

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES

Assistive Technology Advisory Council (ATAC)
September 9, 2009

Attending Members:

Brenda Wickard, Chair
Elizabeth Flaherty, Vice Chair
Patricia Beattie
Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.
Matthew Deans
Tom Dowling
Ben Garrett
Kelly Lum, OTR/L
Joseph Wallace, Ph.D.
Joann Willis

Members Absent:

Peggy Fields, Ph.D., Council Secretary
John Eisenberg
Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L
George Scott Higdon
Senator Yvonne Miller
Jason Neal

Attending Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Staff:

Kathy Hayfield, Director
Technology and Employment Support Services (TESS), VATS Central
Bob Krollman, VATS Central
Barclay Shepard, VATS Central
Elin Glass, VATS Central
Emily McKeough Fallings, George Mason University (GMU)
VATS North Regional Site
Susan Asselin, Ed.D., Virginia Tech (VT), VATS Southwest Regional Site
Rick Barrows, Virginia Tech (VT), VATS Southwest Regional Site

Others Present: Rick Sizemore, Director
Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
James A. Rothrock, Commissioner
Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), (by Video Conferencing)

Call to Order and Introduction of New Member:

Brenda Wickard brought the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms Wickard recognized new Council member, Matthew Deans. All members of the Advisory Council and VATS staff introduced themselves.

Welcome:

Rick Sizemore, Director, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), welcomed everyone to WWRC and discussed assistive technology and how it could serve clients and consumers in need throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Sizemore provided a handout for the Council members. This “Blueprint” is an outline of the current goals of WWRC and is listed below

From the Assistive Technology Center of Excellence

	Item	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed
4.	Integrate AT within WWRC Vocational Rehabilitation Services <i>FY '10 I&E Initiative (Goals #2&3) – funded through DRS Grants and Special Programs</i>	Begin systematic integration of AT within WWRC Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), to include the following: ✓ Cross-divisional in-service training for VRS staff ✓ Participation of VRS staff in biannual Agency AT training (I&E Initiative) ✓ Integrate AT within Vocational Evaluation (I&E Initiative) ✓ Include WWRC Speech/Language Pathologists (SLPs) in initial vocational evaluation interviews for clients with severe communication disabilities ✓ Increased availability of AT devices and equipment, to be centrally housed and tracked through CAL/ACT Loaner Library	Maggie Clower Steve Kirby WWRC SLPs WWRC AT Specialists (in-service training) CAL/ACT Lab staff Kathy Trossi & Kathy Hayfield (consultants - I&E Project Co-Leads)	9/30/10	
5	Increase access to Shared Agency AT Resources and Expertise <i>FY '10 I&E Initiative (Goals #2&4) – funded through DRS Grants and Special Programs</i>	Increase access to shared Agency AT resources & expertise for VR clients, resulting in successful VR client employment outcomes and attainment of independent living rehabilitation goals by accomplishing the following: ✓ Showcase state-of-the art AT through biannual hands-on AT training for up to 60 Agency staff and targeted Agency stakeholders ✓ (Co)sponsor WWRC AT experts to attend continuing	Kelly Lum CAL/ACT Lab staff VATS (co-sponsor of biannual AT Training) Consultants Pat Sitter John Allen	9/30/10	

		<p>education opportunities & national conferences to stay current with skills, trends in the field, & promising practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue and enhance the shared CAL/ACT Loaner Library 	<p>Kathy Trossi & Kathy Hayfield (consultants - I&E Project Co-Leads)</p>		
6	<p>Develop and implement an effective and efficient means to provide quality AT services.</p>	<p>To develop and implement an effective and efficient means to provide quality AT services by WWRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create an outcomes core team to evaluate program performance through a critical review of current and “should” outcome processes ✓ Complete the ACHC accreditation process ✓ Provide evidence-based staff continuing education to improve evaluation competencies 	<p>AT Focus Group Greta Hedberg DME Team Kyle Congleton (OD&QA consultant)</p>	6/30/10	
7	<p>Collaborate with a Private Research & Development Business to Test and Refine Use of a Motorized Joystick (<i>NIH-funded Research Grant</i>)</p>	<p>Collaborate with Barron Associates, Inc. to implement Phase II of a research grant to test and refine use of a motorized joystick for computer access by persons with neurological disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Obtain HRRC approval ✓ Conduct research per approved protocols 	<p>Paula Martin Tim Bobsin Kelly Lum</p>	05/25/10	

A motion concerning Advisory Council action on this plan will be entertained and considered under New Business.

Approval of June 10, 2009, Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Elizabeth Flaherty, seconded by Mike Behrmann and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2009 Council meeting.

Public Comment:

It was suggested that public comment notices may be published using a different process. A discussion followed. Bob Krollman was chosen to follow up and consider adding information on VATS web site by posting Council member’s names and their mail box since they come from different entities. Mr. Krollman will explore the process for public comment which could be added to the Town Hall site with a limit for number of words or an invitation to attend the Council meetings. The process may need to be restricted and have set limits. Members could review written comments, not react, review comments with Chair and then bring comments to the Council meetings.

Tom Dowling stated the need to help people be more aware of VATS and suggested a one-page “VATS Fact Sheet” which can be used for Council members to take to community service meetings. Barclay Shepard will develop this and post on VATS web site. Members could report as to what has been done; how far the distribution reached out for each member and report on progress.

Public Comment

No public comments were offered at this meeting.

Assistive Technology (AT) Manager Report/Program Updates:

Kathy Hayfield reported that the model demonstration grants ended September 30, 2009, referred to as the VATNet grant. The new recycling grant, replacing VATNet grant, from Commonwealth Neurological Initiative (CNI) focuses on spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury.

In response to a Request For Proposals solicitation, proposals for the durable medical recycling programs are being reviewed September 10, 2009. \$600,000 will be used toward further development of Virginia’s reuse programs. VATS will inform the Advisory Council of who will receive the grants.

Barclay Shepard will be attending the National Assistive Technology (AT) Reuse Conference in Atlanta next week. Mr. Shepard will serve on a panel and discuss recycling sustainability. Interest has been expressed as to how VATS is working with the state vocational rehabilitation program and our use of the federal stimulus money. There were twelve states that received the recycling grants. Dr. Behrmann suggested to Mr. Shepard that he encourage conference attendees to look at regional or national share programs as it may take several reuse program component parts from different areas to make something come together.

VATS has been moved within DRS and is now under the Field Rehabilitation Services Division. The new division name is “Technology and Employment Support Services” and Ms. Hayfield will manage this new programmatic configuration. This will help integrate AT into the agency employment support services efforts. VATS plans to be more involved with direct service organizations such as employment service organizations, rehabilitation facilities and the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. VATS also has monthly meeting with the rehabilitation engineers and with the Center of Excellence AT Focus Group at WWRC. VATS will also examine how the program can be in involved in working with the school age population as well as the aging population.

Dr. Behrmann suggested VATS consider a small amount of budget sharing (MOU) with the Department of Education’s Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T-TAC) in order to work with the youth population. Contact persons could be John Eisenberg and

Pat Abrams. Brenda Wickard stated concern on how to let the schools know the importance of assistive technology. Every school division is different regarding childrens' rights with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and whether a child is permitted take AT equipment home with them. Bob Krollman will contact John Eisenberg and someone from the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) and ask them to speak and be part of a forum at the next Council meeting, December 9, 2009 on what positive impact VATS could have in their programs with collaboration.

Dr. Asselin, VATS SW Regional Site, suggested VATS consider attending the Department of Education's annual conference held in Roanoke during the month of June.

Ms. Hayfield reported that VATS will be hosting an "Assistive Technology Room" at the 2009 Annual Collaborations Conference scheduled to be held at Virginia Beach in October. VATS will have eight demonstration tables with different kinds of AT equipment. There will be 6 ½ hours of hands-on opportunities for conference participants to explore AT equipment, the Collaborations Conference usually has approximately 300 attendees.

Bob Krollman reported that the VATS Central Office was informed that a national group had available, at no cost, a basic communication device. VATS was the first state to respond to this offering and receive 80 devices to distribute. The communication device is basic and text only. The device could be used by patients in an emergency room for communicating basic needs such as to indicate the pain level of a patient. Mr. Shepard will take some devices to a speech clinic and collect data on its use. Some devices will be delivered to Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, Augusta Medical Center, the VATS Regional Sites, Rehabilitation Engineers and the Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance (T/TAC) programs.

Mr. Krollman will be coordinating Assistive Technology (AT) Training in November, which is held twice a year at WWRC. The 2 ½ days of AT Training will have attendees which include a number of DRS and WWRC staff as well as a range of community partners,

Old Business

Joey Wallace stated that at the last Council meeting he agreed to find ways to promote VATS through electronic awareness. Mike Behrmann provided assistance from his graphic designer at GMU to help set up a one-page format. A sample was shown to the Council on the over-head projector. Another sample was shown of a newsletter draft from WWRC's Center of Excellence. WWRC is also in the process of having an electronic mailing list available. VATS may get access to the WWRC mailing list. The list is limited to current referrals to WWRC.

VATS could include on their web site a current Newsletter and link to the NewWell Fund Newsletter and the WWRC Newsletter. Possible features would include information on

Advisory Council members, meetings and activities as well as reports on both new and ongoing initiatives, as well as the Advisory Council Meeting.

Bob Krollman will provide this electronic information, one page only, and have it available 3-4 weeks before the next Council meeting scheduled in December. Pat Beattie will submit, one time, on sending some information addressing the deaf/blind, audio captioning, and gather announcements and information from WWRC. This will be posted on the web site.

Mr. Krollman and Dr. Wallace will check on editorial policies which need to be met and the gathering of resources and announcements. People could subscribe to it on the web site. Dr. Wallace asked Council members to send him suggestion for a slogan to use, such as "AT Solutions" before the next meeting on December 9.

Smart House Presentation

Kelly Lum, WWRC, provided a presentation on the Smart House at WWRC which is a national model. The Smart House was a grant project, directed by Dr. Tony Gentry, which continues as a collaborative project between WWRC and Virginia Commonwealth University Occupational Therapy Department.

Council members and staff took a tour of the Smart House which is a cottage on the campus of WWRC. The clients of WWRC can live in the cottage and use the technology provided as part of a formative evaluation process. The clients also provide feedback to WWRC staff on their experience with the different types of devices.

New Business

Tom Dowling reported that there is a problem with the television captioning due to the converter box change to digital which took place in June. The captioning is not readable for the deaf community. Pat Beattie reported that there is a Bill called "Twenty-first Century Video and Accessibility Act" which will replace the present law. A new Act needs to be in place due to the new technology. Hopefully, this will help with viewing and reading the captioning.

The Bill will come to Congress this fall. A letter of support from the Council would help move this forward. Council members may find information on the web sites for the Collation of Organizations for Accessible Technology and on the Federal Communications Commission web site.

A motion was made by Tom Dowling, seconded by Pat Beattie, and passed for the Council members to write letters for endorsement of the Twenty-first Century Video and Accessibility Act to enhance close captioning. The Advisory Council will target representatives from Virginia delegation from both House and Senate.

Comments by James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, DRS

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, DRS, participated in the meeting by video conferencing and gave a brief update. There is a budget reduction taking place for DRS and WWRC. The budget adjustments should not have a major impact on VATS' Council plans.

He also related that on August 25, 2009, VATS merged with the Employment Support Services and came up with a new name, "Technology and Employment Support Services (TESS)". The purpose of this staffing pattern and organizational adjustment is to make AT an agency wide initiative.

Tom Dowling asked Commissioner Rothrock if there was data on the number of people with traumatic brain injury for the past several years, forecasting the survival rate and number of veterans returning with post traumatic stress. Commissioner Rothrock responded that he did not have the answer at this time; however, he will follow up with Mr. Dowling with the requested information.

A motion was made by Joey Wallace, seconded by Ben Garrett, and passed for the Council to endorse the WWRC Blueprint and ask for updates from WWRC during the coming year.

Next Scheduled Meeting

The next ATAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 9, 2009 (10:00am-2:30pm) at the DRS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA.

Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and passed for the Council meeting to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:20pm.