



The Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

Annual Report
2021-2022

Maximizing Ability and Opportunity

50th Anniversary

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Mission

Lead Michigan State University in *maximizing ability and opportunity* for full participation by persons with disabilities.

Staff

Michael Hudson, Director

Tanya Adams, Bosco Careers Collaborative

Kelsey Foote, Ability Access Specialist, Learning Disabilities

Tesia Freer, Ability Access Specialist, Blindness/Visual Impairment & Other Conditions

Liz Fuller, Gilbert Ability Access Specialist, Leadership Development, Accessible Materials

Shelby Gombosi, Ability Access Specialist, Psychiatric Disabilities

Lindsay Hill, Gilbert Ability Access Specialist, Autism and Brain Injuries

Suzanne Hoffmann, Real-Time Captioner

Ashley Maloff, Gilbert Ability Access Specialist, Chronic Health & STATE Program Faculty

Shelly Martinez, Real-Time Captioner

Virginia Martz, Ability Access Specialist, Deaf/Hard of Hearing & Mobility Disabilities

Jennifer Montague, Ability Access Specialist, Psychiatric Disabilities

John Pedraza, Psychiatric Disabilities & Disability Resource Coordinator for Employees

Virginia Rutan, Ability Access Specialist, Learning Disabilities & Student Athlete Liaison

Beverly Stehlik, Budget/Personnel & Administrative Assistant

Becca Wetzel, Operations & Testing Coordinator

Interim Staff

Margo Glew, Learning Disabilities

Elaine High, Psychiatric Disabilities

Kiersten Manos, Chronic Health Disabilities

Milan Monardes, Psychiatric Disabilities

Adjunct Staff-Project Leaders

Rachel Giddings, Documentation Coordinator & Public Relations

Tom Hwang, Braille & Tactile Mapping

Partnership Staff

Julie DeGraw, Office of Employee Relations Accommodations Specialist

Mission in Action

Spartans change lives every day in ways practical and profound; creating opportunities through study and research, finding solutions for some of the world's most challenging needs. Education expands opportunity and for those experiencing disabilities, education is a most empowering choice. This is why Team RCPD works diligently to engage MSU traditions of quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity for the benefit of all.

Together, we create a welcoming environment, fortify capacity, and compassionately challenge each person to reach their fullest ability. Disabilities need not preclude the achievement of goals and dreams; rather, they mandate a greater level of creativity, commitment, and a repertoire of compensatory techniques. We grow ambition into personal and professional success as we connect MSU knowledge, self-advocacy, innovative technology, and community.

Team RCPD is ready to assist students, employees and visitors with resources that create an environment of opportunity. We value full integration of persons with disabilities throughout the University mission, programs, and services.

Executive Summary

Team RCPD is dedicated and maintains a reputation for leadership across the state, nation and world for quality, inclusion and innovative programming that helps people with disabilities fully engage the promise of MSU. RCPD celebrated our 50th anniversary in 2022 making it one of the nation's longest standing university disability service programs building on what was started in 1934 by Tower Guard. We have established relationships with alumni and community partners resulting in a broad portfolio of endowments that empower our staff to innovate and serve as beacons of opportunity. During the 2020-2022 global pandemic, RCPD staff responded to unique challenges with innovation that maintained sense of community for students, families, staff, and donors who experienced unprecedented demands and uncertainties. Throughout 2020-2021 our program remained positioned to maximize ability and opportunity for the range of persons with disabilities working and studying at MSU. In 2021-2022 a new trend of resignations began to occur as part of a widespread "great resignation" referenced around the nation as a corollary to endemic unrest. A fuller discussion of this dynamic is offered in the Staffing sections below. In summer 2022 our focus shifts to celebrating the dedication and talent of existing team members as we prepare to onboard a record number of new hires replacing those who departed MSU RCPD. We anticipate fortifying our collaborative, ability centered, and creative approach as we regain full staffing needed to address community needs. The remaining pages highlight efforts to uphold the MSU World Grant mission while denoting emerging trends, concerns, and plans to address them. We remain thankful for the dedication of our current staff and the many community partners who join in reaching our objectives including support and awareness from MSU administration and donors supporting our mission.

Important Trends and Associated Requests

Population Growth:

For years, RCPD has experienced a typical 5-15% annual population growth in student registrations which is consistent with our peers. Maintenance of a sustainable student to staff ratio is essential as this enables timely and deeply interactive work as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act. In 2020-2021 1,420 new students self-identified with the RCPD with 703 of these being found to have permanent disabilities by year-end through the needs assessment process while another 77 registered with temporary conditions (some of which will become permanent). In 2021-2022 those numbers ballooned to 2,227 students self-identifying and 1,089 of these assessed to have permanent disabilities (a record single year uptick of over 50%) with 142 students served for temporary conditions. Much of this growth happened in the areas of mental health, learning disabilities, and chronic health conditions and

was linked to pandemic pressures. Considering permanent disabilities, the student population increased 25% this year to 3,478 while employee cases grew by 30% to 451. As student to staff ratios grow, pressure on staff to meet needs increases, time for innovation work diminishes, student complaints about timeliness and follow-through increase, and staff fatigue or burnout follows. The unprecedented staff departures in 2021-2022 were astonishing and partially fueled by these pressures. RCPD is highly selective in our hiring to select staff who are passionate about the work and mission and thus exemplify excellence in the work of our program. High achieving staff suffer when they cannot live up to the ambitions of the program and the self-expectations they bring to task. Recognizing the need to balance quality, efficiency, and sustainability, RCPD requests additional staffing periodically to meet the needs of a growing community and maintain quality for MSU. In 2022-2023, the university initiated new goals for retention and graduation at the very time that substantially more students are being admitted to MSU (many of which are expected to self-identify with RCPD further expanding demands in the new year).

Recommended Solution:

RCPD, with support from the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (APUE), created a new Assistant Director for Case Management, Assessment and Programmatic Innovation. That position begins June 2022 and promises to help address needs within a growing program including: a more structured onboarding process for new staff, increased training and case review to help staff identify solutions and resolve challenges, partner on assessment activities to ensure connectivity with multiple communities, and aid strategic endeavors that improve innovation efforts. Retirement of a departmental captioner provides opportunity to fortify staffing in chronic health and mobility services while an active request of the Provost and APUE for 1 additional FTE in the area of neurodivergence will help address pressures faced by the learning disabilities and attention deficit specialists to mitigate caseloads that have reached 500 students per staff (an unsustainable level). These staffing additions provide vital assistance to address the past years trends but may not fully address growth anticipated in the new year. The realignment of RCPD from APUE to a new Provost MAU centered on Health and Wellbeing promises to closely align our work with relevant partners and primary referral sources including CAPS, Center for Survivors, Health Education, and campus health systems. We anticipate new synergies helping our staff more effectively and efficiently serve needs through these affiliations.

Medical and Clinical Program Service Quality and Leadership:

The colleges of Human Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and, to some extent, other graduate programs represent rigorous experiences that progressively transition from classroom and laboratory learning to clinical settings that functionally mimic employment settings. This dynamic began intensifying in 2017 and continues today as many colleges are moving to day-one immersive practical experiences which further challenge our existing support levels. These programs have grown in enrollment, geographic reach, and intensity of assignment at a time when many more students are identifying with disability needs. Required clerkships and rotations involve intense rapid succession and students must adapt every 3 to 8 weeks with new location and task assignments being hallmarks of the experience. These settings challenge all students, however, those experiencing disabilities are more so affected as they must secure effective accommodations while honoring the standards of each practical setting. This process involves much more than simply declaring that a certain accommodation is reasonable; Staff must create partnerships that meet student needs, honor programmatic integrity, and articulate how accommodations will function in complex fast-paced settings that all too often recognize disability as incongruent with fulfillment of clinical duties. Without robust engagement in support of these students during this time of extreme demand, student performance can suffer followed by hearings, remediation plans and stigma. As most enrolled students accumulate noteworthy debt on their way to degree attainment, they are reliant on career success to recover from the accumulated debt and are thus

increasingly ready to cite the institution as delinquent and legally responsible if success becomes elusive. RCPD staff centered on disability inclusion serve large caseloads and are thus hard-pressed to engage the deeper deliberations essential to success in this high-stakes, fast-moving, diverse array of programs. RCPD identifies this complex set of demands as vulnerable without a new approach. We identified 129 students enrolled in these medical and clinical programs as of spring semester 2016 growing to 165 enrolled spring 2017, 172 spring 2018, 193 spring 2019, 200 spring 2020, 204 spring 2021, and 246 spring 2022. While most of these students are functioning effectively, we are concerned that increasing numbers demand strategic coordination to ensure favorable outcomes. While no new position was realized in any of the past 6 years of this declared challenge, we attribute that to rapid leadership succession which rendered our requests tertiary to other dynamics. Thomas Jeitschko, as most recent of 3 Graduate School Deans, conveyed our needs to 3 recent Provosts and we are now hopeful that Provost Woodruff will help us negotiate a solution as she ideally becomes a stable part of campus leadership. In 2022-2023 RCPD will be realigned from multiple reporting lines to a single new Assistant Provost for Health and Wellbeing which may provide new linkages to affect this need.

Recommended Solution:

Clinical and Medical Programs:

RCPD proposes the creation of a new position that will lead more thorough, effective, and timely responses in the interaction of disabilities in the clinical and medical fields. Likely functions include:

- Serve as a resident expert facilitating timely and highly aware interactions and solutions supporting disability and medical, clinical, and practical program coordination. This position would offer deep awareness of programmatic demands, technical standards, and curriculum, while offering leadership to facilitate more effective connections between the academic/clinical programs, internship/clerkship sites, students and RCPD Ability Access Specialists.
- Lead innovative activities that increase awareness, showcase best practices, and increase efficacy of integration of people with disabilities into the medical and clinical fields. This may include seeking grants in partnership with our CIC peers, between RCPD and the clinical colleges, or in partnership with other campus entities and community medical centers emphasizing diversity and inclusion.
- Troubleshoot dynamic situations and educate faculty/staff/clinicians in strategic areas toward success and leadership by students with disabilities, in turn helping MSU exemplify leadership in inclusive medical and clinical programs. If a position does not become available, a secondary option may involve RCPD relying on DEI leaders in each college to serve a coordination role for disability inclusion efforts. While this will address some of the needs, it may fall short in facilitating rapid technical accommodation planning needed in this work.

Litigious Environment with Increased OIE and OCR Investigations:

RCPD enjoys a long-standing reputation for leadership, innovation, and favorable partnership with constituents. This is the MSU-RCPD culture that draws dedicated, innovative, and growth-centered staff to our team and motivates private gifts and endowments to our program. Broader community unrest in a number of areas has accelerated allegations and investigations into fair treatment in a range of topical areas. For RCPD these trends have involved record numbers of OIE and OCR investigations along with FERPA and FOIA demands which are time-intensive and stressful for involved staff. Prior to the recent MSU upheavals, RCPD participated in 1 or 2 investigations in a year, but that number has grown to approach 10 or more a year. This is not a decline in program quality as we are found effective via surveys, general feedback, the OIE reviews themselves, and external reviews and legal responses in our work to date. Community unrest, broad agitation, growth in numbers of people identifying as having disabilities, and greater sense of entitlement with increasing college costs all increase exposure as do the new layers

of investigatory staffing and complaint response systems. Staff are keenly aware of the importance of noteworthy vigilance, timeliness, and careful consideration in our work of accommodation determination and provision as adverse findings can diminish program reputation. While findings of RCPD efficacy are welcomed and anticipated, the regular routine of investigations wears on staff, takes time out of already busy schedules, and threatens staff morale. In 2021-2022, RCPD lost an unprecedented number of staff to pressures of the work. RCPD will strive for continued productivity, staff development, and close working relationships with students to ensure OIE, OCR, and legal complaints are minimized through high-quality experiences. We share grievance channels whenever we understand clients to be unhappy with some element of campus services. We remain steadfast in our work and optimistic that continued diligence will meet needs and result in as few complaints as possible. Maintaining well-informed, energized staff with suitable case counts allows timely and deeply interactive work which helps us uphold our mission and avoid/withstand complaints.

Focus on Assessment:

MSU and APUE have raised expectations for assessment efforts in the past year with the creation of a new Assistant Dean for Student Success Assessment and Strategic Initiatives. While RCPD remains student centered when creating and operating our Signature Programs, we recognize the value in further aligning our assessment efforts to both meet expectations and further inform and document our programmatic efficacy. As APUE enhances these expectations, we wish to dedicate increased levels of work toward this outcome as it will serve a range of needs including an increasing range of requests about DEI intersectionality with our program.

Recommended Solution Approved in 2021 and Underway for June 2022:

Assistant Director for Case Management, Assessment, and Programmatic Innovation:

This position will fill existing program gaps brought on by sustained population growth while improving effectiveness in a number of areas identified by MSU Administration, RCPD Director, and Ability Access Specialists as increasingly important as demands on our program grow. Shelby Gombosi was selected to fill this role beginning June 2022 and she brings relevant experience and academic focus to this task. Shelby will provide direct case management, lead assessment and reporting efforts, and collaborate with the Director and Ability access Specialists on strategic planning to advance RCPD operational and strategic objectives. By collaborating with Ability Access Specialists, faculty, and staff we will ensure students with disabilities have effective access to the instruction and programs of the university while providing proactive early interventions to mitigate claims of unsatisfactory service quality and ideally resolving dispute resolution enabling RCPD to maintain a reputation of quality. This position may eventually serve a moderate caseload providing direct services to students with intensive needs while partnering with staff toward solutions to complex challenges. As RCPD is tasked by President Stanley and APUE to intensify our work in assessment, dashboarding, and programmatic innovation, this position will partner closely with the Director to lead assessment efforts that validate efficacy, improve quality, and evidence our leadership in a range of diversity-related endeavors. Beyond ensuring operations of the RCPD meet legal and policy obligations, it will help streamline and manage an increasing portfolio of signature programs that maximize ability and opportunity. It will aid in the development of new cross-organizational efforts including Trio Programs, staff training and support, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, alumni efforts, and grant/donor funded initiatives.

Data Systems Modernization:

The data systems used to manage student and employee accommodations including client self-identification, accommodation determination, accommodation reporting, accommodated testing,

volunteer management, accessible books delivery, and reporting for investigatory processes are core to our work. Known as the RCPD Student Data System (SDS) and Employee Data System (EDS), these systems were designed by RCPD and programmed by IT Services as custom solutions replacing traditional paper files at the turn of the century. The systems were built on MSU AIS public web services for security, reliability, and cost-effectiveness. IT Services defines our systems as legacy in their code base and we subsequently plan to invest in modernization over the next couple of years. The modernization will necessitate migration to a new campus central platform or contract with a specialized product intent on disability service provision. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. While initially envisioned as a possible 2020-2021 project, we determined it would be unwise to migrate our systems as so many campus resources were being directed to the new MSU SIS project. Thus, this project remains unresolved. RCPD's systems are receiving remediation to enable continued operation as old SIS linkages are replaced with Campus Solutions for fall 2022.

Recommended Solution:

RCPD Data Systems Continued Study with 2023-2024 Implementation:

RCPD's study of alternative systems in partnership with IT Services determine 3 possible approaches. The review of viability for 3rd party and local frameworks continues with Deb Dotterer, Scott Termeer, Brian Ronan and select RCPD staff. some sort of allocation of time or resources should be undertaken in 2022-2023 to ensure RCPD identifies a path forward toward timely data and record keeping on student and employee services. As time has lapsed since our previous external systems review, it will be prudent to refresh our awareness of the major solutions ascertaining match with our needs and ensuring sustainability.

Accommodated Testing Review and Analysis:

Increasing numbers of students registered with the RCPD request and are found eligible for accommodated testing. Most commonly this involves extended testing time and reduced distraction or separate testing space. When our program was smaller, this dynamic was much simpler to facilitate as less than 1% of the student body required such adjustments. Today around 4% of the student body is authorized some level of extended time for testing with roughly half of these time adjustments representing 50% extended time or greater. Faculty have long been expected to administer testing under their control including accommodated testing whenever feasible. Increasingly faculty site difficulty or inability when testing exceeds 50%-time extension or separate testing spaces. RCPD has long communicated Provost belief that testing management was the duty of faculty, departments and colleges while RCPD helped with extreme needs wherever possible. As populations grew, RCPD operation of 7 testing spaces became inadequate for demands in the pre-pandemic from students and faculty. A shift to online exams during pandemic substantially modified requests of our office for testing spaces and temporarily solved our challenges. During the 2021-2022 year demands again began to rise. Heading into 2022-2023, RCPD retains 5 spaces reserved for the most demanding testing situations involving unique equipment, disruptive behavior during testing, or extensive time allowances. During the 2019-2020 year we formed a testing focus group consisting of representatives of several colleges and select RCPD staff, and we employed the services of a graduate student from Student Affairs Administration to help us review process, policy and data. The work of this focus group was abbreviated due to Coronavirus evacuation of campus, but the work of the focus group provided important insights that we can leverage going forward. The insights included better understanding of our peer responses to the dynamics, ideas to better empower faculty to administer accommodated testing, and some preliminary next step planning and instructional materials to keep the accommodated testing program functional.

Recommended Solution:

Broad campus awareness and consideration of this dynamic is critical as ongoing efforts are needed to ensure we have the resources to administer accommodated testing in cases where faculty and departments cannot find space on their own. Prior administrations identified faculty as responsible for managing their examinations and thus the challenge was left to faculty, departments and colleges to resolve. Perspectives of the current administration are valued as they may help us find a directional truth for this challenge. The MSU Testing Center has finite capacity to help but that is a revenue generating model which departments often object to for reasons of budget. Facilities Planning has been helpful in establishing a few spaces where adjacent testing capacity is provided near large classrooms but that is still a small initiative and faculty need help finding such spaces and often do not find suitable proctoring possible. Other universities are resourcing their disability service programs with space and staffing to manage the challenge but RCPD does not see this as practical by space availability or staffing at this time. RCPD welcomes university consideration of an expanded testing center that can meet a broader range of testing needs.

Dashboard Indicators (services provided May 15, 2021 through May 14, 2022)

- A. In total, 3,478 enrolled students were accommodated for permanent disabilities (up 25% over last year)
- B. 2,227 new students self-identified with disability-related conditions (up 56.8% from last year), 1,089 (up 54.9%) of these were found to represent permanent disabilities while 142 (up 84%) were found to represent temporary conditions needing accommodation.
- C. 55 students reported an open case with Michigan Rehabilitation Services while 11 reported working with the Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons.

Student disability counts by major characteristic (permanent disabilities enrolled only – Note: disability counts will exceed the number of students above due to the presence of multiple disabilities):

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing – 66 (down 7%)
 - Blindness/Visual Impairment – 75 (up 39%)
 - Mobility – 183 (up 22%)
 - Brain Injury – 84 (up 23.5%)
 - Learning Disability – 1,770 (up 30.5%)
 - Psychiatric – 1,776 (up 33.8%)
 - Chronic Health – 679 (up 16.2%)
 - Autism Spectrum – 147 (up 51.5%)
 - Other – 67 (up 34%)
 - Multiple – 1,144 (up 37.8%)
- D. Direct service and consultation to students with over 146,968 student contacts representing more than 14,255 student service hours.
 - E. 451 employees (up 30.3% over last year) with active permanent disabilities were current with the RCPD; 115 were newly registered this year with a net population increase of 105 given retirements and other transitions.

Employee disability counts by major characteristic (permanent disabilities only – Note: disability counts will exceed the number of employees above due to the presence of multiple disabilities):

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing – 48 (up 20%)
 - Blindness/Visual Impairment – 24 (up 14.2%)
 - Mobility – 146 (up 20.7%)
 - Brain Injury – 25 (up 56.2%)
 - Learning Disability – 88 (up 91.3%)
 - Psychiatric – 161 (up 51.9%)
 - Chronic Health – 176 (up 57.1%)
 - Autism Spectrum – 3 (unchanged)
 - Other – 18 (up 20%)
 - Multiple – 111 (up 65.7%)
- F. Direct service and consultation to faculty and staff with disabilities totaling over 8,145 contacts surpassing 1,719.8 hours.
 - G. Provision of auxiliary aids and services:
 - Over 2,397 hours of course-related interpreting/real-time writing for deaf students which was lower than usual due to pandemic remote classes, increased use of auto captioning and central IT efforts to caption videos
 - 71 Tower Guard members and 4 student employees joined RCPD staff to deliver 152 projects (books/course packs/course materials) in alternative formats for students with print-related

disabilities. This included 50 documents produced locally through e-texting, including 8 large books which were divided into between 13 and 22 tasks each. The remaining 102 requests were delivered from existing electronic format facilitated by RCPD but delivered via publishers. Tactile graphics were created for graphs in a blind student's economics exams throughout both terms. RCPD also provided extensive consultation regarding accessible materials best practices to MSU Faculty and Staff as well as individuals from other universities, notably EMU.

- 188 alternative tests for a total of 65 students were facilitated by way of readers, scribes and quiet rooms at the RCPD and classrooms around campus.

Significant Events, Initiatives and Changes

Staffing

RCPD teamwork is the heart of MSU's tradition of inclusive excellence that exemplifies mission, purpose, talent, energy, and dedication. In 2021-2022, RCPD experienced substantial staffing challenges ultimately leaving to 8 open positions as of summer 2022. Searches and interim efforts are underway. Departures included 4 departures by staff for other positions, 1 staff on leave, 1 staff retirement, 1 staff death in March 2022, and 1 staff promotion in June. **RCPD anticipates a return to full staffing by August 2022. We also created a new Assistant Director for Case Management, Assessment and Programmatic Innovation which will serve needs in alignment with unit goals.**

Significant Staffing Changes:

- Operations Coordinator, Position was left vacant during pandemic and Becca Wetzel was hired in August 2021 as in-person instruction returned to MSU. Becca served as a student employee during her undergraduate years and returned to the office following several years of employment in other campus departments. This role facilitates multiple operations from our front desk including management of accommodated testing.
- Assistant Director - Case Management, Assessment, and Programmatic innovation, new position addressing needs within a growing department, filled by Shelby Gombosi, June 2022
- Assistant Director – Assistive Technology Innovation, Vacated Feb 2022 by Leslie Johnson, fill by August 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Neurodivergent, John Pedraza on leave since October 2021, awaiting return or fill if he is unable to return by August 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Neurodivergent, Vacated October 2021 by Grace Tong, fill June 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Neurodivergent, Vacated March 2022 by Darryl Steele, fill by August 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Neurodivergent, Vacated June 2022 by Shelby Gombosi, fill June 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Chronic Health, Retirement of Denise Hartman January 2022, fill by August 2022
- Ability Access Specialist - Chronic Health & Law Liaison, vacated by Caleb Sandoval March 2022, fill by August 2022
- Ability access Specialist - Leadership Development, Vacated May 2022 by Liz Fuller, reassign Ashley Maloff to this role as Chronic Health hires occur by August 2022
- Ability Access Specialist, vacated by Ashley Maloff as she moves into the Leadership Development role August 2022

Caleb Sandoval Spirit of Ability Endowment

MSU offers unparalleled opportunity that welcomes and challenges people to grow talents, passion, and determination into personal and professional success. This tradition grew from decisive leadership and deep personal engagement over multiple generations. Beginning with the founding of Tower Guard by

May Shaw in the 1930's and continuing through the decades with leaders who made decisive contributions during their time of prominence at the university; MSU fosters a Spirit of Ability that greets challenges with a sense of community, self-efficacy, and future potential.

Caleb Sandoval valued the importance of education, personal investment, and decisive action and committed himself to this work as both a student and exemplary Ability Access Specialist at the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD). He grew from freshman student in 1995 to ultimately serve as Ability access Specialist from 2015 through his untimely passing on March 13, 2022. He developed and shared a spirit that lives on as one of MSU's celebrated pioneers in Maximizing Ability and Opportunity. In honor of Caleb, we are building an endowment in his honor and adding him to our existing Spirit of Ability Award referenced at: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/spirit-ability-award>

Coronavirus Pandemic

Aided by new vaccines, increased knowledge about COVID, and waning impacts from the virus, RCPD returned to in-office work for fall 2021 using a new hybrid working model. Becca Wetzel was hired as Operations Coordinator and served a valued lead role in re-opening and staffing our office. She and a team of student employees welcomed walk-in traffic aided by the use of protective equipment (masks, desk-mounted plastic shields, and a good measure of social distancing. This allowed re-opening of resources including accommodated testing and assistive technology tools. Other staff in the office worked a hybrid model with 2 days in office and 3 remote. This baseline staffing provided at least 3 professional staff in the office most days to ensure office continuity and mutual staff support. RCPD staff worked to identify, refine, and deliver programs centered on creating a welcome for new students, foster community for existing students and reinforce MSU as a valuable opportunity overcoming the distancing dynamics of the pandemic.

- **RCPD Community Groups** continued as an opportunity for students with disabilities to connect virtually and discuss topics relevant to their experiences. A recent study conducted by the Careers Collaborative program highlighted the need for college students with disabilities to maintain connection with their peers throughout the pandemic. Many students reported having a difficult time adjusting to online classes and were experiencing negative effects of the isolation endured during remote learning. The RCPD Community Groups provided an outlet for sharing experiences and building community. These groups are run by RCPD specialists and a student facilitator to engage participants in conversations relevant to their daily experiences. Students met weekly via Zoom, and many expressed that the groups helped them cope with the isolation and loneliness experienced as a result of the pandemic. The RCPD will evaluate need for the Community Groups as endemic academic life develops.
- **PEER Program** Designed by Shelby Gombosi, the PEER program continued in a second year bringing together experts from academia in the fields of disability and mental health to identify skills to build resiliency and community. PEER was designed for students with mental health conditions with collaboration between the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities and Counseling and Psychiatric Services. This program consists of 6-weekly psychoeducational workshops derived from evidence-based practices such as mindfulness and resiliency training, Cognitive Behavioral (CBT), Dialectical Behavior (DBT), and Acceptance & Commitment (ACT) therapies. Each weekly workshop contains different skill development opportunities in mindfulness, acceptance of one's diagnosis, executive functioning, behavioral activation and cognitive reframing, emotion regulation and resiliency training. PEER also provides a dedicated practical application support group to allow students to discuss material presented in the weekly workshops, learning to apply the skills to their own lives and build community in an informal, supportive environment. Students expressed value and appreciation for a program that addresses mental health on campus." Collaboration with CAPS through this program lead to additional

efforts named CAPS Connect which provided open time for students to connect with CAPS staff with RCPD encouragement.

- **UGS110 and First-Year Experience** Our UGS 100 offering entitled Maximize Ability and Resiliency at MSU is intent on enhancing our larger focus on health, wellness, and resiliency. This 11-week, 1-credit course returned to an in-person offering by Ashley Maloff and Jennifer Montague to provide a welcome, strong start, and valuable linkages at MSU for first-year students. The course explored topics around academic wellness, nutritional wellness, and building resiliency. Segments were added to aid students in considering how to more fully engage in both online and in-person environments present following pandemic. Staff extended the first-semester offering to a second semester including peer wellness mentors to extend momentum from the course and link new students with a successful role model. This year-long programming provided continuity and connectivity during the unique demands around the pandemic.
- **Braille Technology Advantage** Born out of pandemic-related difficulties delivering paper Braille, this first of a kind program evidences national leadership by providing a refreshable Braille display to each new student who reads Braille. The program facilitates timely production of critical reading materials while encouraging students to grow in their technological sophistication which will provide expanded career and life opportunities. During fall 2021, Tesia Freer brought a Vispero staff trainer to campus who met with staff and students to share features of the Braille displays and seek our guidance on needs for the future. RCPD used TLE and Carlson endowment funds to secure 2 new model QWERTY Braille Mantis displays to provide an alternative for those who prefer a conventional keyboard over a Braille keyboard. saw four students engage this opportunity.
- **Documentation Processing** RCPD determinations begin with student and employee submission of confidential documentation about disability dynamics. This material was customarily managed as a paper process. During covid, we needed to redesign that process as electronic to facilitate workflow. Beverly Stehlik and Rachel Giddings collaborated to streamline document management for the future.
- **Saving Michigan Flyer** Leadership from RCPD in cooperation with other regional entities saved the accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation service between East Lansing, Ann Arbor, and the Detroit Metropolitan Airport. RCPD unified communications, helped establish meetings with government officials and ultimately helped this entity receive emergency funding to survive the pandemic when it was initially omitted from pandemic recovery funds eligibility. Thousands of Spartans benefit from this service with extreme value for international students and those with disabilities. This service is valuable to MSU as life returns to in-person.

RCPD Visibility, First Impressions, Identity, and Promotion

Building on our August 2019 launch of a new RCPD website, 2020 brought refinements, substantial content additions, greater social media integration, and expanded visibility for MSU and the RCPD. We recognize our website as a vital point of visibility for the leadership underway. Students, families, and practitioners from around the globe can easily find our programs and efforts. Departmental representation on LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook allow rapid updates for connected students, alumni, and prospective students. Many staff participate in helping drive excellent web and social media content, but we are especially thankful to Beverly Stehlik, Rachel Giddings, Becca Wetzel, Kelsey Foote, Liz Fuller, and student Nicole Siri for their efforts in operationalizing our web, Ability Blog stories, and social media channels. Of special note this year for our 50th anniversary event, we prepared materials for our first live awards event and donor luncheon in 2 years. Lessons learned from pandemic provided a living framework for the community to observe innovation and progress efforts as part of the anniversary celebration. The page at: RCPD's 50th Anniversary Awards and Appreciation Reception provides a snapshot of our milestone. Our 50th anniversary Awards Reception was sponsored by the MSU

Federal Credit Union. President Stanley provided remarks in honor of the milestone. Attendees received a limited-edition anniversary coin which included symbology and messaging consistent with our mission and the anniversary themes “Ambition Meets Innovation” and “Founding to Future”. More than 20 awards were presented to the community including 14 student scholarships totaling \$63,000.

Private Sector Fundraising

Private gifts are vital in providing resources to test new concepts, support emerging needs, and drive innovation toward sustained leadership in our field. Accordingly, staff continued activities that strengthened ties with existing donors, generated new donors, and facilitated awareness of annual giving opportunities. Staff and students are appreciative of the generous ongoing support of each donor which is maintaining and enhancing RCPD leadership in innovative activities from scholarships to Signature Programs (fully described at the RCPD website www.rcpd.msu.edu). Private contributions to the RCPD between May 15, 2021 and May 14, 2022 exceeded over \$425,000 which included 17 endowments and 3 expendable funds. These gifts and endowments are vitally important as we address increasing needs and strive to remain innovative in our work. Staff continue personal and financial investment in RCPD programs with several team members transcending daily work investments of time and energy to become financial benefactors. Full details on endowments are available at:

<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/contributions>.

- The Stern Tutoring and Alternative Techniques for Education Program, the Robert L. Decker and Benjamin Muns Friendship Memorial Scholarship, and the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment fund maintained their designation as named beneficiaries of significant planned gifts. Full details of each endowment are featured on the RCPD Website along with the [Signature Programs](#) and [scholarships](#) which operate from these resources.
- A tree of giving in the office reception area recognizes donors for various giving milestones. A “Friends of RCPD” honor roll celebrates the contributions of donors to the office during the past year.

Explorations in Ability

We began the thematic structure of *Explorations in Ability* during the 2011-2012 academic year to encourage new innovative initiatives targeted at expanding capacity in our students and campus partners. These initiatives welcome staff and students to envision and test new concepts, programs, and services. Private gifts, community partnerships, and endowment funding allow us to test and refine promising ideas to remain leading edge in our field. RCPD continued these activities supporting students in new ways.

- **STEM Accessibility** In conjunction with other departments with funding from the Teaching Learning Environment (TLE) funds, RCPD worked to close the gap in accessibility of critical scientific learning environments. New technology allowing the RCPD Technology Team and Tower Guard to produce accessible materials were purchased including a Glow Forge machine that provides laser etching and holds promise for solving access issues including through tactile demarcation on a range of surfaces. We worked with the classroom technology team to bring Equatio to campus which allows persons with various print-related disabilities to convert mathematical formulas to spoken and Braille output. A partnership with Facilities Planning is outfitting Bessey Hall and the new STEM facility with a product called GoodMaps which is a smartphone-powered system to enable those with disabilities to navigate the interior spaces of buildings more effectively by providing verbal and spatial guidance as a phone is pointed around an open space. MSU is the first university in the world to deploy GoodMaps and that will further highlight our work in STEM accessibility. Based on the success of this new technology, we may deploy this tool in additional campus locations including the Engineering Building.

- **IOS Application Development** In 2022 the [Munch app](#) and Guide app remain operational and provide accessible insights for the broad campus community around dining and navigation. Munch addresses needs of those with dietary concerns while providing a completely accessible experience for those who otherwise struggled to access menu choices. The app was made possible with coordination by RCPD and funding support from the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Fund, RHS and IPF. It afforded recent graduate Aditya Mathew additional opportunity to develop and apply his education while solving important accessibility challenges and serving needs within the RHS Culinary program. Beyond a range of innovative allergen alerts, preferred food flagging, and specific cafeteria guidance, the app provided a framework for the RCPD Spartan Ties program which helps students connect with dining experiences to build community and facilitate new friendships. The [Guide app](#) continues to be refined with new functionality building on its launch in 2015.

Bosco MRS-MSU Careers Collaborative

Generous funding from the Bosco family has allowed the Careers Collaborative signature program to continue for an eighth year. The collaborative is a shared-funding partnership which provides MSU students with disabilities the opportunity for expedited services from an on-site Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) counselor. In the fall of 2021, Tanya Adams was hired as the 4th lead counselor for the collaborative since its founding. Her dedication and energy for the work along with that of multiple specialists (Lindsay Hill, Kelsey Foote, Jennifer Montague, and Shelby Gombosi) at the RCPD are helping grow the collaborative post-pandemic. Through the partnership with MSU Career Services Network (CSN), Careers Collaborative employed a part-time graduate student to help with implementing new opportunities for students. The team has worked to increase interest in Careers Collaborative services by offering student success stories on the RCPD Ability Blog as well as on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These stories have helped to promote the program while showcasing students who have achieved their career goals with support of the collaborative. See a [Careers Collaborative student success story](#) here.

Stern Tutoring and Alternative Techniques for Education (STATE)

STATE remains a highly regarded Signature Program at RCPD and a critical support for struggling students. RCPD specialists often field correspondence from students, academic advisors, and faculty with questions regarding the program's utility for students who struggle academically. Many of these students are on academic probation and the STATE Program may fulfill a component of their academic improvement plan. Considering this, we actively recruit students whose GPA place them on academic probation, and we market STATE as an academic recovery-based program. The STATE leadership team continues to partner with colleges across campus to provide outreach to students who are placed on academic probation. College advising units continue to send targeted messages to students on probation who are registered with RCPD. Advisors from participating colleges strongly encouraged students registered with RCPD to participate in STATE in lieu of their college probation program requirement. Additionally, during the pandemic, invites were sent to a wider band of students within RCPD to provide outreach, community, and academic support to as many students as possible during this challenging time. The STATE Program partnered with the Runge Endowment to provide optional, additional academic coaching for students who wished for increased support. Coaches provided an opportunity to allow students to engage in additional study strategies, discuss campus resources, and build community during the pandemic.

Building Opportunities for Networking and Discovery (BOND)

The RCPD advances leading edge programming for students on the autism spectrum at Michigan State University. Starting with investments by Julie Wolf and the Baldwin Foundation, and later through the Autism Initiatives endowment started by the Kindzierski Family, we provide a community of support. With leadership by Lindsay Hill as Autism Specialist, fellow Ability Access Specialists, and enthusiastic student leaders, the BOND Program team continues to provide new opportunities for student success. RCPD Staff served as facilitators creating innovative programming for students with ASDs during the Fall 2021 and

Spring 2022 semesters. This year we returned to in-person events and the results were surprising. We enjoyed the best turn out for events we ever experienced. We were able to host our early arrival program, BOND Transitions, in which 26 students participated, up from 12 the last time we offered the program. We had over 75 people at the welcome event where we welcomed students and their families to campus. The monthly BOND events routinely had more than 20 participants. We were also able to hold our Fall Seminar again this year. We introduced a new element in which students had to pay for the course but were able to earn back their money through participation. Out of the 8 participants, three students earned back their entire stipend and most of the others earned back at least half. The rest of the money will be put toward the BOND program and potentially a scholarship opportunity in the future.

Student Leadership and Involvement

The Tower Guard sophomore honor organization remains committed to their 88-year tradition of textbook accessibility and service to students with disabilities. RCPD advises and coordinates efforts that help members realize leadership development through this mission.

The Council of Students with Disabilities (CSD) remained active with RCPD advisement from Virginia Rutan. Beyond regular organizational virtual meetings, they grew visibility for disability issues by facilitating a range of community visibility efforts. RCPD remains active with CSD through advisement, regular attendance at executive board and general assembly meetings.

Registered Student Organization (RSO) Accommodation Process & Student-Wide DEI Training on Disability: RCPD Staff Virginia Rutan and Jennifer Montague co-advised, coordinated virtual meetings, and planned with Megan Weil, an RCPD undergraduate student and CSD Vice President, on her short and long-term initiatives in training MSU Registered Student Organizations on ways to be more inclusive and accessible for students with disabilities. They continued to co-advise Megan Weil and edit video scripts on Disability for a portion of the DEI training for fall 2022.

Public Facility Accessibility

RCPD staff continues work with students and employees with disabilities, the Office of Planning and Budget, Residential and Hospitality Services, and Infrastructure Planning and Facilities to implement modifications for accessibility. Many of the most significant annual accomplishments in general fund facilities are published on a jointly created OPB/RCPD architectural accessibility web site with linkages from the RCPD web at: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/about-rcpd/ideas-and-suggestions>. This site also provides the campus community with a portal to suggest future access improvements. RCPD staff collaborates with the MSU Police Department, Infrastructure Planning, the Michigan Department of Transportation, CATA and the City of East Lansing to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety on and near campus including construction, renovation, and snow removal planning. RCPD staff continues to advise regarding standards, installation, and monitoring of intersection components including audible/tactile pedestrian signals, curb cuts, detectable warnings, crosswalks, and other components while informing the public regarding use and benefits of these intersection attributes. RCPD staff is also involved in pre-planning and consultation for access, alternative routes, and alternative materials used during construction. RCPD maintains representation on the All-University Traffic and Transportation Committee which affords insight and influence on policy and practice. As stated earlier in this report, RCPD is pioneering a trial of new virtual signage technology to enhance indoor navigation in Bessey hall and the new STEM Facility beginning fall 2021. Our advocacy also saved a vitally important transportation system known as Michigan Flyer when it was overlooked for funding during the pandemic.

MSU Service Animal Policy and Procedures

RCPD staff collaborates with Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS), the Office of General Counsel, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the University Physician, and the ADA Coordinator to maintain a Service Animal Policy for students and employees at MSU. The document includes definitions, guidelines, responsibilities, processes of verification regarding disability, University housing areas, and a dispute

resolution procedure. Educational materials and housing contracts assist in the education of MSU students and employees. Annual training and consultation with individuals and departments informs the community about campus procedures. This policy and procedure is frequently cited by other universities and serves as a model for others nationally. Ongoing modifications to federal guidelines and interpretation encourage annual review of this policy and the assistance animal components received significant modification in 2021.

Community Rehabilitation, Education, Advocacy and Transition

RCPD continues to actively collaborate with community education and rehabilitation partners to provide integration of services and support for persons with disabilities at MSU. The RCPD conveys a welcoming vision of opportunity for youth who aspire to succeed in overcoming challenges presented by disability. We maintain regular partnerships with entities ranging from K-12 school systems and transitional counseling entities to adult vocational rehabilitation programs. Key partners in advancing MSU's leadership in educational and vocational rehabilitation include Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, regional K-12 educational systems, regional higher education partners, the ADA Great Lakes Technical Assistance Center, the Disability Network Capital Area, and the Capital Area Transportation Authority. In 2021-2022, public vocational rehabilitation partnerships continued with the eighth-year renewal of the Bosco MRS-MSU Careers Collaborative.

Residential and Hospitality Services

Ongoing collaboration with Campus Living Services and Culinary Services is assisting with placement of students with disabilities into appropriate housing settings including facilitating student participation by those with mobility challenges, health-related dietary issues, and other unique needs. RCPD staff participated in multiple RHS workgroups around housing accommodations. RCPD and RHS also revised the assistance animal verification procedures in the residence hall system. The Munch app was released in early 2020 to great acclaim by a broad spectrum of campus users and it was refined in preparation for restoration of dining for fall 2021.

Strategic Planning and Developmental Imperatives

- **Coronavirus Response and Lessons Learned:** The arrival of Coronavirus provided an unprecedented challenge and corresponding opportunity. Staff and students affirmed the value of technology tools to maintain teaching and a systematic support network despite the rapid onset and dramatic restriction on mobility and traditional in-person social networks. The RCPD mission and spirit around ability and opportunity served us well. We had the tools needed, staff deployed new approaches intent on creating a sense of welcome, belonging and resiliency. We partnered with campus entities to ensure students with disabilities received resources needed to maintain our core mission. RCPD staff are reviewing lessons learned and working to refine our future ability to serve our community with evolving hybrid options gained from pandemic. The annual Bosco Careers Collaborative survey provided insights and ultimately resulted in a whitepaper that shared valuable insights from roughly 15% of our student population. This input guided several new RCPD programs including PEER, Community Groups, and an expanded First-Year program centered on health, wellness, and resiliency. Service to students reliant on Braille and tactile learning was challenged during the virus as was our ability to leverage the service of Tower Guard. These dynamics created a rapid response effort to redesign elements of the Gilbert-Sebald Ability Access Specialist positions and readied new structures helping Tower Guard maintain their leadership during changing times.
- **Leadership in Health, Wellness and Capacity Building:** The RCPD mission "Maximizing Ability and Opportunity" is multi-faceted but, with rapid population growth over the past 10 or more years, has centered largely on accommodation practices as our population has grown dramatically. The 2017

Gilbert family gift and subsequent Edith Moore Squires Endowment provided a seed that we will use to grow our fullest mission which should increasingly build “Ability” for students in addition to helping MSU represent continued excellence in opportunity. RCPD will leverage the Gilbert gift (Angela Sebald Ability Access Fund) and the Edith Moore Squires Vision and Resilience Endowment to launch a new visionary framework and programming around health, wellness and capacity building that extends the “Opportunity-based” work we are already known for. This new agenda will align with emerging campus initiatives in wellness, student success, and other pillars while being tailored to the unique needs around disability. It will engage the hopes of students, employees, key benefactors, and community partners effectively enhancing our focus on the “Ability” side of our equation in our mission of Maximizing Ability and Opportunity. The health, wellness and capacity-building framework promises to:

- Encourage staff innovation, leadership, and identity in alignment with campus initiatives and best practices centered on advancing ability
- Increase leadership that builds life-long ability and ability-centered identity in our population
- Transcend the common accommodation model building upon environmental change toward increased student capacity building
- Address rapid population growth needs by better addressing the needs around mental health, ADHD, and chronic health by offering greater intrinsic capacity to self-accommodate through healthy life practices and perspectives
- Favorably affect resilience in our populations with special focus on the promise of health, while ideally reducing the rates of accommodation need and crisis-level work staff experience today
- Reinforce leadership and forward momentum that excites alumni, donor and community partner interest in our program and university
- **Staff Development:** RCPD staff represent a strong and skilled team characterized by national leadership. We will seek methods to fortify innovation, cohesiveness, resilience, and shared vision during today’s rapid change. Focus will include exploration of ways by which staff may develop shared perspective, increased vision of possibility, programmatic leadership that captures personal passion in turn maximizing effectiveness, and an elevated sense of team effort. We will strive to build our already positive workplace into an environment of unparalleled possibility. Staff are encouraged to keep innovation front and center and we will review staffing alignments and position descriptions to ensure we remain leadership oriented and responsive to emerging needs.
- **Programmatic Innovation:** We will develop new funding proposals and channels to extend MSU leadership in ability enhancing programs and services. In 2017-2018, the Edith Moore Squires endowment became our 15th endowment promising new resources to fuel innovation efforts. The Gilbert family gift led to hiring of 3 new staff in 2017 and redefined our Disability Specialists to Ability Access Specialists in support of student development and ongoing focus on ability. In 2019 we added the Runge Endowment for Learning Differences which holds promise to further advance efforts for our students and in 2020 the Trent Pysarchik Internships Endowment provided its first scholarship supporting a student with summer internship needs. Development of the Caleb Sandoval Spirit of Ability Endowment in 2022 and beyond will further efforts to find possibility in difficult situations.
- **Careers Collaborative:** RCPD will develop and market the Bosco MRS-MSU Careers Collaborative to ensure the program reaches its full potential. We desire to increase student registration, offer expanded programmatic efforts for current and potential clients, increase career and internship linkages, and integrate related initiatives including the Destination Survey data, and emerging

statewide employment programs for people with disabilities. Career Services is a key partner in this endeavor for their ready network of employment contacts as is the College of Education for their Rehabilitation Counseling research agenda as aligned with the Careers Collaborative. The 2019 addition of the Trent Pysarchik Internships Endowment offers a new seed to spur important internship advancements.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Partnerships:** RCPD desired and is now engaged in building better working relations with Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. Students and staff commonly characterize state vocational rehabilitation resources as overly bureaucratic, difficult to engage, and not ideally supportive of students. Through close work with upper management of both state vocational rehabilitation programs, RCPD is forging new connectivity and a sense of partnership and possibility with these agencies. In October 2014, we launched the Bosco MRS-MSU Careers Collaborative with Michigan Rehabilitation Services which is beginning to positively impact career outcomes by increasing the number of MSU students with active vocational rehabilitation cases. This is fostering collaboration between RCPD, MSU Career Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services and MSU Rehabilitation Counseling. RCPD's receipt of a generous private gift from the Bosco family toward this purpose allowed MSU to connect with the State of Michigan to capture federal resources; in turn bringing a vocational rehabilitation counselor to campus along with other resources that will align efforts of the 4 distinct programs referenced earlier. This program promises to reduce impediments to MSU students opening cases with MRS, supply MSU students with additional resources, enhance Career Services familiarity with disability dynamics and employment, help RCPD with new connections around career development best practice including student internships, and empower public vocational rehabilitation to partner with higher education more closely for the benefit of persons with disabilities.
- **Safety and Security:** RCPD is increasingly aware of a need to fully review and implement best practices in personal and departmental safety. While the RCPD remains an environment of relative harmony, we are cognizant of national incidences of university and workplace violence. Our focus will seek to understand and inform staff of opportunities to prevent or respond to safety and security challenges moving forward. We believe that contemporary emergency protocols, CPR training, first aid training, and incorporation of emergency defibrillators are important and our installation of a defibrillator in 2019 was an important step for our program and Bessey Hall.
- **Community Identity and Social Connectedness:** RCPD seeks to strengthen sense of community for incoming, current, and former students creating social and emotional ties to MSU and the RCPD. This is critical for current quality and long-term sense that people will want to re-invest in our programs to create potential for others. The Tower Guard honor organization, Alex Powell Great State Race, Council for Students with Disabilities, generous scholarship programs and close staff connectivity with students remain central to this objective. Spartan Ties provides new connectivity between some of these entities.
- **RHS Housing and Culinary Services:** Successful partnerships with RHS and Culinary Services have increased opportunities and quality of life at MSU. From cooperative app development to award-winning dining opportunities and customized housing concepts, our students benefit from a close partnership. In the coming years it will be essential to ensure focus on new accessible room development for those with mobility challenges is conducted in alignment with the emergent service models in Culinary and Neighborhood endeavors. Recent consolidations in various cafeterias has disconnected optimal dining opportunities from the most accessible housing facilities thus creating struggles for those with mobility challenges. We also anticipate noteworthy new pressures on space as MSU deploys the 2-year live-on plan. There will be a natural pressure between those requiring a

single room as medically necessary and the capacity of the residence system to provide this given enrollment pressures.

- **Lifelong Awareness and Impact:** An area of interest for the RCPD involves developing connectivity in a longer timeline of the student experience. We desire to become increasingly engaged in modeling the possibilities associated with higher education for high school students with disabilities while simultaneously extending our outreach to alumni for their potential to help strengthen resources and professional networks for current MSU students. By building this longitudinal approach, we hope to have a greater influence for persons with disabilities throughout their educational and work lifecycle thus enhancing long-term outcomes for our students and underscoring the long-term significance of an MSU education. Efforts by several staff to develop social media networks and programmatic visibility are among our areas for focus. We realize enhanced connectivity with the Alumni Association and career networks (LinkedIn) can aid our ability to celebrate career successes through Outstanding Alumni Awards which showcase the power of education to change lives.
- **Benchmarking:** We desire to develop benchmarking data in cooperation with peer institutions to quantify our comparative strengths and weaknesses with other CIC institutions. If done properly, this can become a benchmark that peer institutions will desire to engage and may bring reference to MSU as a quantified leader in this effort. Ideally such benchmarking data could become part of the indices used by major publications like U.S. News in their college ranking programs. In 2021 our Team is intent on gaining a top national ranking for MSU in at least one national survey around disability inclusion. Our office has never pursued such a ranking in the past and thus we feel as though our quality and value is not yet as visible as deserved.
- **Testing Accommodations:** Prior to the pandemic, RCPD experienced a nearly unsustainable level of requests for accommodated testing. We need to increase faculty ability and compliance for offering extended time in or near the classroom. We were struggling to reliably facilitate the testing students need at the RCPD given current facility configurations and declared levels of need. Letters sent to Deans, Directors and Chairs by the Provost and Associate Provost combined with quality leadership by the Operations/Testing Coordinator at the RCPD and presentations/focus group sessions on accommodated testing strategies are helping to manage and build strategies around testing pressures. We will continue to monitor and pursue solutions for this challenge. Reduced distraction environments and extended time alone should largely be available by faculty in cooperation with departments and classroom scheduling leaving RCPD facilities for use by those with specific technological needs. RCPD proposed a new 2% concept for classroom construction standards in a 2015-2016 memo to the Associate Provost and Director of Facility Planning and Space Management. That concept began with Bessey Hall classroom renovations during summer 2017 and has continued with other construction projects in settings like the new business pavilion. While not a true 2% capacity, that trial provided faculty and departments with some new capacity to administer specialized or accommodated testing in or adjacent to the classroom. Ongoing studies of natural classroom supports that might increase ability to administer reduced distraction testing are underway as are studies about how relocation of the MSU Testing Center to Bessey may be helpful.
- **Legislative Evolution:** We will work to fully understand and operationalize the range of evolving legal dynamics associated with the amended ADA legislation and corresponding federal rulings that have changed many historical premises of work in this field while preserving the spirit, passion and creativity that called most staff to this field.
- **Explorations in Ability:** We will continue the Explorations in Ability framework begun in 2011-2012 to aid RCPD awareness of client needs, provide programming that builds capacity, and empower

students to grow into leaders. The Emerging Opportunities Endowment and Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Fund provide fuel for innovation activities.

- **Tower Guard Invigoration:** Tower Guard is a long-standing and uniquely powerful opportunity to pair the University's strongest service-oriented scholars with the unique abilities and challenges experienced by students with disabilities. The organization remains a vital part of services to students with print-related disabilities through their service in reading aloud, accessible materials production, and other service efforts to this population. We are working to realign key aspects of the Tower Guard experience to ensure the opportunity remains vitally connected, memorable, and transformative for Tower Guard and the students with whom they work. The conversion of the former Media Access Specialist to a Leadership Development position represents a large step toward this objective.
- **Universal Design:** We will seek connections for faculty on engaging with and instructing a diversity of learners, with a particular focus on Universal Design for Learning in partnership with a range of departments including DigitalX, CAL, Graduate School, and AAN. Universal Design concepts hold promise in both online and in-person courses.
- **DEI:** RCPD was recognized for their work in DEI through a 2020 diversity award and later as part of the President's DEI strategic team. We will partner with programs to ensure they understand aspects of disability and we will learn from them how other diversity aspects intersect with our disability community and use these partnerships to promote success.