

# APSE Conversations with the National Board: Tricia Jones

July 20, 2021

<https://apse.org/apse-conversations-with-the-national-board-tricia-jones/>

Julie Christensen 0:09

Hi, this is Julie Christensen with APSE. We're excited to launch the APSE Employment First employment for all podcast as a new way to connect with you. This podcast is a way to provide updates, real time advocacy alerts, and information related to all things Employment First, be sure to subscribe so you don't miss an episode. And thanks for listening.

Erica Belois-Pacer 0:38

Good morning, or good afternoon if you are joining us in a different location. This is Erica Belois-Pacer here today. And today I'm joined by Tricia Jones, who was newly elected to our national board. So we're gonna chat with Tricia and kind of find out who she is maybe some goals that she has being on the national birth this coming year. So, Tricia, thanks so much for joining us. And I'll let you introduce yourself.

Tricia Jones 1:06

Thank you so much, Erica. And I really appreciate the opportunity. So I, for me, Utah, and I currently work at Utah State University, at the BU said, and we recently just changed our name from the Center for persons with disability, to the Institute on Disability research practice and policy is a bit of a mouthful, and I'm still getting used to saying it. But prior to that, I worked at the developmental disability agency for 20 years. And I have focused on employment for a good portion of my career in working in behalf of people with disabilities. And I've been involved with our local apps each chapter for really as long as I've been focusing on employment since about 2000 2005.

Erica Belois-Pacer 2:07

Nice and that is definitely a longer title. Work. Yeah, I think that's probably why we see so many acronyms in this field. Um, Trisha, so you've lived in Utah, have you always lived there?

Tricia Jones 2:25

You know, I have I grew up in rural, Utah. My father was a was a coal miner. My mom is a registered critical care nurse. And they're both retired now. But yeah, I grew up in rural Utah, and then went, I went to Utah State. And then now I live in Salt Lake City, and I've lived in the cities for gosh, you know, over 20 years, so I can't really say that I'm a small town girl, but I think I once you are you kind of always are at heart a little bit.

Erica Belois-Pacer 2:57

So yeah, I would agree. I grew up in a small town as well in New York, not your job. But surprisingly, I know quite a few folks that either currently live in Utah or did used to live there. So I'm, where I live is close to Palmyra. And that is where kind of a lot of the Mormon religion stuff started. Yeah. So. So very important. Yes, exactly. So um, a lot of our friends and neighbors are Mormon. So a lot of times their kids go to Brigham Young, or even Utah State, like you said, so. I've heard it's beautiful. I'll have to get there at some point. Hopefully, it is full state or mountains and yeah, that's what everybody says. Yeah. So very nice. Um, so I'm just curious, what made you decide to run for the National Board?

Tricia Jones 3:49

When I you know, I work I mentioned that I worked at the state and while there I was really involved in really trying to do a lot of systems change efforts, being involved with the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the supported employment Leadership Network. And the you know, home and community based settings rules really trying to advance movement in our state. And while there were some efforts made there was also just a lot of resistance and pushback at at the state and legislative level. And it was difficult for me just personally, I'm, you know, that person that puts my whole heart and soul into my work. It's, it's personal. I don't, you know, and I think a lot of us in this work are like that, right? We don't just put it away at the end of the day, and when I shifted away from working at the state and went over to the university, I I was still focusing on some of those things, but it was more at the local level and I think I needed a bit of a rest In terms of, you know, just that advocacy and that engagement at that level, and so, you know, after having that bit of arrest, and when the opportunity came to look at, you know, being involved more at the national level, I've always, you know, absi is just that organization that has always been a true north for me, in terms of values, and always pushing for, you know, advocacy and, and I just felt like it was a place that I could, that I've always belonged, but that I could really start getting some that I could make a difference so that I could, you know, get that energy and spirit back into not only making a difference in my state, but at the, at the larger level. And it seems like a good opportunity. It's something I've always wanted to do. And in our state we are, we just reinvigorated our local chapter, we actually closed our chapter for a while. And some local providers got excited, went to the, their first absi National Conference in St. Louis, and came back and got really excited and started a chapter and so that really got me excited, too. And so then, you know, that just kind of gave me that spark, I needed to get back, get back, get back into things. And so yeah, that's, that's really kind of why as I was looking for a place to, to reignite that spark and, and get my energy back.

Erica Belois-Pacer 6:45

So that's great. Um, did you go to the conference in St. Louis too?

Tricia Jones 6:49

I did not I planned on it, and then had some other things come up. And so one of my newer newer colleague that I had hired at the university went instead. And it was her first app, the conference, and she is been another, you know, real instrumental person and getting our local chapter up and coming.

Erica Belois-Pacer 7:14

So that's great. Yeah, I think it's important that lots of different people get the opportunity to attend I know, the past few years are their virtual conference, it was nice, because I think some people that may be, might not have had the opportunity to attend in person due to travel or, you know, there's, there's lots of different reasons, we're able to, so hopefully, we'll be able to do some sort of a hybrid mix this year, so that we can still engage with folks that, you know, it can't be there in person, but still want the information. So, no, that's great that other people went to it was a fun conference. Feels like 100 years ago.

Tricia Jones 7:54

Right? I know, I remember being disappointed that I couldn't go but excited that it meant that, you know, this young person got to go for the first time and, and how much it meant to her. And I remember that feeling the first time I went and glad that she got that opportunity.

Erica Belois-Pacer 8:11

No, that's awesome. Um, so I know that you are going to be I believe a regional delegate, which is exciting. And I was just also curious, if you have any other goals, or just ideas of things that you'd like to do on the national board, obviously, you know, probably can't do everything right away. But I know you'll be with us for a few years. So just any ideas on what you'd like to do moving forward.

Tricia Jones 8:40

I, you know, I think I'm just, you know, my goals within APSE, and just, you know, employment in general, my focus has always been on, you know, people with more significant support needs I I'm the project manager, or the project director for a PI grant. Currently in our state we're in our last year and we're going for a no cost extension. But that's always kind of been my background is is really trying to focus on people with higher you know, support needs and customized employment. So I think right that's always just wanting to make sure and and push and make sure that that's always a part of the conversation. And and I think that's always why I valued app see so much as because that has been such a huge part of their focus and advocacy. And strength is is that inclusion and focus on on people with more significant disabilities. I think the other real key piece is is that I have a strong interest is aligning so much of the you know, the Federal opportunities that exist right now who a and the settings world And, you know, really just kind of seeing or finding ways to help help realize those those opportunities and make them meaningful. You know, at the local level, and I'm assuming this is across the board is, is that? Unfortunately, it seems like those can be seen as these things that we have to do yet there are real opportunities, and I know that many leaders and apps, etc, that, that how do we keep those conversations happening inside of all of the challenges with staffing issues, and you know, all of those kinds of things. So I think it's just keeping those those conversations and happening, I think the other piece that's really important to me, is the lived experience voice. And something I've been really excited about in my first few months being on the board, is how important that also is to APSE leadership and the board is, you know, people who have disabilities being involved in the board and getting, you know, that voice and that representation, not only on the board, but at the local chapter level. So those are all things that

are important that are important to me, I don't know that it's anything that I necessarily want to accomplish, but that I want to be part of advancing and supporting.

Erica Belois-Pacer 11:25

No, that sounds great. And I would agree. Absolutely. Um, so, Tricia, when you were like in high school or earlier on in your life, did you think that you were going to go into the human services field? Or was Did you have a different idea at that point?

Tricia Jones 11:45

You know, I definitely had a different idea at that point. I, you know, in high school, I think I've always had that notion of wanting to make a difference being you know, the person that was the helper, you know, that's always been, what, what drove me. I started out, as you know, wanting to be a nursing student, right. My mom was a nurse, and she actually went back to college when I was in high school, and like, we went to my first year of college, I went with my mom, that was pretty fun. Yeah, that is awesome. I'm being sarcastic, because like, if I would miss class, she would like, come over. And, you know, wake me up. It wasn't very fun. But I look back on it now. And it was actually pretty great. She was an amazing student. And she got me through chemistry, actually. But she was really much more brilliant than I am. But I, as I write as I took those classes, you know, those gen ed classes, I quickly realized that I cared much more about social justice. And you know, I lean towards more of the psychology and the human development and those kinds of things. And so I did home health care all through college. And, you know, that was my job that got me through it, because it was flexible. And I didn't realize that at the time that I had several people that I did home health visits with that had disabilities, and I didn't know what the whole disability service world looked like, until I graduated. And then I supported two women that that lived in a home. And that was that for me, like I knew this is where this was the field. This is the where I belonged, and learned so much from being a direct support professional.

Erica Belois-Pacer 13:42

Yeah I'm always curious, I feel like people always have interesting stories. I mean, in my old job, we used to try to give information or we did give information to school staff at the high school level on options for kids after high school, but you know, with or without disabilities, but I feel like this field isn't always highlighted. And a lot of times people yeah, really are unaware of what is out there in terms of services that can be provided for people with disabilities. And like you said, often you may not even know that someone has rideability. So no, definitely important to get folks. You know, to understand and know that it's out there. For we have have I did want to ask you, if there's any fun facts about yourself or things that may have happened to you in the past that you'd be willing to share?

Tricia Jones 14:35

You know, there are lots of fun facts about me. I don't live as quite as an exciting life as I as I used to. I i'm sure like many people, you know, the pandemic helped me It made me realize how much I really I do enjoy being at home. I have a lovely garden and I have two senior dogs. dogs that I just adore and love spending time with. I've just having senior dogs is like, just a gift

because, right, they just, I don't know, all of the things they do when they're puppies when they're younger that are so great, you know, you just get all of the joy when they're when they're older. So that's definitely what is bringing me the most joy right now. I love to randomly just dance in my kitchen. whether anybody else appreciates that or not. I like Love, Love Live music and concerts. It's probably one of my favorite things I really look forward to.

Erica Belois-Pacer 15:44

Have you been able to go to anything now that things are opening up a bit?

Tricia Jones 15:48

You know, I have not yet but I have tickets to see the Black Pumas in August, and it will be my first live concert back. And I'm pretty excited about that.

Erica Belois-Pacer 16:00

Very exciting. Yes, absolutely. Yeah. No, that's great. Um, no, we have dogs that we all we rescued. So she was past some of those puppy stages as well, and definitely a lot easier. We were lucky. So I, I tend to agree with that. Very nice. Well, thanks so much for joining us today. And I'm excited to work with you in the upcoming year. And the year after that. I'm sure we'll be very busy. And I think Trisha, your Are you part of the professional development committee as well?

Tricia Jones 16:35

I am I am on the professional development committee, the Equity and Diversity Committee that was something I was really excited to get to be involved in. And and then the delegates so very excited. I you know, my my biggest takeaway from that first, you know, National Board meeting that we had was, I'm just in awe at how much work this, this group of people that make up APSE both the board and the staff do to keep this organization go like I think I always knew it, but to get to like to be in it and in a more in depth way. I just like jaw droppingly amazed at the commitment and I just feel honored to be a part of it. So thank you, over happy to have you too.

Erica Belois-Pacer 17:31

So well. Thank you. And, um, I'm excited. I think it will be a great year. I'm excited that you know, we can start doing a few more things in person and happy to have you on the professional development committee. So I will be seeing you quite a bit i'm sure yes. Okay. Well have a great day. And thanks for joining us today. We will be meeting with one more new board member on next week. So look out for that as well. Thank you and

Tricia Jones 17:59

Wonderful. Thanks so much.

Erica Belois-Pacer 18:00

You're welcome. Bye bye.