

Minutes, ACAC Meeting, October 4, 2023

The Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC) met from 11am to noon on October 4, 2023 in the County Administration Building, 3rd floor meeting room. Sixteen people were present for the meeting.

In Attendance:

Nicole Faber, Lower Columbia College
Rosa Rocha-Andrade, Lower Columbia College
Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Auditor
MaryAlice Wallis, Longview City Mayor
Linda Curry, Community Member
Kay Gunter, Community Member
Rochelle Fassold, Cowlitz Community Network
Louise Brown, Community Member
Lori Peterson, Assessors Office
Linda DeCost, Developmental Disabilities Administration
Sara Croasdaile, Developmental Disabilities Administration
Hayley Johnson, Elections Manager
Rachel Facer-Stone, Elections Deputy
Jill Page, Elections Deputy
Makenna Kuljis, Elections Deputy
Sharon Weinhold, Community Member

Welcome and Introductions:

Hayley Johnson, Cowlitz County Elections Manager, welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their attendance and participation. She noted that the number of attendees increased over the last meeting.

Hayley addressed the goals of the ACAC and presented an updated ACAC Plan for 2023. The updated plan contains more details than the previous plan. It includes the location of the ballot boxes, information about the Clear Access Accessible Voting Unit, and details on secure transportation of the voting unit and voted ballots. A motion was made and seconded to approve the updated plan and all the attendees agreed with the motion.

Makenna Kuljis introduced Nicole Faber, the presenter for this meeting.

Presentation:

Nicole Faber, Director of Outreach Services at Lower Columbia College (LCC), and accompanied by Rosa Rocha-Andrade, Assistant Director of Multicultural Outreach, gave an informative and interesting presentation about LCC and how LCC prepares students for their future.

LCC offers a wide range of program options in eight career pathways, including:

- Accounting, Business and Leadership
- Arts, Communication and Humanities
- Health Sciences and Wellness
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing, Trades and Transportation
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

- Social Science and Criminal Justice
- Teacher Education and Early Learning

Each pathway offers knowledge and skills in Communication, Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Relations and Quantitative Literacy. By choosing a pathway early, a student can select classes that fit their interests and goals. A student can pursue a path that leads directly to the workforce or choose an academic transfer program to a university.

When helping students select a pathway, each student is asked what their goal is and how they want to get there. LCC likes to meet with and have conversations with students and their supports – parents, spouses, children, etc. – to discuss the pathway and how to get there so everyone is working together to help the student reach their goal.

LCC offers education opportunities for everyone – high school students, recent high school graduates, mid life people who want to add to their education, and older adults who want to pick up a class. The cost of attending LCC is substantially less than other options.

Round the Table:

Many of the meeting attendees remarked that they and/or their children had attended LCC before entering the workforce or moving on to another college. All were positive about their experiences and knowledge they gained at LCC.

Mary Kate Morgan, Director of Disability and Access Services, was not able to attend the meeting but provided a handout about the accommodations and services LCC offers to students who have a hearing, vision or mobility impairment. The highlights of the accommodations and services were brought to the attention of the meeting participants. For those who are hard of hearing or deaf, LCC offers ASL interpreters, assistive listening devices, note takers and closed captioning. For those with low vision or are blind, LCC offers enlarged materials, audio books, Braille text, note takers, and quiet testing with readers and/or scribes. For those with mobility issues, LCC offers ergonomic furniture, assistive technology, note takers and quiet testing space. The services are determined on an individual basis according to the specific needs of each student. The goal is for anyone who wants to attend to be able to attend LCC and succeed.

Linda Curry mentioned the LCC Center Stage Theatre in the Rose Center. A variety of excellent plays and events take place at the Rose Center. If a person volunteers to usher for an event, and ushers are currently needed, they can attend the event at no cost.

Rochelle Fassold discussed the Cowlitz Community Network's (CCN) efforts to support people (family, friends and neighbors) who care for children in their home or are stay-at-home parents. She mentioned that CCN is partnering with the United Way to help get children ready for school.

Lori Peterson gave a brief description of the Assessor's Senior Citizen and Disabled Persons Property Tax Exemption Program. To qualify, you must be at least 61 years old and meet the household income levels. Total household income in 2023 must be \$54,000 or less. This will determine your taxable level for 2024.

Sara Croasdaile expressed interest in knowing who was able to use the Accessible Voting Unit (AVU). Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Auditor responded that anyone can use the AVU. The AVU has features that assist voters with low vision in reading their ballot and can read the ballot for those who are blind, vision impaired or have difficulty reading. The AVU can assist

people with mobility issues in marking their ballot. The AVU is available to voters beginning 18 days before an Election and is available through Election Day.

The next ACAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 3, 2024.

Rachel Facer-Stone closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.