Infusing Disability Justice Into Average DS Offices

Jen Dugger, Portland State University
Randall Ward, Purdue University
Session Agenda

- Why This Topic is So Important to Us
- The Role of Disability Cultural Centers on Campuses
- Underrepresented Values in Society and in DS Offices
- Ideas for Infusing Disability Justice in the Work You Do
- What It Takes To Get the Work Done
- Circling Back to Cultural Centers
- Broader Impacts of This Work
Setting the Stage for our Conversation

● All of us are on a journey in our understanding.
● We all have a responsibility to examine what it is we think we know and challenge ourselves to expand.
● We thrive by creating a safe and supportive place to share concepts, ask questions, engage in discussion, and grapple with all of it.
Why This Topic is So Important to Us

Disability is POLITICAL
We may understand parts of this Venn Diagram...

- But what about the people down the hall?
- Our faculty?
- Our own staff?
- Our administration?
- Our students?
- The parental units associated with our students?
The Role of Disability Cultural Centers on Campuses

- Disability Cultural Centers are places that provide space for connection and community while engaging in programming and outreach focusing on disability as diversity (Mission statement of Disability Cultural Center at Syracuse University)
- Are oftentimes driven by disabled students
- Have been established at:
  - Syracuse University
  - University of Illinois Chicago,
  - University of Washington
  - University of North Carolina, Asheville
  - University of Arizona
  - Miami University of Ohio
  - University of Minnesota
  - Stanford University
Underrepresented Principles in DS Offices (and Society at Large)

- Appreciation for diversity and the intersectionality of identities
- “New” and refreshing interpretations of disability
- Importance of disability community to one’s identity development
- The disability community’s collective experience of oppression and marginalization
- Accessibility and inclusion of space that goes far beyond mere compliance
Broader Impacts of This Work

- Institutions beginning to think more about DS in terms of diversity/anti-oppression work
- Moving the needle forward for disabled faculty and staff
- Students having a much more nuanced understanding of disability and of their personal disability identity
- Campus community members understanding their roles and responsibilities in the disability justice movement
- Students needing fewer accommodations as more departments on campus implement universal design
- And more!
Strategies for Communicating Our Values

- Books and Movies on Shelves
- Framed Art
- Social Media
- Buttons and Other Swag
- TV screen in Space
- Light Up Sign
- Programs/Events
- All the Little Touches in the Space
- Communications Going out to University Students
Appreciation for diversity and the intersectionality of identities
Appreciation for diversity and the intersectionality of identities
“New” and refreshing interpretations of disability
“New” and refreshing interpretations of disability
You Can’t Make This Stuff Up: Finding the Humor in the Disabled Experience

THE COMEDIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Wednesday, March 27th
6:30pm-8pm
WALC 2087

Videos
Impro
Storytelling

Bring Your Personal Narratives

Presented by The Disability Resource Center at Purdue University
Importance of disability community to one’s identity development
Importance of disability community to one’s identity development
The disability community’s collective experience of oppression and marginalization
Accessibility and inclusion of space that goes far beyond mere compliance
Accessibility and inclusion of space that goes far beyond mere compliance
Accessibility and inclusion of space that goes far beyond mere compliance
Accessibility and inclusion of space that goes far beyond mere compliance

“Without community, there is no liberation...but community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.” Audre Lorde
Other Small Touches That Make a Big Difference

- Disability-centric Artwork/Decorations
- Buttons/Pins/Bookmarks/Fidget Toys/Other Swag
- Sunlight/Privacy
- Plants!
- Warm, inviting colors throughout with pops of color here and there
- Puzzles, games, coloring books
- Friday Tea at the DRC, Movie Day, Contemplation Circles, and other small social events
- Host a Movie Night- Sins Invalid, Defiant Lives, etc.
What It Takes To Get the Work Done

- **Take initiative.** Help others see what more should be done.
- **Be creative.**
- **Be collaborative.** The work of disability justice does not just belong to the DS office.
- **Be bold.** Take risks and go beyond your role as DS Director/staffer.
- **Be inclusive.**
  - Ensure your initiatives are inclusive of the stories of the big, beautiful disability community (and inclusive of the community itself!)
  - Disability is intersectional. So should your programming be!
- **Listen, get feedback, delegate, and ask for help.**
Starting a Movement on Your Campus

- Become fluent with these principles
- Hire people or get student volunteers to do some of this lifting
- Enlist support of your student programming board or advisory board
- Help steer other departments in making their events more disability inclusive
- Start in a virtual space before you have physical space - Create a collective of like minded people
- Consider other creative ways to get started!
Thank you so much!

Jen Dugger
jen.dugger@pdx.edu

Randall Ward
ward176@purdue.edu