



University of New Mexico Staff Council 2024 Resolution

Name: Disability and Neurodiversity Advocate and Ally Trainings

Authors: Yadéeh Sawyer, Grade 13; Jennifer Chamberlin Payne, Grade 12; Bryn McCabe-Kelly, Precinct 12; Amber Trujillo McClure, Grade 14; Angela Beauchamp, Precinct 4; and constituents Veronica Mitchell, Michèl Poindexter, Natalie Rogers, Monte-Angel Richardson, Laura Obregon, Cree N. Myers, Naomi Sandweiss, Cynthia Perez-Chavez, and Hyunju Blemel.

Approved on September 17, 2024

- 1) WHEREAS, UNM's 2040 Strategic Planning Framework¹ Goal Three (Inclusive Excellence) includes an objective to focus on making the University inclusive, accessible to most and readily accommodating, strengthen the equity and inclusion infrastructure, focus on staff diversity and professional development to address injustices and inequities, and address concerns to actively evolve cultural literacy within our community; and
- 2) WHEREAS, UNM holds Dream Zone,² Green Zone,³ and Safe Zone⁴ trainings to educate UNM students, staff, and faculty about the unique needs of undocumented students, military service members, and LGBTQ+ populations, respectively. Attendees are trained to be allies and advocates for the target populations and informed on institutional rules, regulations, and policies, as well as the impact of personal experiences; and
- 3) WHEREAS, neurodiversity is not the same thing as a disability,⁵ each being independent and distinct, and with their own layered complexities. Some intersectionality exists, in the individual experiences, needs, and accommodations by staff at the University of New Mexico (UNM); and
- 4) WHEREAS, offering both disability and neurodiversity training aligns with our University's core values,⁶ highlights our dedication to embracing diversity in all its forms, and fosters an inclusive and supportive environment; and
- 5) WHEREAS, disabilities and neurodiversity can be visible and invisible. If not properly accommodated it may result in barriers for people in the workplace. Training is important to understand how the workplace can be hostile for those within the addressed populations in order to understand when and why accommodations are necessary:

- a. Each training will address how environments that prevent proper access and proper use, or that feel uncomfortable or difficult to navigate, can result in a low sense of belonging or self-efficacy, and what could be considered a hostile space; requesting accommodations in an already hostile space puts undo stress on an already vulnerable population suggesting the need for preemptive accommodations.⁷
 - b. The trainings will address that many preemptive accommodations made in the workplace benefit all employees and provide the space for people to feel comfortable requesting accommodations; and
- 6) WHEREAS, according to the 2022 Survey of Faculty with Disabilities sponsored by the UNM Division of Equity and Inclusion, one of the key findings was that "UNM has room for improvement in becoming culturally and infrastructurally welcoming to faculty with disabilities." The same can safely be assumed for UNM staff, and these trainings could be an opportunity to contribute belonging and retention of both talented staff and faculty⁸; and
- 7) WHEREAS, this is an opportunity for UNM to create an environment that is diverse and accessible, regardless of neurodiversity and/or disability, supported by a system that values everyone's strengths; and
- 8) WHEREAS, these two trainings are an opportunity for UNM to establish additional training programs that engage talented staff and create a diverse, inclusive, collaborative, caring environment that continues to focus on developing a united community. Understanding and respecting individual differences are fundamental to our community's academic and social fabric⁹; and
- 9) WHEREAS, according to statistics from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,¹⁰ up to 1 in 4 (27%) of adults in the United States have some type of a disability. With a local percentage of 30% (1 in 3; 513,659 as of 2021) in adults within New Mexico.¹¹ Since the COVID-19 Pandemic began, an increase of about 1.7 million working-age people report a disability.¹² Some of this increase may be related to a quarter of individuals with long COVID (approximately 4 million people)¹³ being found to have altered their employment status or working hours as a result of this being serious enough to interfere with work for many faculty, staff and students¹⁴; and
- 10) WHEREAS, "While some neurodiverse conditions fall under the umbrella of 'disability,' not all neurodiverse people qualify as having a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act; however, some may need accommodations at work or school in order to be successful"¹⁵; and
- 11) WHEREAS, "neurodiversity" is defined as a social concept¹⁶ and is the idea that people interact and experience the world in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits. Some of the diagnoses that are often considered under the umbrella of

neurodiversity include Attention-deficit/hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and some learning disabilities. Neurodiversity is not a diagnosis; ASD and ADHD are specific within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM5) diagnostic entities. Not all individuals with ASD and ADHD identify themselves as Neurodiverse. The increase in diagnosed ADHD is not because of percentage with conditions changing but due to clinicians having increased capacity to diagnose, as well as social media creating social connectedness allowing the general community to learn more from those with diagnosis and seeking for themselves¹⁷; and

12)WHEREAS, according to statistics from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,¹⁸ 2.21% of adults in the United States fall within the ASD as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders version 5 (DSM-5)¹⁹; and

13)WHEREAS, by introducing comprehensive trainings on Disabilities and Neurodiversity, we can enhance our collective awareness, sensitivity, and competence²⁰:

- a. Both of the proposed trainings have the potential to reduce workplace conflicts or misunderstandings since many common neurodiverse traits,²¹ or not easily identifiable disabilities,²² are frequently misinterpreted as, for example, rude or inattentive by neurotypicals or abled individuals²³.
- b. The proposed Disability training aims to deepen our understanding of physical, sensory, behavioral, and cognitive disabilities, promoting a culture of accessibility and accommodation. The focus on practical strategies to ensure our campus is welcoming and accessible to everyone, reflecting our commitment to equality and respect for individual needs, is a worthy cause.
- c. The Neurodiversity training will celebrate cognitive differences associated with ASD, ADHD, and other neurological conditions. By recognizing and valuing the diverse ways in which people think, learn, and interact, we can create a more inclusive academic environment that leverages ²⁴.

14)RESOLVED, That Staff Council requests that the university fund and support the development (or outsourcing) of training content, as well as sustainability of delivering two trainings: 1) Disability, and 2) Neurodiversity. Examples of possible next steps include:

- a. Determine the appropriate entities to develop the content of these trainings:
 - i. A potential campus-based partner is the UNM HSC Center for Development and Disability, as they already offer a brief (60 – 90 min) training on disability friendly business practices for people with autism and disabilities.

- ii. Training developed and presented should include individuals with lived experiences related to the content of each training. For the Neurodiversity training, involve persons who identify as neurodivergent, or other aspects included within the neurodiversity umbrella, and the same for the disability training.
 - iii. Training content should address:
 - 1. How to be an ally for people with these lived experiences.
 - 2. The intersectionality of disability, neurodiversity, and other identities.
 - 3. Contacts and pathways for support.
 - 4. Ensure a focus on students, faculty, and staff (vs. children and caregivers of children).
- b. Determine the appropriate entities to conduct the trainings.
 - i. If this includes partnerships with non-UNM entities, the partnership must ensure it is suitable for the culture and values of UNM. In other words, any external training can be tailored to fit our needs.
- c. Determine the appropriate entities to maintain the content and sustainable delivery of the trainings.
- d. Commit financial funds as needed to ensure sustainability of the trainings. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Routine review of the curriculum and content to ensure it is current.
 - ii. Standardize delivery when the training will be given by multiple presenters over time.
- e. Coordinate with Human Resources Employee and Organizational Development to offer scheduling via Learning Central.
- f. Ensure existing related trainings (e.g. Safe Zone, Green Zone, Dream Zone) have similar support and funding.
- g. Increase marketing efforts and communications surrounding the aforementioned trainings for consistent, continuous visibility, and importance of creating safe spaces.

Copies of this Resolution shall be sent to the UNM Board of Regents; Dr. Garnett Stokes, President; Teresa Costantinidis, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. James Holloway, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (to be shared with all UNM Deans); Dr. Douglas Ziedonis, Executive Vice President for HSC and CEO of the UNM Health System; Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion; Cinnamon Blair, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer; Kevin Stevenson, Vice President for Human Resources; Heather Jaramillo, Director of Equal Opportunity & ADA Coordinator; Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott, Vice President and Executive Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, HSC; Sidney Mason-Coon, University Policy Officer; Ellen Fisher, Vice President of Research; Dr. Patricia Finn, Dean of the UNM School of Medicine; Melissa Romine, HSC Senior Marketing & Communications Director; Anita Fernander, SOM Executive Diversity Officer; Amanda Butrum, Accessibility Resource Center Director; Lisa Kalberg, UNM HSC Center for Development and Disability; and The Daily Lobo.

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- ¹ https://opportunity.unm.edu/assets/docs/unm2040_strategic_framework_5_2022.pdf
 - ² <https://news.unm.edu/news/dream-zone-training>
 - ³ <https://vrc.unm.edu/programs/green-zone.html>
 - ⁴ <https://lgbtqrc.unm.edu/safe-zone-training.html>
 - ⁵ <https://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/features/what-is-neurodiversity>
 - ⁶ <https://opportunity.unm.edu/vision/index.html>
 - ⁷ <https://lhsmaggie.com/7395/opinion/hostile-architecture-isnt-preventing-homelessness/#:~:text=According%20to%20Medium%2C%20most%20of,or%20a%20lack%20of%20amenities;>
<https://fun4thedisabled.com/the-violence-of-hostile-accomodation/>
 - ⁸ <https://diverse.unm.edu/jeadi-action-plan/disability-is-diversity.html>
 - ⁹ <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D;>
<https://www.oecd.org/education/Global-competency-for-an-inclusive-world.pdf>
 - ¹⁰ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>
 - ¹¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/new-mexico.html>
 - ¹² <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/institute-working-papers/long-haulers-and-labor-market-outcomes>
 - ¹³ <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/institute-working-papers/long-haulers-and-labor-market-outcomes>
 - ¹⁴ <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2022/10/long-covid-appears-to-have-led-to-a-surge-of-the-disabled-in-the-workplace/>
 - ¹⁵ <https://iei.ncsu.edu/2023/05/22/the-employment-of-persons-with-a-disability-and-or-neurodiversity/#:~:text=While%20some%20neurodiverse%20conditions%20fall,in%20order%20to%20be%20successful>
 - ¹⁶ <https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/what-is-neurodiversity>
 - ¹⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9616454/>
 - ¹⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/features/adults-living-with-autism-spectrum-disorder.html>
 - ¹⁹ <https://www.apa.org/topics/autism-spectrum-disorder;>
[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/ss/ss7202a1.htm;](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/ss/ss7202a1.htm)
[https://www.apa.org/members/content/neurodiversity;](https://www.apa.org/members/content/neurodiversity) <https://iei.ncsu.edu/2023/05/22/the-employment-of-persons-with-a-disability-and-or-neurodiversity/#:~:text=While%20some%20neurodiverse%20conditions%20fall,in%20order%20to%20be%20successful>
 - ²⁰ [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10806093/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10806093/)
[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10024274/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10024274/)
[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7732033/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7732033/)
 - ²¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4-ways-employers-can-combat-stigmas-surrounding-neurodiversity-zjeqe/>
 - ²² <https://mediate.com/workplace-disability-conflict-management/>
 - ²³ <https://www.thearticulateautistic.com/8-things-autistic-people-do-that-youre-misreading-as-a-neurotypical/>
 - ²⁴ <https://www.emerald.com/insight/2040-7149.htm>