

# Advancing equity and access

When the Federal Communications Commission in 2015 chose to add a [committee on disability](#) to the committees advising it on matters spanning security and consumerism, two representatives from university-based centers were tapped to lend their expertise to the group.

One representative selected by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities came from American Samoa; the other came from CDS. [Phyllis Guinivan's](#) years of innovative work at CDS in emergency preparedness and assistive technology positioned her to immediately support the committee's push to promote greater accommodations for people with intellectual disabilities.

"For years, federal communications regulations and best practices concerning disability focused on the needs of people with hearing and vision loss," she says. "Now we need to see that the communications needs of people with cognitive disabilities are being met."

Like Guinivan, others at CDS advanced inclusionary practices and policies on committees and workgroups at the national level in 2015-2016. [Jae Chul Lee](#), director of the Center's Health and Wellness unit, advised the [U.S. Administration for Community Living](#), which is pursuing a government-wide strategic plan to promote independent living and rehabilitation research. As a member of the [National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons With Severe Disabilities](#), [CDS Director Beth Mineo](#) is promoting the group's Communication Bill of Rights, which champions the dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of the nature or severity of their disability.

"Beyond the Center's work that responds to the prevailing needs of the community in Delaware, it's important that we advance equity and access any way and anywhere we can," Mineo says.

People with cognitive disabilities who hadn't gotten a lot of attention regarding communications access will be getting more of it now, thanks to Guinivan's promotion of best communications practices, says Elaine Gardner, an attorney advisor with the FCC's Disability Rights Office. "We've got to get them the information they need in a format they can easily access," Guinivan says.



CDS's Phyllis Guinivan is advising the FCC concerning the communications needs of people with intellectual disabilities.