



# **COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

## **MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 1:00 P.M.

Department on Disability

Board of Public Works Hearing Room 350, City Hall  
200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Myrna Cabanban

David E. Wolf

Dr. Robert Bitonte

Alisa Schlesinger

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Theresa de Vera (excused)

Robert Williams (excused)

Iran Hopkins (excused)

Richard Rothenberg (excused)

Betty Wilson (excused)

### **DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:**

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:**

Chris Lee, City Attorney's Office

**GUESTS:**

Ray Murillo, Director of Student Programs, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management (SAEM), Office of the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU) System

Ryan Cornner, Vice Chancellor of Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE), Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD)

**ITEM NO. (1): APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

No Action Taken, Commission on Disability did not have a quorum.

Minutes from February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to be approved in a future meeting.

**ITEM NO. (2): PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (3): HIGHER EDUCATION, TUITION WAIVER & TUITION FORGIVENESS PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations from the CSU System and LACCD regarding Higher Education, Tuition Waiver & Tuition Forgiveness. Information was presented by Ray Murillo and Ryan Cornner.

- I. Ray Murillo presented on behalf of the CSU System. Within the CSU System, students with disabilities can self-identify in order to utilize the services available to them. Services for students with disabilities include testing accommodations, audio recording and real-time captioning, and alternative text formats for documents. Currently, there are no tuition

waivers for students with disabilities. However, there are grants and scholarships available to all students based on needs, such as Pell Grants from the federal government and Cal Grants from the state. The Education Opportunity Program (EOP) is an option for students seeking assistance with admission into a CSU school. The program provides academic support services such as advising and learning development, and students eligible for financial aid may also receive an EOP grant. California Assembly Bill 540 is an exemption for qualifying nonresident students to pay in-state tuition rather than out-of-state. In addition to these options, there are two scholarships specifically for students with disabilities. The Nathaniel R. and Valerie Dumont Scholarship was established to aid students with financial needs, especially those with physical or visual disabilities. The Dale M. Schoettler Scholarship is specifically for students with visual disabilities. Students that have been previously nominated or have received this scholarship can continue to apply for it every year that they meet the qualifications.

- II. Ryan Corner presented on behalf of LACCD. An advantage for students in community college is that tuition is \$46 per unit. Qualifying low-income students can have this cost waived through the California College Promise Grant. The Los Angeles College Promise is for first-time college students graduating from high school, and includes two years of free enrollment to one of the nine community colleges in the district. He noted that LACCD student services offices provide the same accommodations as CSU schools. There are also veterans' centers that address

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#### **ITEM NO. (4): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Discussion on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation was by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability (DOD). DOD had some updates regarding the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. As of this Commission meeting, the City's Emergency Operations Center was activated at Level 3. The Department is still moving forward with planning upcoming events; Disability Mentoring Day, ADA 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the Reel Abilities Film Festival. If upcoming meetings or events are cancelled, DOD will keep the Commission informed. The Department has also been working to secure more durable medical goods to have on hand for those who need it, especially for individuals who are homeless.

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Stephen David Simon also shared his segment with Mike Greenwood and Matthew Tabussian from ACCESS Services. They shared a presentation on ACCESS's Emergency Management Program. ACCESS's role in an emergency is to protect the safety of riders, drivers, and staff while also providing assistance with evacuations. During an emergency, ACCESS activates its Emergency Operations Center staffed by trained personnel. They keep riders informed through Everbridge notification system, which can communicate messages to riders' phones by text or voice recording. ACCESS can also send alerts via their phone app, and callers reaching out to ACCESS will hear a message about the emergency situation as well. On the website, a banner is published with information on the emergency. ACCESS is currently monitoring the coronavirus pandemic and taking measures to keep vehicles thoroughly cleaned for driver and rider safety.

This segment was also shared with Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi from RespectAbility, a national organization that fights stigmas and advances opportunities for people with disabilities. Their presentation focused on statistics; high school graduation rates and employment rates for people with disabilities. Compared to L.A. County's 81.3% high school graduation rate, students with disabilities in the County have a graduation rate of only 63.7%. This creates a skills gap in job preparedness for students with disabilities. This is evident in the employment statistics provided in the presentation. Of working-age L.A. County residents with disabilities, only 35.1% are employed. The employment rate for L.A. County residents without disabilities is 73.8%. Only 29,893 people with disabilities entered the workforce in 2018, compared to 343,000 new jobs for people with disabilities in 2016. She used Florida as an example of what can be done to address these issues. Florida has an Agency for Persons with Disabilities which acquires money from the federal government and collaborates on assisting disability communities with career development resources. RespectAbility would like to see California build a similar system of support for people with disabilities to enable them to get the education, skills, and jobs that they need.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

## **ITEM NO. (5): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Suggested items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests. The Department on Disability will coordinate a special meeting pertaining to COVID-19. DOD will also research how to conduct future Commission meetings in a digital setting, as public meetings are no longer advisable. DOD will provide the Commission with updates as they arise.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (6): ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:02 P.M.