



Minnesota State Academies Board

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 3:15 PM
Joint Site Council Meeting
Electronic Means
615 Olof Hanson Drive
Faribault, MN 55021

1. Attendance
2. Interview of Applicant for the MSA Board Blind Community Representative position
 - A. Briley O'Connor
3. Discussion of Applicants
4. Close

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INDIVIDUALS WHO REQUIRE ACCOMMODATIONS
SHOULD CONTACT LOLA BRAND
EMAIL: lola.brand@msa.state.mn.us
PHONE: (507) 384-6602 / VP: (507) 412-5109

Application for the position Blind Community Member

Part I: Position Sought

Agency Name: Board of The Minnesota State Academies

Position: Blind Community Member

Part II: Applicant Information

Name: Mrs. Briley Nicole O'Connor

Phone: (703) 380-8876

County: Hennepin

Mn House District: 61A

US House District: 5

Recommended by the Appointing Authority: False

Part III: Appending Documentation

Cover Letter and Resume

Type File Type

Additional Documents resume and cover letter.

Part IV: Veteran:

No Answer

Part V: Signature

Signature: Briley O'Connor

Date: 11/17/2020 12:01:26 AM

BRILEY O'CONNOR, NCUEB

2900 Irving Avenue South #207
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(703) 380-8876 • brileyoc@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2012 George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

- Coursework in Special Education, specifically focused on teaching blind and low-vision students with multiple disabilities including autism and hearing loss

2010 Belmont University, Nashville, TN

- Bachelor of Music in Commercial Vocal Performance

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2020 Senior Accessibility Consultant: Target Corp. Minneapolis, MN

- Consult with user experience designers, engineers, copywriters, product directors, and other partners across multiple pyramids to build accessible and engaging digital experiences for both the Target app and target.com
- Collaborate with other accessibility team members and senior leadership to create a strategy and improve processes to increase the teams' scope and efficacy
- Work with partners in D&I and HR to strengthen external relationships to implement programs that will improve hiring outcomes for applicants with disabilities in headquarters, retail stores, and fulfillment centers
- Establish partnerships with emerging product teams to build accessible augmented reality experiences for guests

2019 Accessibility Tester: Contract for HealthPartners, Minneapolis, MN

- Manually tested components in Adobe Experience Manager using assistive technologies—including JAWS, NVDA, and iOS VoiceOver—to establish their conformance with WCAG 2.1 guidelines
- Developed and executed test plans to create end-to-end accessibility audits of user journeys for senior leadership and design/development teams about mobile apps and websites
- Logged, tracked, re-tested, and validated accessibility defects (including providing remediation guidance) in Jira
- Built and maintained a unified template and process for tracking accessibility defects
- Reviewed prototypes and concepts for design elements and provided feedback to agile product teams
- Researched, analyzed, and documented patterns, best practices, and requirements in Atlassian Confluence (including the writing of meaningful image descriptions and reCAPTCHA alternatives)

2016 – 2019 Communications Instructor: BLIND Inc. Minneapolis, MN

- Increased the independence of adults with vision loss through small group instruction in assistive technology, braille, and home management
- Used a variety of inputs to conceive and document tailored lesson plans with other instructors
- Consulted with partners and supported the organization's use of assessments and communications tools with a focus on promoting accessibility
- Tested digital experiences using iOS VoiceOver, macOS VoiceOver, JAWS and NVDA for clients' web sites and mobile experiences tied to WCAG, WAI-ARIA, and Section 508 standards
- Researched, procured, and demonstrated low- and high-tech solutions to barriers encountered by people with disabilities including blindness, hearing loss, cognitive impairments, and low motor skills
- Mentored colleagues on accessibility and most effective instructional methods based on research and data
- Wrote and submitted detailed reports on students' progress to government agencies

BRILEY O'CONNOR, NCUEB

2012 – 2016 Vice President: O'Consulting Group, LLC, Louisville, KY

- Performed manual accessibility testing of enterprise websites and applications for clients using WCAG 2.0 standards, and detailed the results in writing for internal and external use
- Represented voices of users with disabilities to improve accessibility during design and development
- Scoped and planned projects during intake and throughout the program lifecycles
- Developed a standardized interviewing and on-boarding process for new hires and contractors

2011 – 2013 Communications Instructor: Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

- Performed accessibility testing for products and services under consideration for purchase and deployment that seek to assist clients in education and employment
- Adapted and taught using the “Functional Braille Method,” equipping seniors to independently manage daily tasks (e.g. labeling medications, reading apartment signage, and writing short messages)
- Created individualized curricula to teach Microsoft Office, web browsers and iOS to seniors using VoiceOver, NVDA and JAWS

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

2004 – present Pro-bono Disability Advocate: Louisiana, Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas, & Virginia

- Assist students in the public education system and adults utilizing Vocational Rehabilitation with varying physical and cognitive disabilities to ensure equal access to information and services
- Conduct evaluations and provide written recommendations for individuals' assistive technology needs
- Consult with interdisciplinary teams throughout development and rollout of Individualized Education Plans to ensure accessibility concerns are understood, implemented, and communicated appropriately
- Drive meetings with stakeholders to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes for clients and agencies

2012 – 2013 Band Leader: “Encounter” at First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Alexandria, VA

- Compiled musicians' materials, arranged vocal parts, and facilitated a devotion for weekly rehearsals
- Led worship for active-duty Army service members in partnership with the chaplain at Fort Meyer
- Mentored team members on accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities in church ministries
- Participated in scoping and planning of short- and long-term projects to increase volunteerism and engagement with members and the metro community

To whom it may concern:

It is my belief as an accessibility professional, former educator of blind children and adults, and an active member of the blind community in Minnesota, that every child has the right to a high-quality education, regardless of their disability. The Minnesota State Academies fill an important need in Minnesota, and I am eager to be a part of creating an equitable environment for all. Having worked with families and children as both a teacher and an advocate, I have seen firsthand how a lack of resources, a shortage of highly qualified professionals, and low expectations can impede the growth and development of people with disabilities.

I am well versed in how the IEP process works, am familiar with accommodations processes for assessments, have professional skills in the area of digital accessibility, and have worked with children and adults who are blind, Deafblind, have Autism, and other cognitive disabilities. I currently serve as the secretary for the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota and coordinate a summer program for blind children (the Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning Academy) as a part of that role. Most notably, however, my personal experiences as a blind person and the parent of a blind child drive me to use the knowledge I have to create a better landscape for the blind people that come after me. I have vivid memories of my mother having to advocate for me to learn braille, without which I would likely not have seen much academic or professional success. I remember a lack of digital access presenting a huge challenge both in high-school and beyond. I remember not getting certain roles in the school musical, or opportunities for internships, or (most painfully) jobs because of my blindness. None of this was because I was not capable of learning. It was because others did not believe it was possible.

My mission now is to help people to understand what is possible and see disabled students not through the lens of what they cannot do, but instead the unique skillset they bring if provided training and opportunity. True equity is achieved not through providing boxes for people to stand on to watch the baseball game over the fence. Equity and liberation are achieved by removing the fence altogether. Thank you for considering me for this position.

Sincerely,

Briley O'Connor

brileyoc@gmail.com

(703) 380-8876