

# Campus Climate and Disability

Petra Kuppers, English Language and Literature/Women's Studies

Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2015



## Project Overview

In this half-day event, a range of people – faculty, graduate students, and staff – from across the university came together to exchange ideas and experiences about what it means to be a disabled professional and to set up agendas for future developments. The group was joined by professor Carrie Sandahl from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The first half of the day provided opportunities for informal networking and dialogue among disabled graduate students, staff, and faculty, as well as involved allies.

The second half of the day provided participants an opportunity to witness a roundtable discussion after Dr. Sandahl's keynote address, *Professing Disability Studies: Academia/Activism/Artist/Life Reflections*. Shorter comments were provided by U-M staff, graduate students, and alumni.

## Key Insights / New Questions

The importance of testimony - finding a space where we can witness each others' struggles, even if we cannot find immediate answers to huge (and small) structural issues

The importance of solidarity - listening to each other can help us deal with the loneliness that is part of minority living in academia

The importance of recognition - even if our differences are diverse, we understand that there is communality and coherence in our respective struggles



## Participants

### Keynote Speaker

**Carrie Sandahl**

Associate Professor

Disability and Human Development

University of Illinois at Chicago

Head of the Program on Disability Art, Culture, and Humanities

### Invited guests

**Jina Kim**

PhD candidate, English/Women's Studies

**Jane Berliss-Vincent**

Assistive Technology Manager

**Lloyd Shelton**

MSW Candidate, Community Organization

**Jasmine Pawlicki**

recent Michigan graduate, Peer Information Counselor, University of Michigan Library

## Next Steps

- Cultivate each other as a resource.
- Work through appropriate responses to diversity initiatives: as a very small minority in academia, we are too easily overloaded with service, and we are spread much too thin to work on all of them. How can we help cultivate informed allydom?
- Find companionship - let's not always be "the only one in the room."

