

Recommendations by the Workgroup for the AUCD Council On Consumer Affairs

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Introduction

During the past several years, members of the Council On Consumer Affairs (COCA) and others within the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) network have been concerned with the ongoing function of and support to COCA. To address these issues, an ad hoc work group was appointed by David Johnson, Past President of AUCD.

This workgroup was charged with the task of evaluating the past progress made by COCA. It was also asked to make recommendations on future roles and functions of the Council that will not only allow for full inclusion of people with disabilities and family members, but promote meaningful participation and leadership roles within the AUCD.

It is the belief of the workgroup members that the following recommendations will position the Council On Consumer Affairs for engagement not only within the AUCD, but also throughout the entire disability network. We believe these changes will enhance and empower people with disabilities and their family members to successfully address the challenges of the new millennia.

Recommendations

Mission Statement

As a council of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the Council on Consumer Affairs helps lead the national network and strengthen its member programs. By modeling effective partnerships, the Council assists AUCD to advance policy and practice for and with people with disabilities, their families and communities. The Council helps the association to:

- build effective partnerships with other AUCD Councils and Committees, federal agencies, and other national disability groups.
- build the capacity of local University Center Consumer Advisory Committees (CACs), including identifying needs for assistance, providing technical assistance, and disseminating information about exemplary and innovative practices.

- envision, actively advocate for, and disseminate information about the next generation of policy and practice that will help make the promise of full participation a reality.
- develop leaders and mentors that build the capacity of the network to affect change at the local, state, and national levels.
- assist in the development of standards for participation of people with disabilities and family members in UCEDD education, research, and service programs and in AUCD functions.
- serve as a model and resource for others desiring to infuse the participation people with disabilities and family members into program planning, research, and evaluation.

In order to achieve these outcomes and fulfill the proposed mission statement, the workgroup proposes the following recommendations for the Council, the AUCD, and individual UCEDDs to restructure and revitalize the Council On Consumer Affairs:

Structure and Membership

Recommendations for COCA Members.....

- COCA members will commit to a minimum of 3 years of concerted involvement.
- COCA members will develop a close relationship with the individual UCEDD and their CACs.
- COCA members will elect a steering committee of no more than 15 people to oversee activities of the Council between meetings.

Recommendations for UCEDDs ...

- Individual UCEDDs will choose their COCA representative. A diversity of UCEDD employees and non-employees is expected in COCA, as well as a mix between primary consumers and family members.
- Directors will commit to a minimum of 3 years of supports, including time and resources, for the COCA representatives selected by their UCEDD.

Recommendations for AUCD

- AUCD will provide the ongoing staff support that is necessary for COCA to function as a council and to integrate the activities of COCA into other councils and functions of the AUCD.

- COCA members will receive a base level of training and ongoing support to facilitate communication and active, ongoing participation within COCA, their individual UCEDDs, the AUCD, and the entire disability network.

Roles of COCA

The workgroup recommends that COCA and its members embrace the following roles within their Council, individual UCEDDs, and the AUCD:

Roles within UCEDDs...

- Advocate for people with disabilities and their families.
- Participate in the research, interdisciplinary training, services and supports, and information dissemination agendas for both individual UCEDDs and the national organization to insure that all activities involve people with disabilities and families as partners in the design, implementation, and evaluation of these core functions.

Roles within COCA...

- Advocate for people with disabilities and their families.
- Increase and enhance membership and membership participation.
- Promote leadership development through formal training and mentorships.

Roles within AUCD...

- Advocate for people with disabilities and their families.
- Integrate with AUCD Board, Councils, Taskforces, and Workgroups, building communication and representation.
- Build partnerships between professionals/other stakeholders (including AUCD councils, federal agencies, and other disability groups) and people with disabilities and their families.
- Define and demonstrate professional-consumer partnerships.
- Offer COCA resources to other federal agencies.
- Represent AUCD within other consumer and family groups.
- Provide a unique and experienced voice to the media to promote the activities of COCA and AUCD.

Activities of COCA

The workgroup recommends that COCA and its members implement the following activities within their Council, individual UCEDDs, and the AUCD:

Activities within UCEDDs...

- Recruit members desiring to serve at the next level of leadership and advocacy.
- Build the capacity of state CACs.
- Work with directors and CACs to develop agenda items to be addressed at national COCA meetings.
- Communicate activities and outcomes from COCA to UCEDD directors and CACs.

Activities within COCA...

- Develop a national communication infrastructure that is effective, regular, frequent, substantive, and interactive to make the COCA experience more meaningful and consistent.
- Undertake strategic planning & priority setting for COCA and participate in these activities for AUCD.
- Develop a job description for COCA members and co-chairs and promote the development of these job descriptions for all AUCD councils, committees, and Board members.
- Identify each COCA member's interests and expertise and appropriately match those strengths to identified needs within COCA, AUCD, and their individual UCEDDs.
- Provide training to membership on core competencies and promote mentorships within AUCD and COCA.
- Publicize and promote the agenda of COCA.
- Generate and disseminate public reports of COCA activities and achievements.
- Play a significant role in Summit 2005.

Activities within AUCD...

- Initiate discussion around the next generation of public policy that will make full participation a reality.
- Address the issue of replacing the word “consumer”.
- Advocate for an AUCD Board policy on supports for COCA members.
- Gather and share information on Best Practices.

Name Change

Reflecting the new mission, activities, and goals of the COCA, the workgroup recommends changing the name of COCA. Four name change recommendations follow:

1. Partnership Council for Full Participation
2. Partnership Council for Universal Participation
3. Leadership and Advocacy Council
4. Council of Citizen Advocacy
5. Council of Community Advocates

The workgroup will consult with the full council and make a recommendation on the name change to the AUCD Board of Directors.