

**Approved Minutes**  
**Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting**  
**March 10, 2011**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Matthew Deans, Vice Chair; Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Secretary; Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.; Clayton Bowen; Melanie Brunson, Esq.; Tom Dowling; John Eisenberg; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; Kelly Lum, OTR/L; Shawn Utt; Joseph Wallace, Ph.D.; Brenda Wickard

**Members Absent:** George Scott Higdon; William Massey; Joann Willis

**Presenters & Guests:**

Robert Gray, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)  
James Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)  
Erica Lovelace, Education Services, DRS

**Staff Present:**

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Field Rehabilitation Services, DRS  
Robert Krollman, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Central Office  
Barclay Shepard, VATS Central Office  
Elin Glass, VATS Central Office  
Emily McKeough Fallings, VATS-North Regional Site - George Mason University  
Alisa Louther, VATS-North Regional Site - George Mason University

**Staff Present by Telephone Conference:**

Joann Ervin, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University  
Susan Asselin, Ph.D., VATS Southwest Regional Site - Virginia Tech  
Robert (Rick) Barrow, VATS Southwest Regional Site - Virginia Tech  
Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (FREE)

**Staff Absent:**

Janice Austin, VATS Central Office  
David Netherton, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University  
Sharon Davis, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University

**Call to Order:**

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of 12/8/10 Minutes:**

***Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Council Secretary, asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes for the last quarterly meeting. The 12/8/10 ATAC Meeting Minutes, as submitted, stand approved.***

**Public Comment:** No public comments were offered.

**Old Business:**

**Project Catalyst:**

Michael Behrmann, Ed.D., GMU, gave a report on Project Catalyst. Project Catalyst is the new Tech Act Technical Assistance Project and Dr. Behrmann is highly involved in this project. A proposal was submitted to RESNA to work in an advisory capacity with the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) to develop training webinars. GMU will be providing links for webinars that are being planned for the next three years. The webinars are for professional development. The first webinar will held March 23, 2011 and all webinars will be archived.

**Proposed 2011 Webinars**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Proposed Date</b>	<b>GMU</b>	<b>ATIA</b>
<b>March</b>	Wednesday, March 23 @ 2-3:30 PM Eastern		New Products from ATIA Orlando
<b>April</b>	Thursday, April 14 @ 12:30-2 PM Eastern	AIM (Overview)	
<b>April</b>	Wednesday, April 20 @ 2-3:30 PM Eastern		AIM (Text Readers)
<b>May</b>	Thursday, May 19 @ 12:30-2 PM Eastern	Accessibility of Mobile Technology	
<b>May</b>	Wednesday, May 25 @ 2-3:30 PM Eastern		Demo: JAWS

<b>June</b>	Thursday, June 16 @ 12:30-2 PM Eastern	Evidence Based Practice: AT in the core curriculum	
<b>June</b>	Wednesday, June 22 @ 2-3:30 PM Eastern		Demo: Kurzweil/Read and Write Gold
<b>July</b>			
<b>August</b>			
<b>September</b>	Thursday, Sept. 15 @ 12:30-2 PM Eastern	Data Collection (Overview)	
<b>September</b>	Wednesday, September 21 @ 2-3:30 PM Eastern		Data Collection (Products)

ATIA and GMU met to discuss webinar topics and schedule through September 2011 as well as long term themes for upcoming years.

- New Products: ATIA will provide a “what’s new” webinar each February to discuss new products and trends in the field, based on the ATIA conference held in January.
- GMU and ATIA will collaborate on two webinars each year. GMU will provide a more theoretical overview including a discussion of best practice and research, while ATIA will provide an overview of specific technology products as well as product comparisons related to the specific topic.
- GMU and ATIA will each provide two additional webinars yearly. GMU would like to present a reoccurring session on evidence based practice. Possible topics include AT in the core curriculum, augmentative communication, and switch access. In 2011, ATIA plans to conduct demonstration sessions on specific tools indentified from the listening tours as in need of additional training.

#### 2011 Joint Topics

- AIM: Accessible Instructional Materials. GMU will provide a very brief overview of AIM and AIM legislation. The majority of the session will discuss the selection of accessible formats for individuals with disabilities based on user needs and features of reading tools. The tools include text reader software and hardware devices that enable reading of textbooks, tradebooks, and other print materials in specialized ebook formats (i.e. DAISY, large print, audio). ATIA will

present a follow-up webinar that includes a demonstration of specific tools mentioned in the GMU session as well as product comparisons.

- Data Collection: GMU will discuss the importance of collecting data in evaluating the effectiveness of assistive technology implementation for both children and adults. ATIA will present a follow-up webinar that includes a demonstration of specific tools mentioned in the GMU session as well as product comparisons. As with the research to practice theme, we believe data collection is a topic that can be repeated based on specific areas of interest such as within the core curriculum, augmentative communication, autism, early childhood, etc.

### **Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment ( FREE):**

Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, FREE, provided an update. The Richmond Chapter of FREE is up and running as of December. The South Hampton Roads (SHR) Chapter is moving forward in the pre-opening stage and hoping for launch in late spring or early summer.

FREE is developing a great relationship with the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Virginia (SCIAVA). Ms. Schaible and Barclay Shepard presented at the SCIAVA's monthly meeting in January. The featured news article for the SCAVA Newsletter (March issue) was distributed at the Council meeting.

Ms. Schaible and the president of the SHR Chapter were interviewed by Vanessa Coria, WVEC, and the segment was aired on the news on February 17, 2011. Ms. Schaible was interviewed on a local show called Dialogue that airs on Sunday at noon. FREE and the Virginia Reuse Network's "logo" will have a quarter-page advertisement in the Brain Injury Association of America's quarterly newsletter in both the spring and fall issues.

### **New Business**

#### **AT Director's Update:**

**Kathy Hayfield, Director, FRS, reported that Council members had recently received the VATS Update from Bob Krollman. The VATS Annual Report was submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. VATS served nearly 5,000 Virginians with disabilities last year and will focus on data and**

will be able to include more data through our assistive technology (AT) equipment which is located at WWRC.

Barclay Shepard, VATS, has been appointed to the National Task Force on AT Reuse. Robert Krollman and Barclay Shepard recently presented for the Department of Aging and VATS plans to focus more on the aging population.

Ms. Hayfield, as the new Director of Field Rehabilitative Services, discussed how her change in position may affect VATS. She acknowledged the “cradle to grave” requirement of the AT Act and the importance of assuring that VATS focus on access and acquisition of AT in the areas of education, employment and community living. She also commented on the benefits to VATS in being connected to the FRS program of DRS, especially as it relates to maximizing limited resources of the Commonwealth on behalf of consumers with disabilities. Ms. Hayfield encouraged the Council to regularly provide input to VATS regarding its activities related to meeting the requirements of the AT Act and the needs of people with disabilities.

#### **NewWell Fund:**

Joseph Wallace, Ph.D., Director, NewWell Fund, reported on funding and plans to re-establish the Consumer Service Fund in the fall of 2012. The budget amendment put forward this session of the General Assembly was not approved. The NewWell Fund submitted a grant proposal for \$50,000 to the Richmond Eye and Ear Foundation to initiate a mini consumer service fund in the Richmond area.

The NewWell Fund completed a financial projection. As a result of the financial projection; it appears that if the NewWell Fund continues to do business as usual, the NewWell Fund will have a stable funding base through 2021.

In early March, Dr. Wallace provided a presentation at the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Muscular Sclerosis Society along with representatives from FREE and WWRC.

#### **Presentation: Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA):**

Robert Grey, Disability Rights Advocate, VOPA, gave a report and provided a handout with information about VOPA. VOPA is one of six independent agencies which means they operate from a governing Board. They work on objectives each year. Mr. Grey is the AT contact

person and other objectives are handled by the skill-set of other staff members. VOPA's annual performance reports are posted on their website.

It was decided to review relevant reports and materials from VOPA and invite VOPA staff to the next Council meeting to discuss mutual goals and collaborative opportunities.

### **Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC):**

Kelly Lum, WWRC, gave an update on WWRC activities. They plan to present at the Virginia Transition Forum on occupational therapy and driving. They have purchased a large full-sized van with control devices and hired two AT Specialists in the field to connect with the rehabilitation engineers.

Ms. Lum provided a demonstration of several pieces of AT Equipment purchased as part of the VATS Equipment Loan Program.

### **Commissioner's Update:**

James Rothrock, Commissioner, DRS, provided an update. The Disability Commission will do a study on "AT Follows the Student" and it will be addressed at next session of the General Assembly in January. As the Interim Commissioner for the Department of Aging, DRS is focusing on the aging population. Commissioner Rothrock gave examples of how AT has a direct application for keeping people employed in their profession, such as those individuals working as self-employed on their farm or in the logging industry.

Commissioner Rothrock stated that as of March 1, 2011, the "Order of Selection" became effective which impacts on how DRS will serve clients; serving first -those clients who are already on the waiting list, and next - serving clients with the most significant needs. As resources allow, DRS will open categories.

### **VATS Regional Sites:**

All three of VATS Regional Sites reported on regional site activities in the preceding quarter.

### **Advisory Council Members Updates:**

Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L, reported that in January he presented at the AT Rehabilitation Society in the Netherlands on technology for cognition; and during the next year, Dr. Gentry will be developing and presenting face-to-face technology for cognition and on-line modules.

Dr. Gentry is also working with McGuire's Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital in Richmond to help set up an AT Equipment Lab. The VA Hospital has a new Polytrauma Unit and will have a lab to demonstrate and lend out AT equipment. Dr. Gentry emphasized that there is a need for treatment for individuals who have brain injury and for those who have had amputations.

Melanie Brunson reported on the need to find ways to maximize the "vision" importance for individuals who are blind or vision impaired. There is a need to receive training for equipment used by individuals and make the most out of opportunities for trainings that are available. We need to get the word out about the trainings, as well as, awareness about equipment that can be borrowed.

The American Federation for the Blind is looking at issues regarding Medicare and Medicaid coverage and they are trying to increase the need for accessible prescription drug labels.

**Next ATAC Meeting:**

The next ATAC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2011 (10:00am-02:30pm), at the DRS Central Office in Richmond.

**Adjournment:**

***A motion was made by Dr. Wallace to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Brenda Wickard and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:45pm***