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Center for Persons With Disabilities

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OBAMA APPOINTS PAVITHRAN TO U.S. ACCESS BOARD

December 4, 2012 by Sue Reeves

Sachin Pavithran, director of the Utah Assistive Technologies Program at Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities, has been appointed as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (commonly referred to as the U.S. Access Board) by President Barack Obama. Pavithran was one of four people recently appointed to Administration posts.

“It’s an exciting opportunity,” Pavithran said. “It’s not often one gets appointed by the President.”

Pavithran received a phone call in April from the Office of Presidential Appointments, notifying him that he had been highly recommended for the position, and asking if he was interested in serving on the board. Then his name was sent to the Office of the President, who authorized the start of the vetting process.

“They look at everything,” Pavithran said. The resulting background checks examined every aspect of his life, from security to financial to personal details.

A handful of people knew about the appointment, but Pavithran had been instructed to keep it confidential. He received final confirmation on Thursday, Nov. 29 but still was told to keep the information confidential until the White House issued the press release the following day.

“It’s a big responsibility,” Pavithran said. Even though he is familiar with many of the issues the board will address, there will be other topics that will require more study.

“There will be a lot of information to digest and make recommendations on,” he said. “I will really have to understand it.”

Pavithran, who also is a disability analyst at the CPD, received bachelor’s degrees in business information systems and marketing and a master’s degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling from USU. He recently started work on a Ph.D. in disability disciplines. He joined the CPD in 2002 and has more than 12 years of direct involvement in development, testing, and training for accessibility for assistive technology, extensive experience in lecturing and training others in accessible technology.

In addition to the U.S. Access Board, Pavithran serves on the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs National Board, the Utah State Rehabilitation Council, the advisory board for disability policy for Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), the Research and Development Committee of the National Federation of the Blind, and the National Multicultural Council of the Association of University Centers for Disabilities.