Did you know that this is an election year? If you live in or near one of the several “battleground” states, it is difficult to avoid all of the commercials. Even if you don’t, I am sure you hear about the newest polls every day. Many of you are probably tired of hearing about the election, but as you know, this election is very important. As an organization that represents college professionals who work to improve the lives of people with disabilities in higher education, we are representing education and the future of the employment world. Every day more people with disabilities are entering the workforce and their rights are equally important as everyone else’s. This election is important. Your voice matters. At the end of September the National Forum on Disability Issues was held in Columbus, Ohio. Representatives from both campaigns spoke about these issues: (http://www.nfdi.org/). See the Federal Update section (pp. 8 - 9) for details.

Regardless of which way you vote, disability issues impact all of us and the work we do and it is important for Washington to come together and support the rights of persons with disabilities. And it is important for each of us to take the time to learn about the candidates and their stance on disability issues. We also have an opportunity to stress to our students the importance of voting in this election. Below are links to each of the candidate’s websites as well as one from the National Disability Rights Network. As we have learned before, your vote counts!

Additional Resources

Barack Obama
http://www.barackobama.com/

Mitt Romney
http://www.mittromney.com/

Leading Disability Rights Group Says People with Disabilities Could Decide Election

Get out the vote efforts for persons with disabilities. The American Association of People with Disabilities: http://www.aapd.com/

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As some of you know I am fascinated by the calendar. For me calendars represent change and persistence; commitments and future promise; seasons and history. September is particularly rich in contrasts, the weather turns from summer to autumn, the academic year replaces summer break; Elvis Presley (9/9/1956) and Star Trek (9/8/1966) broke into our national consciousness; Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (9/22/1862); and Eisenhower ordered the National Guard to enforce the integration of schools (9/24/1957).

Closer to the work of AHEAD, September witnessed culmination of state-sponsored eugenics programs with the initiation of Germany’s T4 Program, based on American “science” and law, that sought to eliminate individuals with disabilities to so they and their children would not burden the state (9/1/1939). Contrasting this low is the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act signed by Nixon on September 26th, 1973. Though it would take nearly four years to get the regulations signed, 504 held the promise of access to education, government services, transportation, jobs, etc. It laid the ground work of much of what we do. I encourage each of you to take a moment to consider your work in the wider context of history and how it (and you) influence the individuals and organizations you work with. Recognize the progress that has been made as well as the ongoing challenges and need to explore fresh approaches and perspectives.

You should have received the call for papers for our 2013 conference “Challenging and Changing Disability Perspectives.” While I am looking forward to visiting Baltimore’s Inner Harbor again I am most interested in your practices, strategies, programs, and research that you will be presenting. Your work has contributed to both AHEAD’s success as an organization and to a tremendous body of knowledge that has served as a catalyst for change.

While you are reflecting on your work and the history of disability rights to frame your presentation, consider nominating a colleague for the Hearne Leadership Award for emerging leaders with disabilities. I had the privilege of working with Paul Hearne and he would be pleased to see thousands of nominations even if there are only a few winners. In his obituary one colleague noted that “Mr. Hearne’s only concession to his disability was laughter.” The only thing sharper than his sense of humor was his focus on changing the world’s approach on disability.

If you don’t feel you have a nomination for the Hearne Leadership Award there are other ways to honor the work of your colleagues within and outside of AHEAD.

**Letters from AHEAD President:** Scott Lissner

Resources:
- Germany’s T4 Program
  [http://fcit.usf.edu/Holocaust/People/USHMMHAN.HTM](http://fcit.usf.edu/Holocaust/People/USHMMHAN.HTM)
- American “science” and law
  [http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/](http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/)
- Section 504
- AHEAD 2013
  [http://ahead.org/conferences/2013-cfp](http://ahead.org/conferences/2013-cfp)
- Hearne Leadership Award
Professional Development Opportunities

*Take advantage of these upcoming events, conferences, and other opportunities to increase and share your knowledge.*

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| October | National Association of ADA Coordinators                                   | October 22-25, 2012     | Marriott San Diego Del Mar Hotel  
San Diego, CA          | [http://www.naadac.info/](http://www.naadac.info/) |
| November| 15th Annual Accessing Higher Ground Accessible Media, Web and Technology Conference | November 12-16, 2012    | The Westin Hotel  
Westminster, Colorado            | [http://www.colorado.edu/ATconference/](http://www.colorado.edu/ATconference/) |
| November| COSD 13th Annual National Conference                                      | Thursday, November 8, 2012 | Sheraton Gateway LAX  
Los Angeles, CA          | [http://cosdonline.org/Registration-Information](http://cosdonline.org/Registration-Information) |
| May     | National ADA Symposium                                                    | May 13-15, 2013         | The Hyatt Regency  
San Antonio, TX          | Call for Presentations deadline October 1, 2012  
Email submissions- EdwardsMic@health.missouri.edu  
www.adasymposium.org     |
| June    | 25th Annual Postsecondary Disability Training Institute                   | June 4 - 8, 2013        | The Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers  
Boston, Massachusetts     | [http://www.pti.uconn.edu/](http://www.pti.uconn.edu/) |
| July    | AHEAD in Baltimore                                                        | July 8-13, 2013         | The Hilton Baltimore Hotel  
Baltimore, MD             | www.ahead.org                                           |
| July    | Eighth International Conference on Higher Education and Disability        | July 22-26, 2013        | Innsbruck, Austria        | Call for Presentations!- email innsbruckconf2013@uno.edu  
www.trac.uno.edu/conf   |
| August  | RID International                                                         | August 9-14, 2013       | Indianapolis, IN          | Call for Proposals- Deadline August 15, 2012  
Standing Committees

Standing Committee on Professional Development
Carol Funckes, Chair

Like many of you, the members of the Standing Committee have been focused on the opening of school since the last ALERT. However, we have also continued to plan for how the Committee can provide resources to AHEAD. The following work is underway:

- Several mentor relationships have been established as an outgrowth of the successful implementation of AHEAD’s first professional development conference Program: Out of the Box! As you know, 2012 conference sessions in that strand provided the opportunity for both new and seasoned professionals to explore emerging approaches to service delivery that are responsive to the lessons our applied field can take from disability studies scholarship.

- Planning for the 2013 AHEAD conference is beginning. We hope to expand on last year’s Program and use what we learned to propose a comprehensive approach to professional development to AHEAD’s Board.

- We will be researching topics discussed on both DSSHE-L and the AHEAD listserv in order to empirically identify those issues that are of primary interest to disability resource professionals in higher education.

- In collaboration with the Membership Standing Committee, we plan to develop a members’ self-mentoring program to provide the opportunity for members to develop, share and expand skills through intentional conversations with each other.

- We are working with Richard Allegra, AHEAD’s Director of Professional Development, to implement a team of professionals to serve as a sounding board and review body for AHEAD’s professional development agenda.

- And, finally, we continue to work on Web-based professional development tools that will provide progressive guidance on central aspects of our roles on campus.

We are pleased to share the following article that describes the process and observations of a disability resource office as it works to change the campus narrative around disability and access. As the article describes, we hope to share additional “diary entries” throughout the year as an example of the challenges and successes of shifting practice.

Implementing a New Look at Documentation: Diarizing change...
Heather Mole & Frederic Fovet, Office for Students with Disabilities, McGill University

Management of change in DS
Many disability service (DS) providers wholeheartedly embrace a desire to reframe their work from focusing on individual problems based on disability to environmental problems caused by poor design. We wish the disabled student’s experience was more similar to the experience of nondisabled students. Many of us think of this goal as one that implements the social model of disability and keeps us focused on the ultimate goal of universal design (UD). While it seems easy and equitable (noble even) to promote these notions and advocate for them with our campus stakeholders, it is a lot trickier to take an introspective look at our own practices and to trigger a hands-on-application in our very own world, the DS unit (Parker, Embry, Scott & McGuire, 2003). Implementing new documentation guidelines is a striking illustration of this. While, we may understand the stakes conceptually and personally, it is much more sensitive to convince one’s own colleagues to embrace a new approach as a part of critical and tangible procedural changes.

Management of change is one of the most difficult HR elements to guide seamlessly. Often, it’s just too many changes, too quickly, and without adequate support. The work required to navigate significant change impacts not just our practices, but our unit structure, job allocations, routines, processes and, to some extent, our job satisfaction. There is little doubt that professional know-how is essential, but we cannot necessarily wait for scholarly research to guide us. There is, in fact, a
good argument that scholarly research in this area will have to be fully ecological and mirror faculty positions and student perceptions. It will also likely involve organic transformations within the DS unit structure and an evaluation of the unit’s on-terrain impact: a sort of grounded theory blended with action research objectives (Dick, 2007).

The relevance of McGill OSD’s current transformation
To trigger such communal ethnographic “experience sharing” about the process of revising documentation requirements in DS provision, the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) at McGill University proposes to diarize its process of change management over the period of a year. We plan to share this process in the pages of ALERT. Beyond anecdotal interest, the relevance of presenting McGill OSD’s process is in providing other DS units in the same position with ideas and prompts that may serve as a catalyst for their implementation of change.

For many years, the OSD at McGill has been committed to revising its practice to reflect a less individual approach to access (which can be thought of as implementing the social model) and to focus on UD. However, up to this point we’ve not secured the resources or found the determination to examine the concrete impact of this commitment. Beginning in September 2011, the unit launched a structured and momentous push for tangible UD implementation. The first phase of this task has focused on impressing the importance of this paradigm shift, not just on faculty but within our own unit and on crucial campus partners: Teaching and Learning Services, the Social Equity and Diversity office (SEDE), the Sustainability office and, of course, senior administration. The next Joint Board Senate Meeting taking place on November 27th, 2012 will focus exclusively on UD and its relevance to the campus at large. This will mark the successful outcome of the first stage of implementation.

Documentation requirements: The next hurdle
No change in campus perspectives on disability, access, and design is complete without the DS unit taking the time to examine fully its own practices. In the spring of 2012, OSD staff began UD audits of the processes we coordinate. Removing unnecessary procedures; making services virtual, paperless, congenial and simple; redeploying resources to create instructor awareness; and making quantifiable changes to class environments are some of the many steps which become matter of fact as the larger imperative – changing our focus on disability – begins to unfold.

The last “frontier” however remained unchanged and immovable: a documentation policy that was as old as it was long—one that staff adhered to almost religiously, in spite of the blatant inconsistencies it creates as we move toward social justice and design solutions. Rigid demands for extensive, recent external documentation of disability embody a medical model approach. They create barriers in the environment rather than facilitating and widening access for students. They feed dynamics of power in service delivery that further marginalizes students. We know this and acknowledge it instinctively. And yet moving forward remains a slow and sensitive process. Is it fear of change? Strategic concerns? Institutional self-justification? McGill’s OSD hopes to share observations of its own process in the months ahead to support other DS offices in identifying obstacles and navigating them with agility.

Today’s installment: Evaluating the situation and perceptions at the start line
To set the scene, we are an office of 10 staff: 5 administrators and technicians and 5 advisors (including the director). We provide access to 1,200 students currently. Documentation has been the focus of our office and the reason for our existence for many years. So strong was its hold over us that we devoted a great amount of time to filing it correctly, publishing criteria for it on our website, and creating an intake policy that didn’t allow a student to reach an advisor without documentation. So you might imagine that a staff trained to dissuade anyone without documentation from entering our office would find it really difficult to switch overnight.

Therefore, our process had to begin, first and foremost, with education for all staff, administrators, and advisors. Focusing on the UD aspects in our audits has slowly gained headway because it provided a lens to easily recognize our documentation requirement as a barrier to service. There was some “shock and awe” initially simply because of the weight we had given to documentation previously. “But how can we just believe the students?” is one example of the resistance we encountered. And yet, the staff knew that the vast majority of students who walk through our office doors are there not because they want to be, but because they have to be in order to access their education. So, by reminding people that this is the case (perhaps repeatedly), we have begun to engender more comfort in trusting students’ self-report. We also did internal training for advisors using material from the 2012 AHEAD Conference and invited a fellow DS unit director to talk to us about his experiences using this process in a Skype session. This allowed the team to ask questions and see how a flexible approach to documentation was successfully implemented on another campus. Continual discussion about individual situations has allowed the advisors to experience a growing confidence in their professional judgment and decision-making skills. We have regular staff meetings where we discuss situations in which advisors feel concern or uncertainty. As a result, they are increasingly able to let go of rigid guidelines and safety net they appeared to provide.
Meanwhile our documentation guidelines have disappeared from our website. We have renamed the “intake appointment” (too clinical) as the “initial meeting” (neutral). We have encouraged advisors to sit at the round table in their office, instead of across the desk, and to use iPads to gather information to avoid putting the barrier of the computer between them and students. There is a freedom that comes from opening the initial meeting with the question, “What brings you here today?” and letting the student take the reins. We also talk regularly about asking the students to describe the barriers they are facing at University instead of focusing on their disabilities.

References


A Big Welcome! The regional affiliates are excited to welcome our newest affiliate, MD-AHEAD. The AHEAD Board of Directors approved MD-AHEAD’s application for affiliation in August. Welcome MD-AHEAD!

**AHEAD in Virginia**

Fall 2012 Drive-In Conference  
Friday, November 2, 2012  
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College – Richmond, Virginia  
Wytheville Community College – Wytheville, Virginia

The Fall 2012 Drive-In Conference has been moved to the first Friday of November to allow for all of us to get “settled” for the fall semester. The conference will again be hosted at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (Parham Road Campus) in Richmond with the video-link remote site at Wytheville Community College. The program will feature a discussion of the Supporting Accommodation Requests: Guidance on Documentation Practices (published by national AHEAD in April 2012) in the morning, and the ever-popular update from Office for Civil Rights in the afternoon.

Registration for Fall 2012 Drive-In Conference is available at the following web site (you MUST be a member of AHEAD in Virginia for 2012-13 to qualify for the member registration fee):

http://www.regonline.com/aheadinvirginiafall2012conference

- Member - $50  
- Non-Member - $100  
- Full-time Student - $25

**Indiana AHEAD**

The 2012 IN AHEAD Fall Conference will be held on September 27th & 28th at Turkey Run State Park. David Parker and Julie Steck from CRG are leading a continuing discussion for the group on documentation guidelines. Sharon Downs from the University of Arkansas Little Rock is sharing information with the group about student interviews, documentation, and the new AHEAD guidance. On the 28th, IN AHEAD will have representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation provide updates about their current policies and procedures. Friday morning will also include time for small breakout group discussions so members can collaborate and ask questions about issues from their respective campuses.

**Ark-AHEAD**

Ark-AHEAD will be hosting its Fall Conference at Pulaski Technical College – Main Campus in North Little Rock on Friday, November 2nd from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Margaret Price, an associate professor of English at Spelman College will be the presenting on “Mental Disability in the College Classroom: Re-imagining Access and Design.”

The cost of lunch is provided with the registration fee. Deadline to register is Wednesday, October 17th. If a PO will be in process and not completed by the registration deadline, we ask that prospective attendees fax their registration form BEFORE the deadline to 479-5752-7445 ATTN: Heidi

Please visit the link for a registration form. http://www.arkahead.org/events.htm

**California AHEAD**

California Association of Postsecondary Educators of the Disabled (CAPED) is holding our annual convention on October 8-10, with preconference sessions on both October 6th and 7th, in Sacramento, California. One of the themes is advocacy, and we have the President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate, a staff member from the White House, and a number of state administrators and legislative staff giving keynotes or breakout sessions. There are also sessions regarding Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing, assistive technology and media, employment and vocational rehabilitation, veterans, and many other subjects. Information is posted at our website: www.caped.net.
COLUMBUS, Ohio (TMR) - Helping people with disabilities find jobs and educational opportunities was a major focus of the 2012 National Forum on Disability Issues on Sept. 28 at the Hyatt Regency, sponsored by AHEAD.

Neither President Barack Obama nor Mitt Romney attended the forum, but Ted Kennedy Jr. and U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash) represented the candidates. John McCain had appeared four years earlier via satellite at the first forum.

Each speaker discussed disability-related issues for 10-minutes before answering questions from the moderator, former CNN White House Correspondent Frank Sesno. Before the representatives spoke, President Obama delivered a taped message to the disabled community, which comprises one in five Americans.

“You are part of the tradition of diversity of who we are as a country,” the president said. “We need to work to increase employment opportunities, housing and community support.”

Rodgers and Kennedy each had a personal connection to the disabled community. Rodgers has a 5-year-old son with Down Syndrome. “Our lives changed in the best way,” Rodgers said. “Cole has made me a better person and a better legislator.”

Kennedy’s aunt, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founded the Special Olympics, and Kennedy himself lost his leg to bone cancer at the age of 12. “I’m proud to be a person with a disability,” Kennedy said. “President Obama understands our movement as a civil rights movement. When we talk about being housed and transported in separate institutions, he knows what we mean.”

Kennedy, a lawyer who works on disability-related issues, lauded Rodgers for her own work in Congress on behalf of the disabled but slammed Romney over his “47 percent” comments. “It’s wrong not to care about 47 percent of the people and tell them you’re on your own,” Kennedy said. “President Obama’s slogan of moving forward includes every American, including those with disabilities.”

Kennedy said that Romney advocated a plan similar to the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) as the governor of Massachusetts but now wants to take Obama’s plan and “kill it dead.”

“I met a 17-year-old young woman who lost her leg to bone cancer like me, but thanks to Barack Obama, she won’t have to worry about insurance denying her pre-existing condition. They can’t impose a lifetime cap on her, and they can’t drop her.” Kennedy also said Republicans would prevent the Department of Justice from enforcing the requirement to have lifts in hotel swimming pools, “just like this one [at the Hyatt].”

Sesno asked Kennedy what if states failed to cooperate with Obamacare, “because many states disagree profoundly with its direction.”

Sesno also asked Kennedy why Obama’s recent employment legislation did not include disabled workers. Kennedy replied that the president had added 100,000 federal government jobs for disabled workers on the 20th anniversary of the American’s With Disabilities Act. “We’re the only group who wants to pay more in taxes, am I right” Kennedy said.

Kennedy also noted that Obama had directed $1 billion into the “Money Follows the Person” plan to provide more direct-care workers, as opposed to having people in nursing homes. “When you hear ‘Medicaid block grants,’ you automatically think ‘cap,’” he said. “That’s basically what happens. It saves money in Washington. That’s it.”

Rodgers said government efforts have like the ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have allowed disabled people to make progress, “many have not realized the full promise intended by these laws.” She said the government programs are not streamlined in a way that makes them easy to use.

“A child is diagnosed with autism and a solder returns from the war without a limb, and their families are thrown in the mud and told to swim,” she said. “It’s not a lack of desire or a failure of intent,” she said. “There is just a bewildering array of programs at cross purposes with each other. Some of these programs started before ADA. It’s like going to the moon in a Model T.”

Rodgers said the government has a paternalistic attitude toward the disabled and an attitude of “can’t, not can.” “We need to look at the disabled as an untapped pool of talent,” she said. “We need to move beyond curb cuts and wheelchair ramps to investments in people with disabilities.”

Rodgers praised a Walgreen’s drug store in Wisconsin with a universal-design floor plan and a 50-percent disabled work force that has shown impressive productivity. “Rather than fearing disability, Walgreen’s is embracing ability,” she said.
She also gave kudos to Wal-mart for situting essential items in the front of the store at a level that shoppers who use wheelchairs can reach. “I know Mitt Romney and I know that he lives these values,” Rodgers said. “He has the business acumen to turn this country around.” She also said that Ann Romney, who has multiple sclerosis, would be a “champion of the disabled community” as First Lady.

Rodgers also said that if Obamacare were repealed, the Republicans could “do better and start over.” She also said that Romney’s plan to administer Medicaid funds through block grants to the states would “focus Medicaid on home and community programs.”

Both candidates were asked what disability-related question they would ask Romney and Obama if they were moderating the candidates’ Oct. 3 debate.

“What is your orientation toward disabled people?” Kennedy asked. “Is it one of civil rights, pity and fear, or ‘we have to take care of those people?’

Rodgers said she would ask, “How can we open the doors of opportunity so the disabled can be employed, thinking beyond traditional jobs?”

Before closing the forum, Sesno said he hoped that in four years, both presidential candidates would appear live at the forum.

Stephanie Deible, who is Miss Wheelchair Michigan and attended the forum, agreed. “I enjoyed it, but I’m disappointed that the candidates couldn’t make time to be there,” she said. “They were both in the state this week; I can’t see why they couldn’t make time since it was scheduled on Friday.”

“I would have liked to hear them talk more about employment opportunities,” Deible added, since it’s such a big problem in this country, especially in the disabled community.”

*This article was written by Jeff Gorman, content producer for The Mobility Resource (http://www.themobilityresource.com/)*
SIG Updates

SIG’s, or Special Interest Groups, are AHEAD members organized around an interest or concern. SIG’s provide leadership to the AHEAD membership by providing information and referral, organizing professional development opportunities, and networking around a particular topic. Interested in finding out more: http://www.ahead.org/sigs

Community College SIG
Jennifer Randt, Chair

The Community College Special Interest Group is pleased to announce a “Community College Perspectives” area of interest for the 2013 AHEAD Conference in Baltimore. We encourage colleagues to submit proposals that will address the unique needs of the two-year college setting.

Suggestions for proposal submissions are included in the language below:

AHEAD welcomes proposals that are representative of the unique issues and perspectives that pertain to the community college or two-year campus environment. The Community College Strand will seek to address experiences and best practices designed for the community college disability service professional and provide a support network within the larger AHEAD organization. Some possible areas of proposal consideration include: open enrollment and service issues; assessment of programs to include success and retention themes; social pragmatics on the two-year campus; building relationships with local K-12 and community partners; and working with parents. Participants will be invited to attend one or all of the breakout sessions with the goal of improving services at their campuses, networking with colleagues in similar work environments, and recognizing the important work that community college providers contribute to the profession.

Disabilities Studies SIG
Susan Man Dolce, Chair, Report from AHEAD 2012

During our meeting, the Disabilities Studies SIG discussed the following:

Review of AHEAD website, and edited the Disability Studies SIG mission Statement:

Promotes an awareness of the discipline of disability studies and provides a forum for discussion of current issues and trends in disability studies. AHEAD members who are interested in the field of disability studies are encouraged to attend Disability Studies SIG meetings and join the Society for Disability Studies, www.disstudies.org.

Contact:
Karen Pettus University of South Carolina
Susan Mann Dolce University at Buffalo

- Disabilities Studies SIG is in the process of developing a website resource of books and movies for AHEAD members.
- We are in the process of creating a tab on the DIS SIG page for members to submit their Disability Studies or related class syllabi to share.
- Plans were announced for an online class about Disability Studies through AHEAD. Suggestions were made to create webinar introducing Disability Studies to anyone interested.
- The Disabilities Studies SIG is looking at ways of getting undergraduate and graduate students to the national AHEAD conference which include reduced cost, a scholarship to support student travel and housing at AHEAD conferences, development of student/new member reception, and other appropriate events at AHEAD annual conference.
Presenting at Ahead: From an Undergraduate Student Advocate’s Prospective

By David Dodge

My name is David Dodge and I am an undergraduate English major at the University at Buffalo (UB). I did not know that presenting and attending the AHEAD conference would become one of the best things I have done since I started pursuing higher education. I have been to New Orleans several times to participate in alternative break programs designed to help rebuild after Hurricane Katrina and to combat wetlands loss. As the plane was about to land for the AHEAD conference and I was able to start seeing the city, a fascinating viewpoint for someone with a visual impairment, I thought that this trip would simply be another opportunity to visit a city I love. It was so much more!

UB’s first Diversity in Disability symposium was held on April 14, 2012. The mission of the symposium was to show that while race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation are all a part of our diverse world, issues of access and participation are as well. Our committee brought in two national-level speakers who discussed diversity in disability through the lenses of self advocacy, history, and social structures. Over 100 faculty, staff, students, and community members attended. One would think that presenting this information and receiving marvelous feedback would be the highlight of my week at AHEAD.

In reality, the best part of AHEAD was making networking connections through the wonderful sessions I attended. The Word Project, a presentation about one college’s efforts in creating a disability-themed film series, and a session in which a bibliography of post-ADA literature presenting protagonists in positive three dimensional roles all come to mind when I think about those sessions in which I made great contacts who even now are helping me design new programs at UB. Participating in these discussions was exciting and really furthered my thinking about these important issues.

It was also a pleasure to be a part of the Disability Studies SIG meeting where I met a graduate student who shares many of my interests. Like many others that I met at AHEAD, we have continued to communicate. Due to the presentation and connections made at AHEAD, I am currently exploring opportunities to present at other conferences.

I am not a professional so why does it make sense for me to participate in a professional development conference? Good question. It is my intention to pursue a career in higher education administration. As an undergraduate student attending the AHEAD conference I learned how to develop my advocacy skills and use them to create change. It is my hope that AHEAD continues to do more to get students actively engaged. Nothing about us without us!

Please take a look at our accessible Diversity in Disability symposium video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aNeP AflvPk&list=PL3216C9DE23ECB313&index=2&feature=plpp_video . If you would like to contact me please send me an e-mail at daviddod@buffalo.edu .
Announcements

ADCET
The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) provides information and resources to support the work of disability practitioners in the postsecondary education and training sector. ADCET is a partner of AHEAD.

Subscribe to the ADCET newsletter: http://www.adcet.edu.au/About_ADCET/ADCET_Newsletter_Signup.chpx

Or visit the ADCET home page: http://www.adcet.edu.au/

Author Peter Altschul Releases Compelling New Memoir That Explores Working, Training Guide Dogs, and Falling in Love While Totally Blind—Breaking Barriers: Working and Loving While Blind

COLUMBIA, MO -- How does a specially-trained guide dog and a person who is blind learn to work together to become a team? And what lessons might those who lead others in the workplace learn from this process? These are two of the themes that the author weaves into his compelling memoir. Altschul focuses on a thirty-month period in his life, beginning with his fifth guide dog, a Labrador Retriever named Jules, and ending with his move from his urban bachelor lifestyle in Washington, DC, to committed family man in Columbia, Missouri. Along the way, he describes his unique professional journey as customer service rep, trainer of New York City taxi drivers, mediator between pro-life and pro-choice activists, and workplace diversity specialist – all done with the assistance and companionship of five guide dogs. He also writes about his upbringing, his relationship with music, and the unexpected deaths of his stepmother and father.

Breaking Barriers is richly descriptive, attentive to all the people in the author’s life, and especially wonderful where his amazing guide dogs are concerned. Each scene is about moving forward, taking the next turn, seizing the moment. Altschul sees where he’s been and can relate what he knows now--this is the crucial thing in memoir. And it truly happens in this book!

About the Author
Peter Altschul assists groups and organizations to become better at motivating people, resolving conflicts, managing diversity, and planning for the future. A published composer, he lives with his guide dog, Jules, in Columbia, Missouri, with his wife, Lisa; her three children, three standard poodles, and a python named Monty.