

## **Critical Disability Studies and Universal Design for Learning, Phase II: Develop and Operationalize Best Practices**

### **Rationale for workshop**

On small liberal arts college campuses across the country, faculty and staff members unfamiliar with Critical Disability Studies (CDST) or with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are trying to accommodate their students with disabilities. Supported by a 2014-2015 AALAC grant, our faculty collective has been actively developing knowledge and praxis of CDST and UDL. We now seek to take our work to a new level, operationalizing our knowledge in venues that would reach faculty and staff at our home institutions and at institutions across the country. This AALAC grant would support a two-day workshop during which we would develop “best practices” to achieve two linked goals:

- 1) more robust integration of CDST content into our individual courses and across curricula at our home institutions.
- 2) inclusive and effective means of disseminating our research and pedagogical work at our institutions and beyond.

This workshop would benefit us immediately and also eventually benefit our colleagues at home and across the nation.

In 2014, our cross-disciplinary collective of liberal arts faculty received an AALAC grant for an ongoing faculty development workshop in CDST and UDL pedagogical and curricular practices. Since the grant ended, we have continued holding regular videoconferences, and our collective has expanded in members and AALAC institutions represented. We increasingly learned from many of the Disability Services staff at our institutions, who became participants in our meetings. We have presented work on critical disability studies at meetings of our professional organizations and worked to build Universal Design for Learning principles into our courses. But we now find ourselves returning frequently to these questions: how can we more effectively share what we have learned from each other with faculty, staff, and students at our own institutions? And how can we infuse the field of CDST with knowledge and experiences anchored to elite residential liberal arts colleges and undergraduate education?

With AALAC funding support, we would gather for a workshop in Albuquerque, New Mexico July 14-15, 2018, just prior to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) conference. AHEAD is the leading professional organization for work in disability access and inclusion in higher education; holding the workshop at this site will allow more faculty and staff colleagues to join our collective, supported by funding from their own institutions for their participation in the AHEAD conference. AHEAD administrators have offered us free use of a meeting room space. At the two-day workshop (see Appendix A for schedule), we would develop best practices for future work in our individual institutions and then imagine how we might share our collective work, including traditional formats (white papers, best practices guidebooks, and journal articles) but also non-traditional formats (podcasts, blogs, online journals, wikis, videos). Publications must be grounded in CDST (interdisciplinary field that explores disability experiences, representations, and meanings within social, political, cultural, and historical

contexts) and follow principles of UDL, which emphasize the following guidelines: provide multiple means of presentation, recall, and evaluation; support an expansive learner community; and facilitate full access to information. We view the workshop as a dynamic opportunity to further develop the pioneering work we are doing at our AALAC-affiliated institutions and to take our learning, research, and teaching to a higher level.

In anticipation of the in-person meeting in Albuquerque, we would continue to meet via videoconference 1-4 times per semester during the 2017-2018 academic year. This will continue to be hosted by Middlebury College via Zoom. We will assess project outcomes by surveying participants of our AHEAD meeting and also by the success of our publication efforts.

### **Workshop Leaders/Organizers**

- Kimberly Drake, **Workshop Liaison** (Writing Program, Scripps College, [kdrake@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:kdrake@scrippscollege.edu))  
*Scripps College has agreed to administer this grant.*
- Susan Burch (American Studies, Middlebury College, [sburch@middlebury.edu](mailto:sburch@middlebury.edu)). [Prof. Burch has received \$1000 additional support from the Dean of Faculty Development to support this project]  
*Middlebury College will host the regular video-conferences across Academic Year 2017-2018.*
- Elizabeth Hamilton (German, Oberlin College, [elizabeth.hamilton@oberlin.edu](mailto:elizabeth.hamilton@oberlin.edu))