**TRANSCRIPT – Long COVID Task Force, Podcast #1, August 1, 2022**

**(JJ)** – Jane Jarrow, Disability Access Information and Support (DAIS)

**(KA)** – Katherine Acquino, St. John’s University

**(JJ)** Welcome. My name is Jane Jarrow, and this is the first podcast from the Long COVID Task Force. In the fall of 2021, a group of 32 professionals in the field of disability services in higher education came together to create a resource for disability service providers that would help them prepare for a new population of students with disabilities on campus -- students experiencing debilitating effects from Long COVID. In October, we released *Supporting Students with Long COVID in Higher Education: A Workbook for Disability Service Providers*. In the intervening months, new folks have stepped up to join our ranks, and we have begun work on a series of resources that we believe may expand our knowledge in this area, and help provide more and better support to a population that's likely to grow in the future. As a group, we’re committed to making sure that all the information we gather, and resources we create, are available to anyone who wants or needs them free of charge. Moreover, we want to make sure that whenever something new is ready for introduction to the higher education community, we present accompanying information to assist you in making the most of the new resource by providing explanations and suggestions for how it can be used. That brings me to this morning’s podcast. I would like to introduce a member of our Task Force, Katherine Aquino, from St. John's University, who is going to share information about a research initiative to arise from the work of the Task Force. Good morning, Katherine!

**(KA)** Good morning.

**(JJ)** Tell us about the research initiative and why folks are hearing about it now, today.

**(KA)** Right. After the completion of the Workbook, The Task Force really had a point to reflect and say, “What do we do from here? Where do we go?” There were so many other areas to explore, with one of those being potential research work related to how we are supporting students with Long COVID cases. So I, myself, along with others from the original Task Force, expressed interest in working together, beginning to brainstorm on potential research projects. Of course, these research projects would be in line with the Task Force’s original objectives and thinking about different, creative ways to gain necessary data – data that really is not being collected at this time. Some current members of our Research Task Force include Joanna Morey, she is out of Lawrence University, Lisa Vance, out of North Iowa Area Community College. We had Kathy Shearer out of Spokane Falls Community College, Rebecca Helms at Troy University, and Patricia Anderson at the University of Michigan. And I will say this is a wonderful group. We have had numerous zoom conversations and email threads, just to bounce off ideas with each other in the development of different research protocols and instruments. They’ve really stepped up and done some incredible work thus far.

**(JJ)** Tell us more about this particular first initiative and where you going in terms of research in general.

**(KA)** Absolutely. So at this point, we have a national survey currently out. This we thought was essential, as our first step because this would allow us to not only understand the current timeline but really start us off to start exploring trends for the future. So our team went really through an extensive instrument review process that included expert review of question development, and even piloting. So the current survey that we have will ask questions related to the professional profile of the disability resource professional, the institutional profile of the disability resource professionals, the disability resource office, and most importantly, the experienced cases and really the supporting documentation. Documentation that is asked of, and required for, not only the student request, but for ultimately receiving accommodations for the Long COVID cases. What we hope to do, and what will hopefully start as the next task – we are also are asking open-ended questions related to strategies and resources that are currently being done in the field. We want to see what creative approaches are being used throughout the United States in supporting Long COVID cases for the students in higher education. So this instrument is really going to allow us to track trends. It is our hope to have several data collections. Like I said this is the first data collection. We opened it up early July and we hope to close it probably mid to end of August, and maybe two, maybe four iterations of the survey will be important in the upcoming months and in years ahead.

**(JJ)** And, as I understand it – as I know! –the reason that we’re putting together this podcast for this morning is because AHEAD is going to release and send out the survey to all AHEAD members later today. Is that correct?

**(KA)** Absolutely! So that will be the second notification that AHEAD will be sharing about that survey, but I am happy to share that we were also at the AHEAD conference together sharing that URL out for anyone interested, and we've been sharing that URL out, also, in other places. But we know that the AHEAD listserv will probably have the most impact, and the most reach for the individuals needing to take the survey.

**(JJ)** And we’ll make sure that URL is included in the email that goes out that has this podcast attached to it, so even those who are not members of AHEAD, will still be able to reach the survey and participate.

**(KA)** That’s wonderful… thank you.

**(JJ)** Tell us about plans for the future. How are you going to use what’s in this survey to go forward from here?

**(KA)** We’re at a really interesting time. In the world of higher education, we’re still in a period of processing and really recovering from what the overall COVID 19 pandemic left, let alone thinking of what now Long COVID and impact of Long COVID is for the future. There's so much to be determined about how higher ed is addressing Long COVID, supporting students with Long COVID -- and that survey, like I said, it is really going to allow a baseline of understanding with postsecondary institutions arguing for student Long COVID cases. I think, too, for the future it will be really important to not only use the survey, but to really extend. So we are also applying for some grants right now because we also think that research subcommittee of our task force understands that we need to not only hear, closed ended questions, survey questions, but also start reaching out and having some interviews and focus groups, and we would love to interview and speak to disability resource professionals, once we have that survey data, to dive a bit deeper to say, “OK, these themes keep coming up,. What are you really doing? What is helping specific to your institution?” Because we know there's such variation with institution type and level throughout the country, that we know one strategy at a community college may not necessarily work on a large, private or four year institution. So we understand that we need to hear the voices. We also know that for the future, in addition to reaching out through interviews and focus groups with disability resource professionals, we want to be hearing from the students, hearing from other administrators, hearing from faculty. This is going to need a comprehensive response, and we understand that while disability resource professionals are vital and really at the frontlines, right? While they are the most essential point person at the institution, we know that we need to hear various voices, so that for the future, we can not only understand what is happening, but construct recommendations for the higher education community as a whole.

**(JJ)** Clearly you’re excited about all of this, as we all are, but I think at this point we should let folks go explore this survey again on their, and again folks. It will be sent out to ahead later this afternoon or you can go directly to it on the link is included in your email. It's as you say, an exciting contract and we welcome your participation as we move forward. Thanks much for your time this morning, Katherine.

**(KA)** Absolutely – and if I could just say one more thing… we’re hearing from several different voices at the AHEAD conference, and many disability resource professionals are saying, “Well, I haven’t received Long COVID cases yet.” We understand that this is new, and developing. Please don't feel you should not complete the survey because you haven't received any Long COVID cases yet. We need to quantify if you *are* receiving cases, if you are *not* receiving cases. So even though maybe something hasn't come your way, still complete that survey because there are other questions related to Long COVID in general will be incredibly useful for the field. Thank you.

**(JJ)** An important reminder. OK, folks, you have your charge. We’ll see you again later this week. We had another resource coming up. But for now, go fill out the survey! Thank you so much. Goodbye.