

**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)  
August 1-2, 2019  
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center  
Auditorium  
4800 North Lamar Austin TX 78756**

**Present:**

Neva Fairchild, Chair Carrollton  
Amanda Bowdoin, Forney  
Lisa Cowart, Beaumont  
Michael Ebbeler Jr., Austin  
Cheryl A Fuller, Austin  
Crystal George, Argyle  
Bobbie Hodges, Fort Worth  
Paul Hunt, Vice Chair Austin  
Lisa Maciejewski-West, San Angelo  
Susie May, Austin  
Troy Myree, Houston  
Colton Read, New Braunfels  
Rodrick Robinson, McKinney  
Karen Stanfill Houston

**Absent:**

Crystal Stark, College Station  
Matt Berend, Abilene  
JoAnne Fluke, Abilene  
Lindsey Geeslin, Waco

**TWC Reps:**

Belinda Salazar, Adam Leonard, Jeff Kaufmann, David Norman, Michelle McCall, Ron Ayer, Carline Geiger, Brad Owens, Gary Benner, Jami John, Tammy Martin, Ruth Hughes

**Guest:**

Robin Orlowski (Disability Chamber Council), Kaki Leyens TWIC,  
Steven Aleman, Disability Rights TX, Christina Bryant, Workquest,  
Bonnie Down

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Neva Fairchild, Chair.

## **Address the Council and Present Retiring RCT Members, Ruth Hughs, Chair and Commissioner Representing Employers, TWC**

- My office has worked hard as an agency to find ways to educate employers about the benefits of hiring someone with a disability.
  - We held the first DiverseAbility forum to educate employers about hiring people with disabilities. Having this group outreach in terms of benefits of hiring people with disabilities, having employers share what these success stories look like and really supporting those efforts. Cheryl Fuller and her team are going to take on this forum as an agency wide effort. The next DiverseAbility forum will be held in El Paso this year on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - We also as a commission are working hard to have work-based learning opportunities for students. And that includes students with disabilities. In September 2019 we launched the third internship challenge, with our tri-agency partner at the education agency and higher ed coordinating board. We challenge employers to have paid internships opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Commissioner Hughs presented Neva Fairchild with a certificate from the Governor of Texas and a letter from TWC Commissioners.

## **Committee Meetings**

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

## **Public Comment**

- No one for public comment.

## **VR Division Director's Report Cheryl A. Fuller, TWC VR Division Director**

- The 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session ended in May. The VR program was not significantly impacted as there were no bill that passed involving VR.
- Work In Texas System, the new system should role out August 19, 2019.
- Rehabilitation Services Administration Monitoring Visit
  - This will take place starting September 16, 2019
  - Brian Miller will reach out to the RCT Chair for an interview.
- Summer Events
  - Explore Apprenticeship-VR partnered with two community colleges this summer to pilot the first Explore Apprenticeship programs for high school students. San Jacinto College (SJC) and Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) each hosted a camp for students to build their knowledge of apprenticeship career pathways. Nine students participated in the SJC and seven participated in DCCCD.
  - SEAL-Summer Earn and Learn, TWC VR contracts with each board to purchase work readiness (employability skills) training, worksite identification, placement and monitoring, and to pay students wages and associated cost for SEAL participants. The target for 2019 is 2,500 students by the end of the summer. As of July 18, 2019, a total of 2,154 students were currently at job sites and 481 had completed work experience.
  - Explore STEM! - These camps, are offered by colleges and universities, introduce student to various STEM fields through hands-on activities, the opportunity to hear from and ask description of education and training pathways available to student to help them enter STEM careers. As of July 19, 2019, a total of 380 student has been referred to the Explore STEM! Camps and 256 had registered.

- Other long-standing programs continued LEAP, CCRC College Prep Program.
- Rethink VR-This is a project that Texas was asked to participate in by RSA. The group is reviewing the cause of trends and what can be done about it. The first meeting was in June second in July and the last one in August. Trends in Texas
  - 25% decline in the number of applications to VR Programs
  - 30% decline in number of individuals being determined eligible
  - One thing TWC VR is doing to to make sure customers know where we are located by conducting outreach and awareness activities in FY2020.
- The full VR Division Director's Report was provided in the meeting binder.

## **RCT Committee Reports**

- Customer Satisfaction Committee, Lisa Maciejewski-West, Chair
  - Gary Benner reported on House Bill 2110 that was signed by the governor. This could potentially affect the customer satisfaction surveys in the future. We do not have much to report on at this time but will keep the council informed once guidelines are available.
  - He also gave an overview of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Customer Satisfaction and Needs Survey Report. The full report is included in the meeting binder.
    - One comment on the report that the contractor surveyed only a few customers in the Gulf Coast area. Therefore, there wasn't enough data for this area to run the comparison. This has been addressed with the contractor.
    - The committee is recommending that if a customer answers that they are dissatisfied that there be a follow up question, maybe would they like someone from TWC VR to contact them for further details as to their dissatisfaction.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation on closed cases if the customer answers that they are not currently employed, that the next question is would they like someone from TWC VR to contact them to help you find employment.
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) 2020 Town Hall Meetings
  - Dates, time and city locations are identified.
  - Working on securing building locations.
  - Marketing - send distribution lists or suggested organizations, conventions, vendors etc to Lisa Godwin. This document will be added to the RCT SharePoint for all RCT members to edit. We would send the flier out to the organizations and ask that they distribute to their email list.
  - Live polling was brought up for further discussion.
- Education & Membership, Bobbie Hodges, Chair
  - Membership
    - New Member appointments were received along with reappointments. There are still a few vacant positions include representation from Business Industry and Labor.
    - Michael Ebbeler will visit the Governor's Appointment office two times a year to maintain a good relationship.
    - New Member Orientation will be held on Wednesday November 6. RCT Members need to review the binder for updates.
  - Training
    - VR Overview
    - Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Susie May)
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
  - TWC VR counselor and staff turnover
    - The committee reviewed information received by TWC VR
    - 20-25% of the workforce is eligible for retirement this year.

- Salary guidelines are being looked at for adjustment.
- The concern of RCT is that a lot of staff are leaving before the two-year mark. So, looking at suggestions to help the improvement of retention of staff.
- A list of stakeholders has been requested to share VR job openings.
- Informed Choice
  - RCT will be making recommendations for verbiage to be included in the policy manual with regard to informed choice.

## **Planning and Review Committee Report, RSA Monitoring Update, Carline Geiger, TWC VR Deputy Division Director of PP&S**

- Combined State Plan (CSP)
  - Due to RSA in March 2020
  - Cheryl Fuller will review edits for the VR Portion of the CSP.
  - Next Workforce Editing Department will review.
  - Executive leadership will have a series of briefings.
  - Each of the three commission offices will review
  - Once approved it will be sent out to post for public comment for 30 days.
  - Then back to editing and commission briefing processing
  - Final document

## **Unfinished Council Business**

- Review the To Do List

## **Council Business New**

- Election was held for RCT Chair and Vice Chair.
- Each nominee was given an opportunity to speak prior to voting.
  - Nominations for Chair Paul Hunt and Michael Ebbeler Jr.
    - Michael Ebbeler Jr. was elected Chair by unanimous vote

- Lisa Maciejewski-West was elected Vice Chair unopposed
- Approve May minutes, Lisa Maciejewski-West made a motion to approve the May Minutes, Crystal George seconded. All approved, May Minutes approved.
- Budget Report Lisa Godwin, travel balance \$10958.02 and operating expenses \$8,308.40.

## **Performance Update, Adam Leonard, TWC, Director of Division of Operational Insight**

Adam presented a PowerPoint presentation that was handed out at the meeting.

## **Liaison Reports**

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

- TWIC, Lindsey Geeslin, absent, no verbal report given
- CAP, Karen Stanfill given on Thursday
- PRN, Lisa Cowart
- TEA, Susan May Verbal Report only on Thursday
- SILC, Colton Read Verbal Report only

## **Adjourn**