**Members Present:**

Tommy Carnline, Pranab Choudhury, Lanor Curole, David Gallegos, Jean Hansen (ex officio), Ronald Key, Bob Lobos, Mark Martin (ex officio), Pat Mascarella, Laura Meaux, Libby Murphy, Laura Nata, Derek White and Kay Rone Wilson

**Members Absent:**

Pam Allen, Cassidy Byles, Karla Cummings, Larry Dale, Gayla Guidry, and Billie Ruth Kvaternik

**Non-member Staff Present:** Paige Kelly (Liaison), Rosemary Yesso

**Guests:** Lynn Ballard, Sharon Delvisco, Lauren Becnel and Michael Myell

**Call to Order**

LRC Chairperson Derek White called the meeting to order Thursday, October 24, at 12:00 p.m. A quorum was achieved and maintained through recess.

Motion to accept July minutes with revision to date was made by Bob Lobos and seconded by Libby Murphy. July minutes were accepted unanimously.

**Liaison Report**

Liaison reported that the LRC is composed of 25 gubernatorial appointments, including the LRS Director and VR Counselor who serve as non-voting members. The actual number of council members at this time is 20, 5 vacancies, one application is pending approval. Need to fill the CRP representative position, one business and labor position and three members from “a cross section of individual with a disability or representative of an individual with a disability who has difficult representing themselves.” Liaison will check on what is holding up dissemination of reimbursement checks. Recently it has taken up to 2.5 months.

**LRS Director’s Report**

LRS Director, Mark Martin addressed the Council. He responded to previous concerns and recent questions posed by members. The VR Manual is almost ready for the website. The test version has worked and full roll out should happen soon.

Martin reporting on production and staff said the agency is doing more with less. As an example, each of the Lafayette counselors achieved 100% production goal. He received permission to hire 13 to 15 key positions across the state. LRS currently has 101 caseloads and about 95 counselors and is in process of filing those vacancies. He also has a new position established at state office to engage national business with the National Employment Network (NET) and major companies such as Walgreen's, Walmart, etc. The position is also expected to link more with LWC and economic/business forecasting. A Randolph Sheppard program specialist specifically tied to going out, developing new locations.

A major target with LRS is transition and third party arrangements are being used to supplement that effort. One third party is with Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) to provide services are for post-secondary educational training in self-employment for 10-15 transitional students in Bossier Parish. The program will provide dual enrollment opportunities; staff positions will include a director of job placement and a job coach. BPCC put up $62,000 and LRS draw down a match for the total contract of $288,231. Another third party is with Jefferson Parish, it's a total contract of $136,855 to provide 15 individuals with disabilities and mental illness vocational rehabilitation services, job placement benefits counseling and vocational counseling using motivational interviewing. They will work with an agent to develop a complete wellness recovery plan.

Martin addressed the Employment Model Initiative and the changes made changing the agency to an employment driven agency. His intention is that counselors start at the earliest interactions with consumers talking about employment goals, not services. In the first quarter, our target is 50% of closures in our top demand occupations annually. The actual in 2011 was 69%.

LRS gets 1% of the second injury program total budget to put people through the referral process. The $460,000, draws down almost $2 million and impacts people in every parish. Consideration was given to request an increase to 2% but determination was made to not pursue that at this time.

Laura Nata inquired about hiring bilingual staff arguing it would save money and make things easier. Martin agreed and Nata and David Gallegos offered to connect bilingual individuals and organizations who could possibly serve as translators for LRS.

**Chairperson’s Report**

Derek White, LRC Chair addressed getting the agenda, minutes out earlier as well as the data from LRS to members earlier for their review.

White requested an update from staff on the VR manual’s posting on the website. The IT department has completed the electronic version of the manual and are ensuring its accessibility. As soon as the test is complete it should go live.

White announced the resignation of David Gallegos as Vice-chairperson. He will stay on as a member the representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP). To take his place as Vice-Chair, White appointed Libby Murphy. Murphy will also be serving as the lead member for Public Policy issues.

White presented the following Public Policy action plan recommended by the Executive Committee to inform policy makers of the impact of the VR program and its funding.

1. Development of a Fact Sheet for VR

2. Letter to Division of Administration Commissioner and the Governor’s Chief of Staff

3. Letters to important House and Senate Committees.

4. Opportunities for members to meet with legislators in their districts and in Baton Rouge.

The recommendation was approved by unanimous consent.

The recommendation as made to continue to meet and have members stay in the same hotel, that is accessible and easy to get to (such as immediately off the interstate) and cost-competitive.

The recommendation was approved by unanimous consent.

**Membership**

Bob Lobos is leading the ad hoc membership committee. The number of voting council members at this time is 18. There are 5 vacancies in the following areas: the CRP representative, one business and labor representative, three members with a disability or disability representative. Currently, there is one application from a disability representative pending approval. Bob will reach out to an individual from business to explore their interest in applying.

**Orientation Plan**

The recommendation was made to approve the ongoing orientation plan outlined below.

The recommendation was approved by unanimous consent.

In-meeting presentations.

**July**

* Getting to Know Vocational Rehabilitation, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
* Basics for SRCs, Mandate, Parliamentary Procedure, etc.

**October**

* The Basics of Vocational Rehabilitation: Mandate, Order of Selection, Service Process (From Referral to Closure)
* Association of People in Support of Employment First (APSE) and Work Pay$

**January 2014**

* State VR Plan Development Process
* Overview of Ticket to Work law

**April 2014**

* Supporting Workers with the Most Significant Disabilities

Between meeting trainings <http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/resourcesNSRCF.html>

**September**

* [State Plan Development](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/State%20Plan%20Devleopment.ppt)
[Effective State Goals and Priorities](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/Effective%20State%20Goals%20and%20Priorities.ppt)

**December**

* [Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/Comprehensive%20Statewide%20Needs%20Assessment.ppt)

**March**

* [VR Program Financial Management](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/VR%20Program%20Financial%20Management.ppt)
* [SRC Roles and Responsibilities](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/SRC%20Roles%20and%20Responsibilities.ppt)

**June**

* [Participation in Policy Development](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/Participation%20in%20Policy%20Development.ppt)
* [SRC Membership Issues](http://www.gwntap.org/conferences/%20%20../NTAPDocuments/2013NSRCF/ResourcesNSRCF/SRC%20Membership%20Issues.ppt)

**Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report**

David Gallegos, the CAP representative, indicated issues for which he is getting calls.

* order of selection
* communication from rehabilitation counselors to consumers. This appears to be improving
* consumers requesting more information from counselors on choosing vendors

Gallegos requested LRS send more referrals for benefits planning to both the Advocacy Center and Human Development Center (depending on the consumer’s location in the state).

Gallegos also discussed that the CAP will be tracking 246 residents in group homes, statewide, to see if there are barriers to the VR program. These are people who have stated that they really want to end their participation in sheltered workshops. These persons may or may not have applied for LRS services and may not know if they will meet the order of selection. LRS may see a new consumer statewide from this group.

Gallegos announced that the Advocacy Center will be advocating that the governor issue an executive order to hire people with disabilities within state government.

**Member Reports**

Members representing mandated agencies/programs briefly described their respective programs and initiatives around employment.

**Standing Committee Meetings**

Committees met to perform regular business and discuss revisions to data reports and Plan.

**Presentation of History and Mandate of VR and LRS**

Eddie Givens presented on the topic and provided a new video LRS produced for its new consumers.

**Consumer Story**

LRC heard personal stories from two former consumers of LRS, Lauren Becnel, and Michael Mizell.

**Public Forum**

There were no attendees for the public forum.

**Recess**

Meeting recessed at Thursday, October 24, at 6:00 p.m.

**Call to Order**

Chairperson White called the meeting to order Friday, October, at 8:00 a.m. A quorum was achieved and maintained through adjournment.

**Presentation of Louisiana APSE, Employment First, and Work Pay$ Coaition**

Sue Killiam, Employment Initiatives Coordinator at the LSU Health Sciences Center Human Development Center discussed what APSE is and the benefits of membership. She also discussed the Employment First movement. David Gallegos introduced the Work Pay$ Coalition to the LRC and invited members to participate in networking activities.

**Standing Committee Meetings (Continued)**

Committees were afforded additional time to complete their tasks as there time was limited on Thursday when the meeting ran behind schedule.

**Committee Reports**

The Eligibility and Planning Committee, Employment Committee, and Outreach Committee presented their recommendations.

Eligibility and Planning Committee recommendations:

1. Request data from LRS on transition students regarding the number of referrals determined eligible, by age and an analysis of closures by type

2. Replace Action Plan #16 and #17 with “Provide input to LRS to enhance services and outcomes for transition students.”

Recommendations were approved by unanimous consent.

Employment Committee recommendations:

1. Request LRS to research individual cases identified as “closed other” for the reasons each was so identified.

2. Request LRS to research the expenditures related to the individuals who had been in “closed other.”

3. Request LRS develop/implement an ongoing process of closing unsuccessful cases.

4. Request LRS provide benefits planning and work incentives training for rehabilitation counselors for the purpose of addressing the issues with consumers earlier.

5. Request LRS research the number and quality of job placement and trial work assessments of people w/ significant and multiple disabilities (e.g. developmental disabilities, severe mental illness, and traumatic brain injury) and the monitoring/enforcement of the mandated 40 hour training. Consider revising standards for monitoring of training and creating a credentialing process for employment support specialists.

6. Request LRS to provide information related to LRC Action Plan Activity #7 on accomplishments of the Employment Model Initiative and push out more to counselors statewide.

7. Transfer Action Plan #21 from Employment Committee to Outreach Committee and revise to read, “Develop and disseminate public service announcements (PSA), targeting small to mid-sized businesses and featuring individuals with disabilities confronting attitudes about disability, inclusion and employment.

8. Remove Action Plan #18 and #19.

Recommendations were approved by unanimous consent.

Outreach Committee Recommendations:

1. Request Mark to introduce Libby Murphy, vice-chair, to Tom Guarisco, public relations person with LWC for the purpose developing PSAs. Draft and disseminate a letter for the PSA to disability‑related organizations and policy makers.

2. Requests to LRS/LWC for website:

1. Increase accessibility through the addition of accessibility icons, increase color contrast, increased font size, and the addition of a language translation tool.
2. Addition of the History of LRS.
3. Addition of the new LRS consumer orientation video.
4. Addition of resource links.

Other Action Plan recommendations by the White:

1. Remove Action Plan #2, #4, #8, #9. These items may be picked up again by next year’s action plan.

Recommendation was approved by unanimous consent.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**Adjourn**

White adjourned the meeting Friday, October 25th, at 12:30 p.m.