

Community Advisory Council Meeting

NOTES

March 18, 2026, 12-3pm

Documents to review before the meeting:

- [This agenda](#) (.pdf)
- [December draft minutes](#) (.pdf) for vote during meeting.
- [Teaching Goals, Updates, and Plans](#) (.pdf) for discussion during meeting.
- [CAC feedback for people at CDCI](#) (.pdf) for discussion during meeting.
- [CAC Group Agreement](#)
- CAC Meeting Roles (see last page of this agenda)

Agenda Summary

12:00-12:30	Welcome & membership update
12:30-12:45	National and Center updates
12:45-1:15	Teaching updates and feedback
1:15-1:30	Break
1:30-2:15	New plans for disability studies and feedback
2:15-2:45	CAC feedback for people at CDCI
2:45-3:00	Public comment and discuss how meeting went

Meeting Notes

12:00-12:30 Welcome!

Ocean Streeter asked everyone to:

- Introduce themselves with names and pronouns,
- Choose a meeting role (see table below), and
- Share how they are doing.

VOTE: Do you approve minutes from December meeting?

- Lindsey St. Amour made a motion to approve the minutes as shared.
- Audrey seconded the motion.
- Max abstained, all others (6) voted in favor of approving the minutes
- Minutes were approved

Table below lists who was present for the meeting and meeting roles chosen.

Council member	Present	Roles
Max Barrows	present	Keeper of the rudder until 1pm
Melissa Houser	Not present	
Audrey Homan	present	
Matthew LeFluer	present	Jargon buster
Kirsten Murphy	present	
Lindsey St Amour	present	Time keeper
Michael Shor Co-Chair	Not present	
Summer Stelter	present	
Ocean Streeter Co-Chair	present	Co-Facilitator
Total 7 out of 9	78% of members	

CDCI Personnel Present: Rachel, Maureen, and Winnie

Member of the public: Crista Yagjian

- VFN conference is on April 28 and Lindsay plans to be there for DRVT and asked if there were any fliers or other information to hand out.
 - Rachel talk with Jesse about this offer
- CAC membership update.
 - No new applications since December.
 - Jesse will reach out to membership committee re: Crista Yagjian's application.
 - Kirsten requested a third member of the membership committee
 - Lindsey volunteered to join that group and will coordinate with Kirsten and Matthew

- Do council members have any recommendations for potential members?
- Ocean asked and Audrey shared that there are 2 people they want to reach out to based in southern Vermont
- OAS UVM put a call out in their last newsletter
- Can students be on the committee? CHECK THE BYLAWS
- Matthew agreed that we should check the bylaws

12:30 – 12:45 National and CDCI updates

- Rachel shared we will send our request for funding for next year: July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.
- The search for new I-Team director has started.
 - Job talks this week 3/19 & 3/20. Final candidates will meet with Jesse in the last week of March or early April.
- Plans for communications manager position.
 - Potential to move forward in partnership with another college on campus to share the position

- CDCI needs to support more research on disability. Working on a new CDCI-CESS Faculty Fellowship to encourage faculty to work more closely with CDCI.
 - Matthew wondered about attracting more researchers given the limits to funding

12:45 – 1:15 Teaching updates and feedback (Winnie)

Note: We were ahead of schedule by 15 minutes, but decided to move forward in the agenda.

Winnie shared updates on CDCI teaching goals for this year. Council members were sent handout on Teaching Goals, Updates, and Plans before the meeting.

Winnie walked through the goals that were listed on the handout

- We don't have enrollment this year in our certificates
 - Cost is prohibitive
- Winnie spoke about the Include! Seminar
 - We partnered with the Building Effective Strategies for Teaching and Vermont State Independent Living Center to run a webinar for teachers on inclusion
 - 45 signed up and 20 attended
 - Lots of good questions were asked
 - We asked for feedback about how to update the curriculum
- Winnie walked us through the different class topics she is working on focused on disability, mental health, well-being, ableism, and bullying
 - Basic Digital Accessibility course will be run for staff this summer
 - Partnership between CDCI and UVM Office of Accessibility Services
- We want to support students with disabilities on campus
 - Jesse is the faculty advisor for the Disabled Students Union
 - They would like to form an identity center for students with disabilities and their allies

- Winnie clarified that Jesse could speak in more detail about how we are helping the college see how disability is part of the new UVM Strategic Plan
- CAC members should ask questions and give feedback on our progress.
 - Summer asked if there were people with lived experience ever speak in courses
 - Winnie shared that we have guest lecturers in our disability studies courses at least once a semester
 - She also focuses on personal narratives and encourages students to read memoirs, biographies, and blogs of people with lived experience
- Audrey asked if CDCI and CESS are still offering the full graduate certificate in disability studies and is there any plan to stop running it.
 - We are considered an underenrolled program with only 1 or 2 students enrolled and graduating per year.
 - There are pressures at the university to increase enrollment.
 - There is a worry that we may be told by the dean or provost might tell us we can't run the programs
 - We are focusing on other ways to reach students this year to help support potential future enrollment in our certificates
- Max asked if these courses were designed for people with disabilities? Who is the target audience for these classes?
 - The courses could be taken by anyone and are accessible, but the cost is prohibitive for people that aren't already enrolled at UVM.
 - Max shared that people may not be familiar with the term "ableism" and feels like it's good that we are including that as a topic for courses. He also shared that mental health is an important topic too because people can be dual diagnosed.
- Summer asked if we are incorporating self-advocacy in mental health

- Winnie shared that she partnered with the nursing school on a course which didn't run because there wasn't enough students enrolled that did focus somewhat on self-advocacy
 - Winnie would like to incorporate some of the curriculum from that course into her planned courses.
- Audrey asked if there was a way for the CAC to support CDCI in supporting the Disabled Student Union in creating an identity center.
 - Winnie said we should loop in Jesse on that because we aren't sure how to do that.
 - There are lots of hoops to jump through with the university and it really is up to the students to do that, we can't do it for them.
 - But maybe once it gets past that point, there may be opportunity for the CAC to get involved (fundraising, volunteering, guest speaking)
- Summer is interested in collaborating with CDCI and with students to talk about inclusive practices in small businesses
 - Winnie will reach out to learn more.
 - Kirsten asked how we recruit students to our programs
 - Marketing is challenging for the center
 - We don't have a lot of communications/market support from the college
 - The hope is that trainings for the public on these topics may generate interest in the academic programs
 - Kirsten shared that The Disability Identity Center, if it moves forward, may also create an audience for these courses
- Audrey asked about hosting a conference for digital accessibility that was once a plan at CDCI: if the audience is for current students and high school students, we could also be highlighting education opportunities.
 - OAS is interested in seeing if it's an opportunity

1:15 – 1:30 Break

1:30 – 2:15 New plans for disability studies at UVM (Winnie)

Note: We were still 15 minutes ahead of scheduled so the council decided to skip the break and continue

Winnie shared plans to create a Disability Studies minor at UVM. Council members were sent handout on Teaching Goals, Updates, and Plans.

The problem is we don't have people enrolling in the certificate for graduate studies. We want to reach more students, and the courses are very popular with undergraduates. So now we are exploring a disability studies minor.

- First, we made reviewed the federal requirements for UCEDDS like CDCI for teaching. We learned a minor will still meet all our federal requirements
- Winnie shared that she has met with professors across campus who are teaching courses that include disability topics, but aren't necessarily called disability courses that could be included in the minor
- CDCI is working on this with Audrey and Office of Accessibility Services.
- There are lots of other people at UVM that we need support from for the minor to be approved. We need to show that it is something that is wanted and needed.
- The planning has just begun. This is a very important time to share with the CAC and get your feedback.
- Kirsten suggested that we call out ableism specifically in our 6 skill areas
 - i. Summer seconded that idea
 - ii. Matthew shared in the chat a potential partnership or example for Winnie: <https://www.landmark.edu/about>
 - iii. A college in Putney that supports students with disabilities

2:15 – 2:45 Sharing CAC feedback with CDCI (Maureen)

- The CAC purpose is to give CDCI feedback so we can improve our work.
- Last CAC meeting we tried something new. CAC members shared what they want CDCI people to know.
- We shared your thoughts with everyone at the Center. See handout CAC Feedback for People at CDCI
- Maureen walked through the handout for the CAC members
- CAC agreed that it was okay for members of the public to share feedback
- **Questions:**
 - **What do you think about this idea?**
 - **How can we make this most helpful for CDCI and CAC?**

What do you want to share today?

- Crista shared some of her background as a mom of a person with down syndrome and that she recently attended a P2P class that wasn't accessible.
 - Importance of teaching how to navigate competing accessibility needs and creating structures that support accessibility in courses
- Summer is a mom, a person with a disability, and an employer
 - There is a divide between schools and educators that think they know what is best and family members who want to share what they know and lead from their own experiences
 - She wants to be able to share her broad and diverse experiences and is always looking for ways to do that.
- Matthew is person of color and a person with a disability and sees systemic ableism and racism everywhere in the culture of Vermont and feels strongly that being vulnerable and sharing our lived experiences can help push back against these systemic issues.
- **Maureen asked if people have had any success with getting people to understand what is important.**

- Summer shared that she has had some success and also been shut down.
- Learned a lot from All Brains Belong as both a patient and an advocate
- Currently paying tutors to homeschool because of the challenge in advocating with school teams
- Her son is excelling now, but is lonely/isolated
- Trying to find a hybrid schedule so her son can attend “specials” in school like art with the other students
- The district had her speak in front of the paraeducators to provide education about her experience in a matter of fact/educational way rather than a debate
- Universal design for learning is an important way for all students to feel included
- Important to create a communication bridge between families and schools to make sure everyones needs are met.
- Crista shared a link to a success story on the theme of inclusive and intersectional partnerships that support self-advocacy:
<https://www.therootsjc.org/sync>
- **Do people have online resources for where they get information in Vermont?**
 - Tuesday brain club from All Brain Belong
 - Resources from GMSA
 - Vermont Family Network has lots of resources
 - Padlets for organizing resources was shared by Maureen and got head nods
- **Conferences or trainings that are coming up that we should signal boost?**

- Jackie from I-Team is presenting:
<https://www.vthec.org/event/inclusive-teaching-and-design-complex-profiles/>
- **Next time, Maureen would like to hear about how we all use AI in our lives and work**

2:45 – 3:00 Process Today's Meeting

- Members of the public are welcome to make a brief statement.
- Matthew shared that he is interested in talking about AI and sees that that would be a good agenda topic for next time.
- He also shared that there is a positivity in moving forward, protecting ourselves and respecting ourselves, and hears people asking the right questions to get access to what we need and hears that there are challenges around budget and funding for some of our endeavors and:
- Matthew asked us to think about the question: How can we get members of the public to change their attitude towards people with disabilities?
- Audrey shared that they appreciated having the extra time and flexibility in the meeting given the content and pace of the agenda to let people have a lot of time to process in the moment.
- Decide what we should change for next meeting.
- Matthew motioned to end the meeting early and Lindsey seconded that motion and so did Summer.
- We ended the meeting early at 2:30.

At 3pm, the meeting will be over.

Thank you for your time. We appreciate you.