

## **TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT**

Please attach to your Professional Development/Conference Expense Reimbursement Form. Thank you.

**Name: John Hendry**

**Date Submitted: 16 October 2017**

**Name of Conference: Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity**

**Sponsoring Organization: University of Hawai'i – Center on Disability Studies**

**Theme (If any): Sustainability**

**Conference Dates: October 9 to October 11, 2017**

**Location: Honolulu, Hawai'i**

### **Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:**

**1) Educational Advocacy for Parents of Children with Disabilities: Sarah Taylor MSW, PhD (University of California)**

The thesis of the presentation was to have parents talk about their child and the specific disabilities. The presentation highlighted building strong partnerships with staff and parents. Sharing stories, both positive and negative tend open dialogue amongst everyone including teachers, consultants and parents. Understanding each child leads to more willingness to assist and include. For staff it helps with plans to care and help the child reach their full potential. Discussions included eliminating the "We/They" scenario.

**2) Virtual Mentoring for STEM Students: Accessibility, Promises and Pitfalls: Robert Todd, Maureen Linden and Nathan Moon. (Georgia Tech)**

A very interesting but complex session. The topic was research into using the virtual world to assist students with disabilities in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The goal of the research is to provide secondary and college/university students with improving retention, increasing engagement and encourage the possibility of pursuing future career opportunities in this area.

**3) Canada Embraces Syrian Refugees: Providing Hope to Marginalized Victims of War and Horrific Violence: John Hendry, Trustee Waterloo Region District School Board, Ontario Canada.**

Presentation featured the Canadian program to receive 40,000 Syrian refugees. Specifically the presentation provided insight into the Region of Waterloo, Ontario, public education and the work of the Waterloo Region District School Board receiving over 600 children from war-torn Syria. It was a story of success and hope.

**4) Employment and Disability – Job Accommodation: Kay Magill and Linda Toms Barker (IMPAQ International)**

The presentation was a hands-on session on making the workplace accessible for persons with disabilities specifically for students with disabilities seeking co-op opportunities. Featured were tips on erring on the side of caution, acting quickly, assigning responsibility and conducting training for managers and supervisors. Discussed were areas such as accommodation options, choosing the appropriate accommodations and proper implementation of accommodations. Constant monitoring of the employee (student) to insure the accommodations are providing the desired results for the student/employee to be successful.

**5) Communication Etiquette for Communicating with Persons who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired and Communicating with Customers with Disabilities: Kay Magill**

The presentation included common sense tips that should be incorporated into every Accessibility Plan.

**6) Tips for Applicants with Disabilities: Disability Employment Initiative, Business Leadership Network, State of Hawai'i.**

This was a very informative session on counselling students and other individuals with disabilities with tips for applying for employment opportunities. Included was a guide for a person with a disability in preparing a resume.

**7) Why Do You Keep Doing That? Translating Challenging Behaviour: Andrea Cox, behavioural coach, therapist and special education teacher.**

The learning outcomes from this session were: Objectively describing behaviour in measurable terms, practice analyzing the environment context in which the behaviour occurs, identifying the events that trigger and maintain challenging behaviour and discriminating between the form (what a behaviour looks like) and the function (purpose of behaviour).

The sample used as the discussion topic was the scenario of a teacher with 30 students in her class and one of them spits on the floor. Why did he do it? Was it because he is just a bad kid? Was it because he has a disability? Or, was it because he just doesn't like you? Actually, the reason when explored more thoroughly was because something was not working for him in the classroom. Removing the student from the classroom is not the answer as it removes the opportunity to socialize with his peers as well as from the learning environment. It focusses on punishment.

### **8) School Visits.**

The afternoon was spent visiting a variety of local elementary and secondary schools. School layout, uniforms, discipline were some of the areas of discussion. The philosophy of the Hawai'ian word "Kona" was the principle school life was based on Kona is the respect of the land and the culture in every aspect of life. Students, including those with visible as well as invisible disabilities were included in all aspects of student life. Inclusive, accessible environments were visibly in place.

### **Materials Taken Away:**

**Staff Distribution: Limited materials, including those to be emailed shortly to be provided to Scott Miller in Special Education.**