

## 11.3 - Discussion: Disability, Diversity and Inclusion

**Thursday, July 23rd, 1:30 to 3:00 Eastern Time**

In this interactive session, we'll pose questions, including: How do we position disability as an aspect of diversity on our campuses? Are our offices effectively reaching disabled students with intersectional identities? Who are the partners in the work? What kinds of programming are effective in promoting disability as diversity? What are disability cultural centers and what role can they plan in this work?

Related resources will be posted at the following link after the conference:

[Explore Access: Disability, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

### Panelists:

**Karen Andrews** is the Director of the Disability Services Center (DSC) for the University of California Irvine where she works with students, faculty, and staff to create a culture of inclusion by eliminating, eradicating, and obliterating stereotypical thinking about disabilities. She joined the DSC team in April 2018 after almost three years at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) as the Disability Support Services Director. Ms. Andrews relocated to Alaska from Northern Virginia where she worked at George Mason University as the Associate Director of Disability Services. Prior to working at George Mason, Ms. Andrews was the Director of Disability Services at Strayer University, providing accommodations and services for more than 100 nationwide campuses. She has a BS in Elementary and Special Education and a Master's degree in Adult Education and Development. She is currently enrolled in a PhD program in Psychology.

**Crystal Hill** is the Director of Disability Services for Students at Texas Woman's University (TWU). Prior to joining TWU, Crystal served as Director of the Disability Resource Center at The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) for 18 years. Crystal earned a B.A. in Psychology and an M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Crystal is co-founder of College Bound Arkansas, a post-secondary transition camp for rising juniors, seniors, and incoming college freshmen. Crystal is currently serving as Director-at-Large on the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Board of Directors, and formerly co-chaired AHEAD's Race, Ethnicity, Diversity, and Disability Knowledge and Practice Community. She is currently enrolled at the University of Arkansas, where she is pursuing a Ph.D. in public policy, with a higher education specialization.

**Andrea L. Neal** is the Title IX/ADA Coordinator at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) where she oversees allegations, policy, procedures related to sex misconduct; and provides accommodations to students with disabilities. She is the Co-chair of the Disability Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee within the Division of DEI at UAMS. Prior to her career at UAMS, she was the ADA Coordinator at Arkansas Baptist College, a four-year liberal arts historically black college located in Little Rock, Arkansas. Andrea is the co-chair for the Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Disability Knowledge K&P (REDD K&P) for the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). She serves as the Immediate Past-President of Ark-AHEAD.

**Naty Rico** (she/hers) is a queer disabled Latina who is a first-generation graduate and professional from South Central Los Angeles, CA. As an undergraduate student, she faced various barriers that led her to become a disabled student activist. Since then, she's become an advocate for promoting disability justice in higher education practices. Currently, she serves as the Coordinator of the Disability Cultural Center at the University of Arizona, where she supports students, faculty/staff, and the Tucson community to learn and engage with intersectional disability identity and culture.

**liz thomson** (they/them) identifies as a brown, disabled, bi/queer, Vietnamese adoptee, who is gender non-conforming. They currently are Director at the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs and Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota Morris, a public liberal arts institution. Also, they are a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois Chicago, they are studying disability cultural centers in higher ed.

### **Moderators:**

**Jen Dugger** is the Director of the Disability Resource Center at Portland State University. Jen has worked at PSU since 2012 and has been in the field of disability resources and services for more than fifteen years. Jen co-chairs currently serves the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) as the Equity Officer and has been a proud member of the AHEAD Board of Directors since 2016. Jen is also the co-founder and co-chair of the LGBTQA Special Interest Group for AHEAD. Jen received the Diversity Recognition Award at the 2016 National AHEAD Conference. She also served four years on the board of the ACLU of Oregon. Jen says that the best part of her job is working to increase the capacity of faculty and staff to be able to understand disability as a component of diversity. As a white, cisgender, queer woman, Jen understands the gravity of leveraging power and privilege for those less advantaged and does her best to stay connected to and informed by individuals and communities doing anti-oppression work.

**Melanie Thornton** (she/her) is the Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach for University of Arkansas Partners for Inclusive Communities. She provides professional development and technical assistance on topics related to disability, diversity, digital access, leadership, and design. She is very interested in working with organizations to create more accessible environments and to position disability as an aspect of diversity. Melanie is looking forward to beginning her service as Treasurer on the AHEAD Board this year.