nursing, MUN)
- Sullivan, Anne-Marie** (Associate Professor, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, MUN)
- Vincent, Chrissy** (NL Provincial Coordinator, CRWDP)
- Young, Gabrielle** (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, MUN)