

Human Development Center

This report briefly describes major activities faculty and staff of the Human Development Center (HDC) completed relative to each of the four core functions the DD Act directs UCEDD programs to address (i.e., Interdisciplinary Training, Research and Evaluation, Community Service, Dissemination).

Interdisciplinary Training Dr. Lauren Giovingo and Ms. Maria Blanco, in coordination with the HDC Constituent Advisory Council (CAC) planned and implemented a project designed to help LSUHSC Allied Health students (i.e., Speech, Occupational, Physical Therapists, and Rehabilitation Counseling) gain an appreciation of the perspectives of people with developmental and other disabilities. The idea of this project is for students in various professions to gain awareness and knowledge- and have one on one (person to person) relationships with people with disabilities. The hope is that by having these experiences as students they will be better able to work with people with disabilities as “people first” – rather than as disabled people- when they enter their chosen profession. During the quarter a survey was developed and sent out to Allied Health students to assess their general awareness and knowledge of perspectives and issues related to persons with developmental and other disabilities. In addition, six “Lunch and Learn Seminars” for Allied Health students were conducted by self-advocates, family members, and HDC staff, again with assistance from the HDC CAC. The topics included, Disability Awareness; Person Centeredness/People First language; DSP roles, responsibilities, and perspectives; Communication; Assistive Technology; Relationships, Intimacy & Sexuality; and Employment. The next step for the project is to match Allied Health students with individuals with disabilities based on common interests and facilitate small group and then one-on-one activities in the community. These activities will occur in the next quarter.

Ms. Karen Pasch and other HDC faculty/staff continue to provide lectures and/or field experiences related to disability issues to pediatric residents. Discussions regarding ways to create more interdisciplinary training/curricula across programs occurred with the School of Allied Health administration and department heads. Currently, HDC faculty and staff are designing an interdisciplinary class with faculty from other Allied Health departments.

A variety of training events that were designed to be of interest to persons in a variety of fields and/or self-advocates and family members were held. HDC faculty and staff are teaching an introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders course for the University of New Orleans (as part of a subcontract- the LA Low Incidence Disabilities Consortium). This semester, the class is attended by Special Educators, Speech Pathologists, Early Interventionists.

A number of regional and school district specific training and technical assistance activities were carried out around the state by staff of the LASARD project during the quarter. These training and TA activities are specifically designed and targeted toward teams of professionals, family members, and advocates. In addition, two on-line training modules designed to be useful for professionals in a number of fields (e.g., General and Special Education, Speech and Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Psychology, Family, etc.).

Interns in the Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium (LAS*PIC) program, coordinated by Dr. George Hebert, continue to rotate through a number of interdisciplinary field experiences. Finally, HDC's LAS*PIC program hosted two different Continuing Education training events for pupil appraisal staff (i.e., school psychologists, educational diagnosticians, appraisal social workers, and families) during the quarter.

Research and Evaluation

In January, Dr. Alisa Lowrey presented the findings of the Employment Study that was commissioned by the DD council. Subsequently, HDC faculty and staff were in contact with leadership of LRS, Department of Education, and OCDD to discuss strategic planning of activities to document and address barriers to participation in community employment by persons with intellectual and other disabilities.

Under the leadership of Dr. Gina Easterly, the staff of the Autism Early Intensive Treatment research project continues to implement the research/service protocol and collect data. This study is beginning to ramp down and will be concluded early in the next state fiscal year. Satisfaction data were collected from participating families and results were highly favorable.

HDC faculty/staff are currently preparing a research/development proposal to submit to the Institute on Educational Science (IES). This proposal seeks support to develop an instrument/protocol for measuring the implementation and outcomes associated with "Response to Intervention".

Community Service

HDC faculty and staff completed a large number of activities related to implementing a variety of funded projects, including but not limited to: Children's Special Health Services project, Employment Consortium, Secondary Mentoring Project (RAMP), In-school training and Technical Assistance projects (TIERS), Data Accountability Center (DAC), Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) project, direct services at Earl K. Long and University Medical Center for young children/families, and the EarlySteps transdisciplinary services pilot (ESTP).

The fourth annual LASARD Summer Institute was planned and advertised. For more information or to register, go to www.hdc.lsuhs.edu. The theme for this year's institute is: "I'm included...now what". We are excited about the array of national and state presenters, including teams from schools participating in the LASARD project.

Finally, a significant amount of time went into planning for the re-establishment of an inclusive childcare program. Much remains to be done and it is still premature to say with certainty that we will be able to open the program. However, we remain optimistic that this will come to fruition sometime in the next year.

Dissemination

The HDC website served as a vehicle for disseminating information regarding issues pertaining to disabilities, recommended practice, resources, and opportunities. During the past quarter, the HDC website has been under major restructuring. The work is not quite complete. When completed, we hope that it will be viewed as a useful source of information to our stakeholders.