



## **Proposed Restructuring of the Disability Commission**

### **Prepared by Michelle Livingston and Berne Christiansen, Co-Chairs**

As Co-Chairs, we propose to the Board that the Disability Commission be restructured beginning with the 2018-2019 year. This will require a bylaw change that would be voted on by membership at the November 2017 Annual Meeting.

#### **Rationale:**

The MCPA Disability Commission was created in Academic Year 2008-2009, and has supported the community with education, outreach, and events related to disability and access. It has been a parallel commission to the LGBTQIA\*, the POCC, and the New Professionals Commissions. However, the Disability Commission has struggled with its mission since that time for several reasons, including:

- There are a lack of MCPA members and other professionals who identify as professionals with a disability who wish to attend events around that identity.
- There is a sense among MCPA members that with limited time and funding for professional development, advocacy and education around race, gender, etc. are more likely to have direct impact on their professional and personal identity roles and work.
- Professionals who work in disability and access services have their own professional organizations (i.e. MNAhead), and their offices are less likely to support involvement in a generalist organization.

At the annual conferences, each Commission is required to bring in at least two programs. Typically, disability-focused programming has been driven primarily by the Commission Co-Chairs, because there are monetary and professional barriers for disability and access services professionals to present (i.e. lack of funding/professional development support/time off work to attend generalist organization events). For the Commission, this has been difficult, and for the MCPA community, it has been limiting, because many of the Commission Co-Chairs have not been practicing disability services professionals, and thus have widely varying levels of expertise in the disability field and disability issues generally.

Attendance at events outside of the annual conference has been minimal, including at educational events and socials. While intersectional events with other Commissions have yielded a more attendees, this is because of the attendance draw of the other Commissions.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that planning and ongoing strategic oversight of disability and access issues within MCPA and the broader higher education community be addressed through a disability and access advocate, liaison or advisor position on the Board rather than through a Commission structure.

**Advocate/Liaison/Advisor Duties:**

At the Board level, this person would be the first point of contact for issues pertaining to access and disability, and would bring these concerns before the board with recommendations or for discussion. They need not be a disability and access services professional. However, they should be a member of MCPA, have some experience or interest in working in disability and access, or work with students, staff, or faculty with disabilities. This would be an appointed position, serving a term of two years.

Please see the attached position description for additional information.

**Succession:**

Under this proposal, the current Disability Commission will cease to exist at the close of the 2017-18 board year, and the new position will be in effect with the 2018-2019 board on June 1, 2018. The terms of service for the current Commission Co-Chairs will end with the elimination of the Commission. Should a current Co-Chair wish to serve in the new role, they may apply for appointment.

<b>Disability and Access Advocate (1)</b>	
<b>Term Length:</b>	2 Years
<b>Type:</b>	Appointed Position
<b>Team:</b>	Inclusion
<b>Committees:</b>	N/A
<b>Events to Coordinate:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conference               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Solicit conference workshops that focus on the needs of communities with disabilities</li> <li>○ Markets to disability communities inside and outside of MCPA membership</li> <li>○ <b>Educational events or trainings related to disability and access (lead)</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Inclusion Institute</li> </ul>
<b>Must Attend:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board Meetings</li> <li>● Conference</li> <li>● Disability and access educational events</li> <li>● Inclusion Institute</li> <li>● One additional membership outreach opportunity</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Duties:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Networks via meetings and events to explore, address, and actively assist the Board in raising awareness and inclusion of the needs of diverse students and professionals.</li> <li>● Organizes outreach to MCPA stakeholders with disability concerns.</li> <li>● Researches grant and other opportunities to build accommodation budget and/or fund educational programming.</li> <li>● Liaises with the standing commissions to ensure intersectionality opportunities are explored.</li> <li>● Pursues knowledge around current issues and opportunities in disability and access scholarship.</li> <li>● Maintains accurate and timely information on website.</li> <li>● Intentionally engages the Board in advancing the progress of the Equity &amp; Inclusion Plan.</li> <li>● Utilizes role to make progress on both the Strategic and Equity &amp; Inclusion Plans.</li> <li>● Maintains current membership in MCPA.</li> <li>● Submits annual report in May to share with incoming Board members.</li> </ul>