Cynthia Overton

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Strong leader experienced in project management, diversity and inclusion, accessible technology, program implementation, and evaluation. Effective collaborator with executives and staff to implement initiatives designed to transform how staff engage with their work and each other. Strategic thinker that leverages diverse skills and experiences to achieve organizational goals. Advisor to start-ups on accessible technology for people with disabilities and aging populations. Experienced in national and international speaking on technology and diversity.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

M.S. and **Ph.D.**, Learning Technologies; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI *(Dissertation explored how college students with disabilities use technology to engage with their environments.)*

M.P.S., Public Relations/Corporate Communications; Georgetown University, Washington, DC

B.A., English; Hampton University, Hampton, VA

Assistive Technology Applications Certificate, California State University, Northridge Center on Disabilities, Virtual Program

Teaching Certification, Elementary Education; Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Academy Training, Navigating the Disability Employment Process, Orlando, FL

Education Policy Fellowship Program, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC

United States Marines Educators Training Workshop, Parris Island, SC

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

American Institutes for Research (AIR), Washington, DC, 8/8/05-Present, Principal Researcher
AIR is a professional services firm that conducts and applies the best behavioral and social science research and evaluation to improve people's lives, with a special emphasis on the disadvantaged.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Inclusion Clearinghouse, https://inclusionclearinghouse.org/, Founder, 2017-Present
Online platform that contains curated resources that promote diversity and inclusion in the technology industry. Collection is designed for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders, practicing and aspiring technology professionals, entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, and investors to help inform decisions and practices.

AIR Diversity and Inclusion Council, Council Member, 2015-Present
- Appointed by AIR president and CEO to serve as a member of AIR's Diversity and Inclusion Council, AIR's body charged with fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace
- Co-led the development of AIR's first corporate-wide diversity and inclusion training
- Co-developed strategic plan to roll-out diversity and inclusion training to all AIR staff
- Evaluated ERG business plans presented to the Council for approval
- Represented AIR in *Diversity Careers* as a feature profile in the article, "Tech Pros With Disabilities Find Careers They Love"

Access AIR (employee resource group focused on disability), Chair, 2015-Present
- Led the development of the Access AIR business plan and charter that aims to promote access and inclusion for staff with disabilities and the clients that our organization serves
- Provided guidance to HR on implementing recruitment strategies that are responsive to functional differences of candidates with disabilities
- Collaborated with HR to develop and implement strategies that invite staff to self-identify as having a disability as required for AIR by Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Collaborated with the Office of the President and CEO to identify and implement strategies to make all-staff meetings more accessible to staff with disabilities
- Organized and facilitated corporate-wide event on the Americans with Disabilities Act featuring Justice Richard Bernstein, Michigan's first blind supreme court justice
- Conceived of and designed AIR's annual "Access Extravaganza," an exhibit fair to raise awareness of AIR services that support inclusion among staff and clients with disabilities
- Developed and executed strategic plan to market all Access AIR-sponsored events
- Designed and collaborated with AIR publications to produce event publicity materials

BLAAC Diaspora Network (employee resource group focused on those who identify as Black, Latino, African American, African, or Caribbean), Chair, 2013-2015
- Led the development of the BLAAC Diaspora Network business plan and charter that aims to promote inclusion for staff members of African and Latino descent
- Partnered with HR to develop and implement recruitment strategies to attract a workforce more inclusive of African Americans
- Coordinated AIR-wide guided discussion on implicit bias
- Organized and moderated AIR-wide panel event on the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Supported junior staff to facilitate AIR-wide talk on historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) featuring Dr. Ivory Toldson of the White House HBCU initiative
- Developed and executed strategic plan to market all BLAAC Diaspora Network events

AIR Diversity Advisory Committee, Committee Member, 2009-2014
- Appointed by AIR president and CEO to serve on AIR's Diversity Advisory Committee, AIR's body charged with advising executive leadership on diversity initiatives
- Co-developed AIR's corporate-wide diversity statement
- Co-authored the Diversity Advisory Committee charter
- Led subcommittee to explore the need for a diversity and inclusion (D&I) director at the request of AIR's president and CEO by coordinating assignments, gathering data, and drafting report, resulting in AIR's first D&I director in 2012
- Appointed by AIR's senior vice president of human resources to serve on the AIR D&I director interview panel
- Coordinated AIR-wide learning event with Ryan Smith to discuss diversity in the workplace at the recommendation of an AIR board member
- Co-facilitated diversity recruiting events for Holmes Scholars and McNair Scholars

American Institutes for Research Staff Council, Chair, 2008-2009
- Led group of corporate-wide elected staff to serve as the voice of colleagues to executive leadership
- Co-chaired diversity sub-committee, which convened diversity brown bag discussions and authored report that inspired the president and CEO to develop AIR's corporate-wide Diversity Advisory Committee in 2009
- Designed and implemented a two day Staff Council leadership retreat to create an inclusive culture for staff from offices across the country

Co-Project Director, Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC), 2011-Present
Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- *Project leadership:* Provide strategic leadership and operational oversight to coordinate knowledge translation activities for 34 research organizations across the country; manage a team of more than 10 staff and contributors
- *Multimedia development:* Designed needs assessment to understand stakeholders' preferences and interests when using project website; partner with AIR client technology services to lead the website development; collaborate with production company to create consumer education videos (3 of the 7 have won Telly Awards); and engage vendors to ensure that multimedia products are accessible to users with disabilities
- *User experience research:* Develop protocols to assess website user experience and leading data collection activities; develop protocols and training materials for video consumer-testing; and design surveys to understand product utilization
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Developed and implemented communications strategy, which has led to an increase in web traffic from 99,500 to more than 1,200,000 visitors annually; deliver project presentations; and conduct outreach to stakeholders

Researcher, State Exchange on Employment and Disability (SEED) Evaluation, 2015-Present
Funder: U.S. Department of Labor
- *Project leadership:* Served as interim principal investigator for project to evaluate a federal initiative to introduce employment policy options to policymakers
- *Evaluation:* Lead data collection, analysis, and report writing to document the evolution of SEED and determine the initiative's readiness for evaluation; contributed to a literature review on implementation sciences to guide the development of SEED and maximize opportunities for replication; and collaborate to design the SEED evaluation to understand impact on policymakers

Project Director, National Council on Disability (NCD) Progress Reports, 2014–2016
Funder: National Council on Disability
- *Project leadership*: Collaborated with NCD members to develop the strategic direction of the 2014, 2015, and 2016 progress reports to the White House and Congress; oversaw the work of staff members and vendors; and managed the budgets to deliver reports on time and within budget
- *Policy*: Conducted analysis of legislation and policies guiding technology design for the 2016 report dedicated to technology, which included NYC legislation requiring agency websites to meet accessibility standards; and analyzed legislation impacting people with disabilities and societal trends to identify how regulations influence the lives of people with disabilities
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Collaborated with local and state policymakers to learn how legislation shapes employment, education, health, transportation, and housing, which included working with the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities on a chapter dedicated to NYC transportation; engaged youth with disabilities in a Twitter chat about technology and disability to inform the report, generating more than 500 responses; and collected input through individual and group discussions from NCD members, people with disabilities, industry leaders, and government officials to inform the reports

Website Consultant, Great Lakes Comprehensive Center (GLCC), 2014-2016
Funder: U.S. Department of Education
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Served as the liaison between the GLCC and website developers to create website that addresses the academic achievement gap between African American males and their peers; created promotional materials to publicize the initiative; and delivered conference presentations
- *Multimedia development:* Conducted needs assessment to understand teachers' professional development interests to address the achievement gap; and collaborated with developers to produce storyboard mock-up, pilot site, and website

Evaluation Lead, Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Improving the Accessibility, Usability and Performance of Technology for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, 2014–2015
Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- *Evaluation:* Developed an evaluation framework for a training to help those with hearing loss learn about hearing and assistive technology (HAT), trained others on HAT and planned for training events; and created four surveys to establish content-knowledge baseline data and understand knowledge development throughout the course of the training activities.

Deputy Project Director, Center for Technology Implementation, 2009-2013
Funder: U.S. Department of Education
- *Project management:* Managed project expenditures and labor hours using corporate finance tools; coordinated staff meetings; and prepared monthly project review reports
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Developed and executed communications plan; supervised social media activities; and delivered conference presentations
- *Evaluation:* Designed protocols to evaluate an online platform to support teaching students with disabilities and their classmates using technology; and led data collection activities in public school district

Researcher, Microsoft Math Partnership (MMP), 2007–2011
Funder: The Microsoft Corporation
- *Project management:* Managed project expenditures and labor hours using corporate finance tools and prepared monthly reports for project reviews
- *Research:* Collaborated with the Learning Mathematics for Teaching Project to facilitate test item adoption to measure teachers' understanding of mathematics content; and led the development of user-friendly district data reports

Researcher, National Center for Technology Innovation, 2005-2011
Funder: U.S. Department of Education
- *Product development:* Developed whitepapers and other user-friendly resources to encourage the use of innovative technology among people with disabilities; and led the development of published article and consumer guides addressing the procurement of innovative technology for people with disabilities
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Engaged stakeholders on social media platforms; delivered conference presentations; and helped plan and execute annual conference that convened technology innovators, researchers, and investors from across the country

Researcher, Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Evaluation, 2009
Funder: National Science Foundation
- *Evaluation:* Designed data collection instruments to evaluate AGEP's success in increasing the number of minorities obtaining graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines; designed and executed training on using instruments to conducting focus groups, interviews, and observations; and led data collection activities

1776, 2016-Present

1776 is an international technology incubator that supports high-growth startups focused on solving societal challenges in education, energy, transportation, and financial services sectors. As a 1776 expert, I advise technology startups on:

- Inclusive design that can lead to more desirable and competitive mainstream products
- Actionable steps to develop inclusive technology products and services
- Policies that guide accessible design

National Advisory Board, 2016-Present

The National Advisory Board is supported by Anthem, Inc. to provide input on health care services for older adults and people with disabilities. Contributions include:

- Developing a document on promoting inclusive technology to maximize opportunities for stakeholders who are older or have a disability
- Offering feedback on services to ensure that they respond to the needs of older adults and people with disabilities
- Providing policy analyses to identify implications for older adults and people with disabilities

Proposal Reviewer, Ongoing

Expert input to various organizations on funding decisions include:

- National Science Foundation, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2015, and 2016 (2016 panel chair)
- Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, 2016
- National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, 2011
- Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics & Science Teaching, 2006
- National School Boards Association Technology Salute District, 2000

TECHNOLOGY-FOCUSED PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

National Council on Disability (2016). "2016 *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*." Available at http://www.ncd.gov/progressreport/2016/progress-report-october-2016

Gray, T, Silver-Pacuilla, H., Brann, A., Overton, C., & Reynolds, R. (2011). Converging trends in educational and assistive technology. In T. Gray, & H. Silver-Pacuilla (Eds.) *Breakthrough Teaching and Learning: How Educational and Assistive Technologies are Driving Innovation.* New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Gray, T., Silver Pacuilla, H., Overton, C., & Brann, A. (2010). "Unleashing the power of innovation for assistive technology." Washington, DC: AIR. Available at http://www.nationaltechcenter.org/documents/unleashing_the_power_color.pdf

Overton, C., Volkman, C., Silver-Pacuilla, H., & Gray, T. (2008). Understanding Consumer Needs Through Market Research. *Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits*, 5, 6–18.

SELECT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS & TRAININGS

Overton, Cynthia, Burnette, D; Coleman, R; Hardy, C. (2018). Developing a CISE research agenda that's relevant to the CISE industry. Presented at the QEM/NSF Outreach forum on building Research and Education Capacity in Computer and Information Science and Engineering at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Overton, C., Moore, C. (2018). It Takes a Village to Create High Tech Pathways. Presented at the National Summit for Educational Equity, Arlington, VA.

Overton, C. (2018). The Importance of Accessible Technology (2018). Presented at the Black Women Talk Tech Conference at NYC Microsoft Headquarters.

Overton, C., Pineda, V., Williams, K., Horn, B. (2017) Making Room for Disability in the Diversity and Inclusion Discussion. Presented at Tech Inclusion, San Francisco.

Overton, C, Kaplowitz, M. (2017) Entering the Disability World as Coders, Developers, and Designers. Presented at the New York Code + Design Academy, New York, NY.

Overton, C. (2017) Diversity in the Tech Industry. Presented at Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

Overton, C. (2017) Social Innovation, Technology, and People with Disabilities. Presented at Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Overton, C., Lewis, A., Cai, C., and Kaplan, B. (2017) LEAD 2017 Diversity and Inclusion in Cultural Institutions Four-Part Series, Presented at the LEAD Conference, Austin, TX.

Overton, C., Rai, G. (2017) Integrating Knowledge Translation Into OT Education and Professional Development. Presented at the American Occupational Therapy Association, Philadelphia, PA

Overton, C., Bailey, B. (2016). Conditions for Learning While Reducing Suspensions. Presented at the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color conference, New York, NY.

Overton, C., Bernstein, R. (2015). 25 Years of Access and Inclusion: Why the Americans with Disabilities Act matters. Presented at American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC.

Overton, C. (2015). Resources When You Want Them: A web tour of professional learning tools that promote supportive learning environments for African American males. Presented at the African American Young Men in Michigan conference, Ypsilanti, MI.

Overton, C. & Shaewitz, D. (2014). Can I Quote You On That? Practical Tips on Responding to Media Requests. Presented at the Effective Media Outreach Strategies online conference, Virtual Conference.

Overton, C. (2013). Universal Design with Mobile Devices. Presented at the Project Access NYC Best Practices for Inclusion in the Arts Conference, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

Overton, C. (2013). Building Capacity Among School Leadership Teams to Promote Technology Implementation. Presented at the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference, Orlando, FL.

Overton, C (2012). Action Research. Presented to at the LEAP school, Cape Town, South Africa.

Overton, C. (2012). Supporting Instruction with Technology-based Resources. Presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference, Denver, CO.

Overton, C. (2011). Promoting Inclusive Education in the U.S. with the Power of Technology, Presented at the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

Overton, C. (2011). Inclusive Education Supported by Technology, Presented at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong.

Overton, C. (2010). Transition into Higher Education and the Role of Assistive Technology. Presented to the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) Consortium, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Overton, C. (2010). Knowing State-of-the-Art Assistive Technology When You See It. Presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Nashville, TN.

Overton, C. (2009). Trends in Accessible Media in the Classroom. Presented at the 23rd Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference, Los Angeles, CA.