

DISABILITY RESOURCES

Annual Report for 2014-2015

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Executive Summary

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The Office of Disability Resources recognizes disability as an aspect of human diversity that is integral to society and to our campus community. We serve as a partner in fostering an inclusive and equitable environment at the University of Minnesota Duluth. This office employs three Disability Specialists, one Executive Office and Administrative Specialist, three American Sign Language Interpreters and twelve student employees to fulfill our mission of ensuring equal access to all programs and services offered by the university.

This has been a year of change...and the future of Disability Resources is looking bright!

The 2014-2015 academic year kicked off with Emily Norenberg taking on the role of director. In October 2014, Tim Walters joined the Disability Resources team as a Disability Specialist. Finally, Alissa Stainbrook, Disability Specialist, moved from temporary to permanent status. The new energy and enthusiasm in our unit is noticeable!

It's been a busy year for Disability Resources. As we strive to fulfill our mission, we've seen an 18% increase in tests proctored in 2014-2015, as well as an increase in students with mental health conditions requesting disability accommodations. Catch a glimpse of our world here in Disability Resources by scrolling to these pages: Disability Resources by the Numbers (pg. 14) and A Closer Look at Students Served (pg. 15).

We're putting our money where our mouth is. We've always believed in the social model of disability - where disability is neutral, and a product of an inaccessible environment - and this year we've worked hard to reflect this doctrine in our actions and our words. Disability Resources has redesigned our entire suite of print materials, focusing on using inclusive, welcoming language with a consistent design that allows people to know who and what they're looking at. Disability Resources also dug deep into our web presence. First, our team partnered with ITSS to reorganize the structure of our website. Then we drilled down into the content of each page, removing repetitive information and heavy-handed wording and replacing it with direct, inclusive, welcoming text. Disability Resources also expanded its web presence by adding a Twitter account to our social media outreach efforts.

Technology is changing the way we do business. Over 40 years ago, conversations about accessibility focused on physical access. Now we must address a new frontier...ensuring accessibility of technology. While this is a significant change - one that will require ongoing effort from our entire campus community - the work must begin by building momentum towards change. Disability Resources, in partnership with several equally critical campus units, is leading the way towards this change.

Disability Resources is contributing to student learning. Assessment helps us understand how we contribute to student learning at UMD. This year we learned that students are clearly articulating the nature and impact of their disability condition, although there is room for growth in understanding what accommodations can mitigate disability impacts. We also learned that students are feeling increasingly confident in working with faculty members to advocate for accommodations.

Indeed, this has been an exciting year for the Office of Disability Resources! **We look forward to continuing to build upon our successes, and growing where opportunities are identified.**

Mission and Vision

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Our Mission:

The Office of Disability Resources promotes an equitable and inclusive learning environment by facilitating reasonable and appropriate accommodations, empowering students to become self-advocates, and educating the campus community.

Our Vision:

We envision UMD to be an equitable and inclusive learning environment in which disability is understood to be an aspect of diversity and individuals with disabilities are an integral part of the University community.

University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy on Disability Services:

As a campus within the University system, UMD endorses the Board of Regents' policy on disability services and is committed to equitable access and opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities. Read the [University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy on Disability Services](#).

Goals

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Goal Area 1: Learning

Create learning experiences to help students know and understand of the impact of their disability condition.

Provide learning experiences so students will understand their rights and responsibilities under ADA and Sec 504.

Provide learning experiences and resources to help students know how to use accommodations and services.

Goal Area 2: Cultural Competence and Equity

Provide information and educational opportunities to help campus partners become aware of the legal obligations pertaining to accessibility for students with disabilities.

Provide information and educational opportunities to help campus partners understand how to use accommodations, services and resources pertaining to ensuring access to students with disabilities.

Goal Area 4: The “Student Life Experience”

Partner with other campus offices/services to increase awareness of the importance of inclusive and accessible course media and technology.

Goal Area 5: Resources

Apply a strategic, visionary, student-focused and sustainable approach in developing, managing, and continually assessing human, fiscal, physical, and technological resources.

Utilize resources effectively, ethically, and efficiently through stewardship and collaboration.

Objectives

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1. **Participate in the Chancellor's Task Force on Accessibility and the Assistive Technology Team to contribute to a plan to ensure electronic and information technology is accessible to all users.**

Action Steps Taken: The director of Disability Resources has served as co-chair for the Chancellor's Task Force on Accessibility. The Task Force has successfully fulfilled both charges assigned to the group:

- *Review the accessibility and equitable use of the UMD website, utilizing a recently released report about the sites new design.*
- *Provide recommendations about web-based assignment and assessment products (those currently in use and those under consideration) and develop a framework and process for academic departments to use when adopting such products*

To complete the charge related to web access, the Task Force conducted accessibility audits of 26 high traffic websites, including the UMD homepage. The Task Force also developed usability testing tasks that were completed by users with disabilities. Reports on our findings were compiled and presented to the Campus Climate Leadership Team in December 2014. From the findings, the Chancellor requested a list of prioritized recommendations that were approved at the April 2015 meeting. Top priorities include establishing accountability and responsibility for web accessibility, forming a technical working group to continually evaluate web accessibility, and to educate the campus community.

To fulfill the charge related to teaching and learning products, the Task Force surveyed faculty to learn about what tools are used in facilitating student learning. The Task Force then partnered with Usability Services in the Twin Cities to conduct usability testing of two commonly used publisher generated teaching and learning websites. Results were compiled into a report that was submitted to the Campus Climate Leadership Team in May 2015. The Task Force reported their findings and recommendations during the June 2015 Campus Climate Leadership Team Meeting.

Status of Objective Achievement: Fully met. It is important to note that ensuring accessibility of electronic and information technology is a continual process, not a project. While the objective has been fulfilled, the work will be ongoing.

Objectives

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2. Partner with Career and Internship Services to provide support and resources to students with disabilities preparing to enter the work force.

Action Steps Taken: Disability Resources partnered with Career and Internship Services to participate in a series of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) webinars pertaining to disability and workplace disclosure in May 2014 and June 2014. These webinars worked to facilitate a conversation on how our two offices could further collaborate to best support students with disabilities as they seek employment and internship opportunities. In January 2015, Disability Resources staff attended a meeting of the Northland Career Development Professionals Association. The focus of this meeting was a panel discussion on disability and employment. Attendees learned more about the details related to the what, when, and how of disability disclosure during the job search process.

Using information from this discussion, in addition to research from best practices in job disclosure, Disability Resources developed a Disability Disclosure in the Workplace brochure that will be shared with students. Career and Internship Services contributed to the development of this resource by serving as consultants and editors to the content.

During the Spring 2015 semester, Career and Internship Services convened a meeting with Disability Resources and Counseling Services to explore emerging trends among students with mental health conditions. The team discussed how to best support students with mental health conditions in our separate, yet connected, settings. We discussed and refined a process for referring students amongst our offices.

Conversations continue with Career and Internship Services to consider hosting a series of events in which disability disclosure in the workplace is the focus. A structure and methodology is pending, although the conversation will continue through the summer of 2015.

Status of Objective Achievement: Partially met.

Objectives

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3. Develop a strategic plan to publicize and/or demonstrate to the campus community Read and Write Gold, a reading, writing and study tool designed to support the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities.

Action Steps Taken: Disability Resources has taken initial steps towards promoting the availability of Read and Write Gold to the broader UMD campus community. The following steps have been taken:

- Given a student without a preference for a text-to-speech program, Disability Resources will advise of the availability of Read and Write Gold and provide the student with the link to download the program to their computer.
- The director of Disability Resources engaged in a conversation with the director of UMD Stores to ensure that advocating for students to obtain books digitally so as to be usable with Read and Write Gold would not conflict with the business interests of the bookstore. It was agreed that a conflict of interest did not exist.
- Disability Resources has submitted a proposal entitled “Read 100 Pages by Wednesday? No Problem!” for Bulldog Welcome Week in which the features of Read and Write Gold will be demonstrated to session participants.
- Disability Resources has considered working with the SSP program to demonstrate the features of the Read and Write Gold program to students enrolled in the SSP 1054 (Learning Strategies) course. This would be considered a pilot for demonstrating the program to students in a classroom setting. Pending the outcomes of these pilot sessions, Disability Resources would seek to partner with the Writing Studies department to demonstrate the program to all students enrolled in WRIT 1120 (College Writing).
- Disability Resources staff will offer to demonstrate the Read and Write Gold product during a Fall 2015 Advising Partners meeting.

Status of Objective Achievement: Fully met, pending implementation.

Objectives

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4. Select a new student management database product, with a goal of increasing efficiency, providing improved service to students, and being able to more effectively track demographics, accommodations, workload and trends.

Action Steps Taken: During the 2013-2014 academic year, Disability Resources engaged in several database product demonstrations. The team also sought out various feedback from users of our top two database choices, and consulted with the Twin Cities Disability Resource Center to learn about feedback they'd received as part of their exploration of database products. In 2014-2015, Disability Resources renewed the conversation about which database product would be the best fit for this office. The team concluded that Clockwork Database Scheduler by Microscience is the product that would fulfill our needs.

Clockwork offers the benefits of being highly customizable, so it can be adapted to fit our needs. These customizations can be completed by authorized users of the database product and do not require a high level of technical knowledge. Clockwork programmers are familiar with Peoplesoft and have synced the two systems for seamless integration. Clockwork is also a database product that resides on our servers, not web based servers. This adds an additional level of protection for sensitive student data.

Clockwork also carries the highest price tag of the products we reviewed, but when considered the pros and cons of the top product choices, this seems to be a worthy investment. Still, it is wise to continue to seeking feedback from users of the Clockwork product. Before arriving at a firm and final decision, Disability Resources will connect with two universities - one that is currently using Clockwork (Northern Arizona University) and one that is switching from Clockwork to Accommodate by Symplicity (University of Buffalo).

Disability Resources also recognizes that the Upgrade project needs to be fully put to bed before seeking to implement a new database. While we are strong in our leanings towards Clockwork, an investment of this size deserves the highest level of scrutiny.

Status of Objective Achievement: Partially met.

Objectives

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5. Redesign print recruiting materials to ensure sustainable content and language that reflects the social model of disability.

Action Steps Taken: In Spring 2014, Disability Resources hired a graphic designer to create a series of brochures with a consistent look and feel. We started with several brainstorming sessions in which we discussed what features we did and did not want included in our new print presence. With the design aspect underway, Disability Resources staff then worked to revise content for our general brochure, disability specific brochures, faculty brochure, and new student brochure. The emphasis when reviewing content was succinct language written in a welcoming tone. This project was finalized in September 2014.

With work in redesigning our print materials completed, Disability Resources started working with ITSS to reorganize our web content in preparation for the transition to a new web content management system. This was an opportunity for Disability Resources to consider how users might intuitively seek information on our website and organize it accordingly. Beyond that, the exercise represented a significant opportunity for this office to rewrite our web content such that it aligned with the succinct and welcoming tone found in our print materials.

Presently, Disability Resources has revised all web content and is ready to launch our material in the new web template. It must be noted, however, the Disability Resources has mindfully opted to not use the new templates as there are principle failures and critical issues related to accessibility in the new templates. As an advocate and model for equal access, Disability Resources will not migrate to the new web templates until the accessibility and usability issues are resolved.

Status of Objective Achievement: Fully met.

Objectives

6. Align Disability Resources mission, vision, goals and objectives to Student Life and University goals.

Action Steps Taken: Disability Resources has made gains in better connecting our mission, vision, goals and objectives to larger university initiatives. For example, an objective for 2014-2015 was to participate in the Chancellor's Task Force on Accessibility, which fits into UMD Goal 2, as well as Student Life goal areas 2, 4, and 5. Ensuring alignment of these elements will be an ongoing priority of this office and we will strive to meaningfully consider and integrate the work of this office with the priorities of Student Life and the UMD campus.

Status of Objective Achievement: Ongoing.

Assessment

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Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Student knowledge of disability.

Results: Students were asked to engage in role play discussion on how to share information related to their disability diagnosis, related impact, and accommodations necessary to achieve equal access. A rubric was developed (below, developing, meets) to evaluate student performance in the following three areas:

1. Understanding Diagnosis (able to articulate and demonstrate understanding of diagnosed disability condition)
 2. Functional Limitations (able to state impact of disability in the academic setting)
 3. Accommodations (able to identify accommodations necessary to achieve equal access)
- 80% of students in the sample were assessed at “meets expectations” in the area of understanding diagnosis. Students who meet expectations know and understand the major diagnosis included in their documentation.
 - 70% of students in the sample were assessed at “meets expectations” in the area of functional limitations. Students who meet expectations know their disability diagnosis and can provide thorough feedback on impact of disability in the academic setting.
 - 60% of students in the sample performed at the “meets expectations” level in the area of accommodations. Students who meet expectations have knowledge of what accommodations are needed in order to have access in the classroom.

A similar role play discussion in which students were asked to articulate how disability impacts academic performance and needed accommodations was conducted in 2010. At that time, 25% of students were “proficient” in their ability to state the impact of their disability. Similarly, 25% of students in the 2010 assessment were able to state their needed accommodations.

Assessment data suggests that students are showing continued improvement in self knowledge of their disability.

Assessment

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Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

2. Student confidence in advocating for accommodations.

Results: Using Campus Labs, students were asked to respond to a brief survey in which they indicated their level of agreement with the following items. Options for responses included strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

1. I feel confident talking with my professors about my disability and related accommodations.

- 73% of students indicated a favorable response (strongly agree or agree) in confidence talking with professors.

2. I feel confident in my ability to explain the impact of my disability when talking with my professors about accommodations.

- 80% of students indicated a favorable response in confidence explaining the impact of their disability

3. Discussions with my Disability Resources specialist have helped me to understand and explain accommodations I need.

- 80% of students indicated a favorable response to the role of their Disability Specialist helping them to understand and explain accommodations needed for equal access.

4. My letter of accommodation helps me to feel confident and guides me in conversations about accommodations with my instructors.

- 83% of students indicated a favorable response to the role of their letter of accommodation in guiding conversations about disability accommodations.

5. My professors show a willingness to help me implement the accommodations I need.

- 83% of students indicated a favorable response to professors showing a willingness to help implement accommodations.

A similar survey conducted in 2011 indicated that 62% of students felt confident asking professors for accommodations. In that same 2011 student survey, 79% responded favorably to the role of their Disability Specialist helping them understand and explain the accommodations needed for equal access. 67% of students responded favorably to the role of the letter of accommodation guiding conversations about accommodations, and 51% of students in 2011 responded favorably to professors demonstrating an interest in their letter of accommodation.

Assessment data suggests that students are demonstrating increased confidence in advocating for accommodations.

Disability Resources by the Numbers

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389 students served



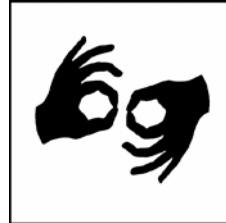
3277 tests proctored



210 alternative format textbooks



970 student appointments



991 interpreting hours



85 outreach activities



163.5 hours of media captioned



93 note taker requests

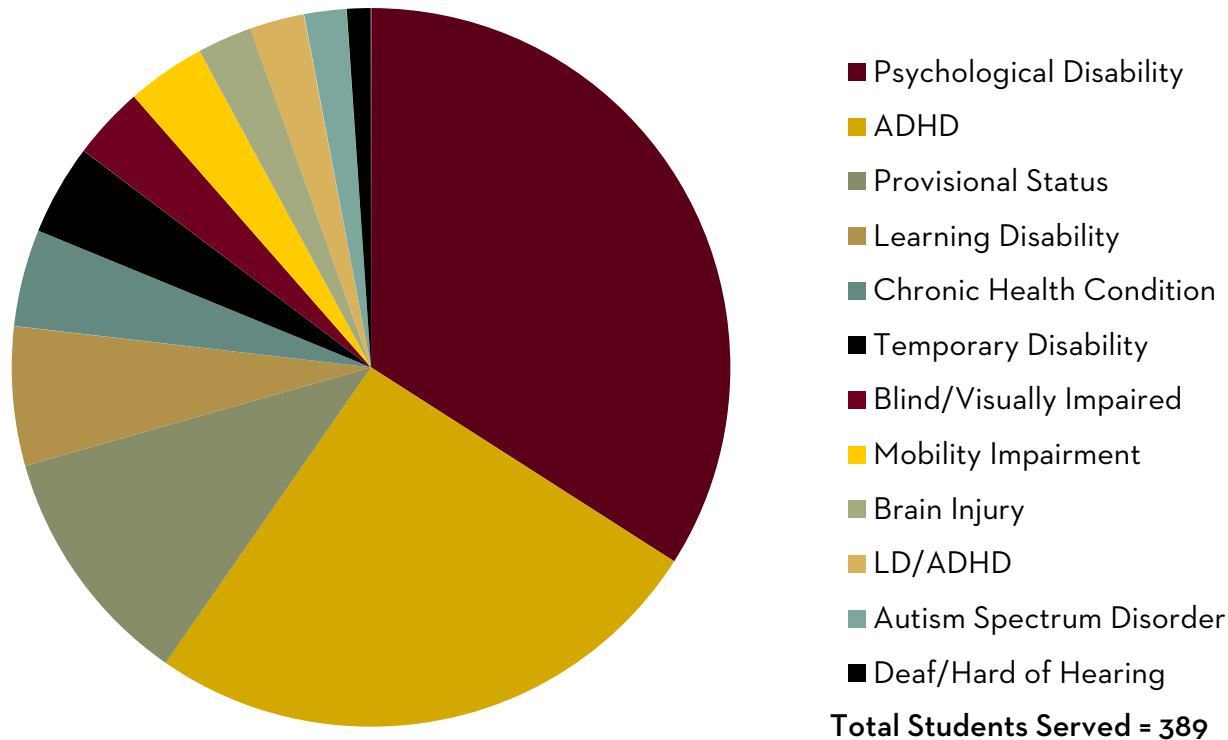


166 applications for admission reviewed

A Closer Look at Students Served

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Students by Disability Category

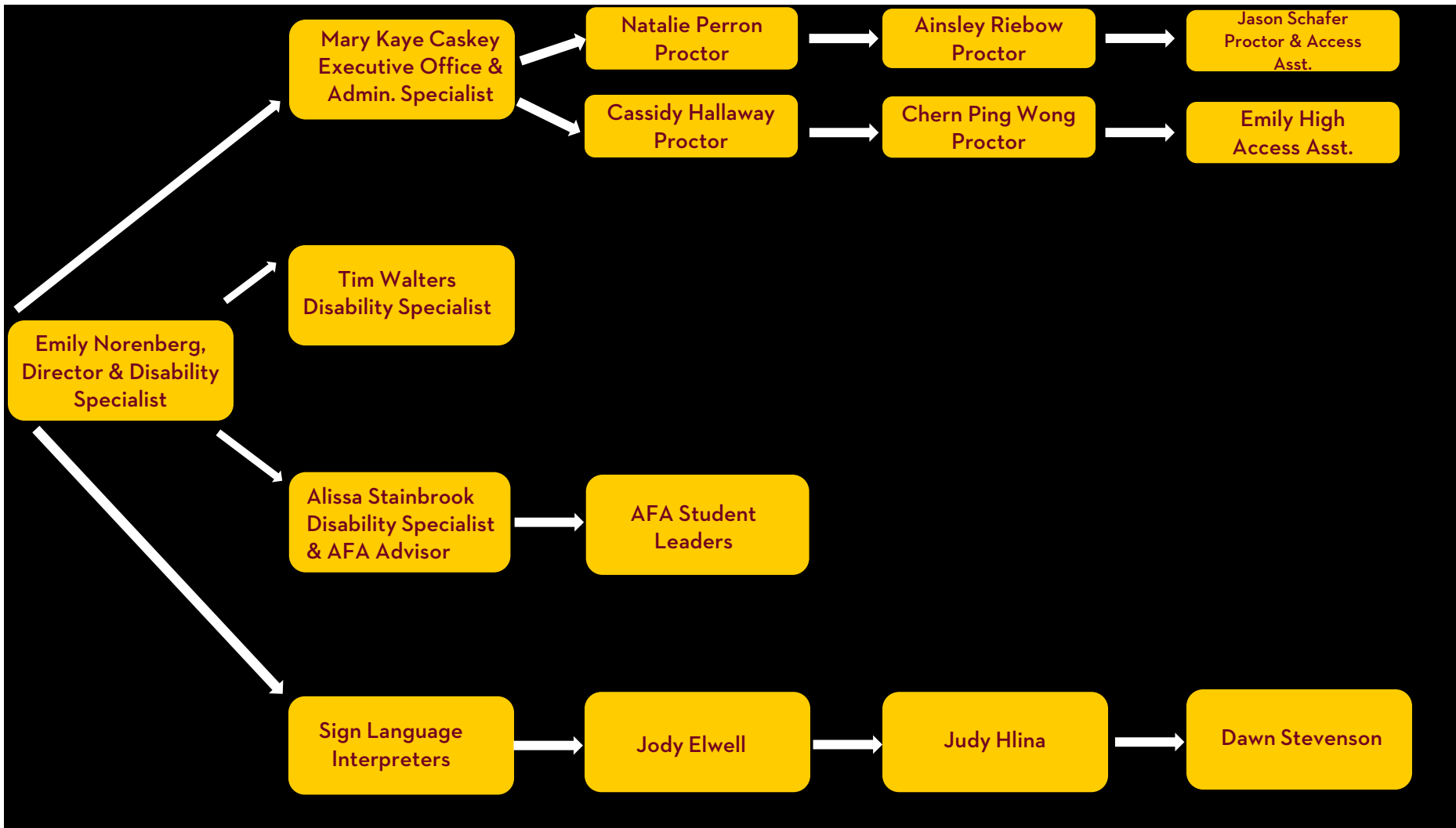


A few notes about this snapshot of students receiving accommodations:

- Some students have multiple disability conditions. This chart accounts for the **primary disability** condition reported.
- **Provisional Status** refers to students who are receiving accommodations temporarily (no longer than 1 semester) while either working with a medical professional to explore a disability diagnosis, or to obtain documentation of a previously diagnosed disability.

Disability Resources Organizational Chart

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Budget - Disability Resources

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Disability Resources Budget

Data as of Tuesday, 06/16/2015

Fiscal Year	2014-2015	
Prior Year Carry Forward		
Fiscal Year End Carry Forward	14,663	
Total Carry Forward	14,663	
Revenue		
State O&M Appr Redistribution	339,636	
Student Fees	4,000	
Total Carry Forward + Revenue	358,299	
Expenses		
Payroll	231,097	
Fringe	64,865	
27th PD Accrual PR & Fringe	822	
General Oper Supplies and Services	13,783	
Telecommunications	1,328	
Travel	3,430	
Federal Non-Reimbursable	423	
Consulting and Professional Services	475	
Non-Capital Equipment	0	
Short Term Rents & Leases/Bldg/Fac	407	
Repairs and Maintenance	305	
Enterprise Assessment	3,783	
Total Expenses	320,717	
Transfers		
Transfers In	11,761	
Transfers Out	(4,239)	
Total Transfers	7,522	
Ending Balance	45,104	

Budget - Central Fund for Accommodations

Central Disability Accommodations Fund

Data as of Tuesday, 06/16/2015

Fiscal Year	2014-2015
Prior Year Carry Forward	
Fiscal Year End Carry Forward	0
Total Carry Forward	0
Revenue	
State O&M Appr Redistribution	70,816
Student Fees	0
Total Carry Forward + Revenue	70,816
Expenses	
Payroll	41,139
Fringe	9,401
27th PD Accrual PR & Fringe	225
General Oper Supplies and Services	8,198
Telecommunications	0
Travel	0
Federal Non-Reimbursable	0
Consulting and Professional Services	78,633
Enterprise Assessment	702
Total Expenses	138,297
Transfers	
Transfers In	579
Transfers Out	0
Total Transfers	579
Ending Balance	(66,902)

A few notes on the Central Fund for Accommodations:

The Central Fund was established in 2010 to ensure that UMD would have sufficient funds to cover the cost of reasonable accommodations for students and guests with disabilities.

Accommodations covered by the UMD Central Fund for Accommodations include, **but are not limited to:**

- Sign language interpreting
- Audio description
- Textbooks in alternative formats (Braille and e-text)
- Conversion costs for books in alternative formats,
- Note-takers and SmartPens
- Proctored exams
- Specialized software
- FM systems and t-coil systems for hard of hearing students/visitors
- Captioning of videos when required for course access

These costs are difficult to predict since the number and needs of students and visitors requiring reasonable accommodations vary from year to year.

2015-2016 Strategic Plan - Goals

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UMD Disability Resources Goals	Mapped to University Goals	Mapped to Student Life Goals
<p>Goal Area 1: Learning</p>		
<p>Create learning experiences to help students know and understand of the impact of their disability condition.</p>	1	1.1
<p>Provide learning experiences so students will understand their rights and responsibilities under ADA and Sec 504.</p>	1	1.1
<p>Provide learning experiences and resources to help students know how to use accommodations and services.</p>	1	1.1
<p>Goal Area 2: Cultural Competence and Equity</p>		
<p>Provide information and educational opportunities to help campus partners become aware of the legal obligations pertaining to accessibility for students with disabilities.</p>	2	2.1
<p>Provide information and educational opportunities to help campus partners understand how to use accommodations, services and resources pertaining to ensuring access to students with disabilities.</p>	2, 1	2.1, 1.1
<p>Goal Area 4: The “Student Life” Experience</p>		
<p>Partner with other campus offices/services to increase awareness of the importance of inclusive and accessible course media and technology.</p>	2, 5	4.2, 2.2
<p>Goal Area 5: Resources</p>		
<p>Apply a strategic, visionary, student-focused and sustainable approach in developing, managing, and continually assessing human, fiscal, physical, and technological resources.</p>	5	5.1
<p>Utilize resources effectively, ethically, and efficiently through stewardship and collaboration.</p>	5	5.2

2015-2016 Strategic Plan - Objectives

1. Continue to foster and develop a partnership with Career and Internship Services to provide resources and targeted learning opportunities to students with disabilities preparing to enter the work force.
2. Monitor progress towards advancing accessibility of technology by participating in appropriate teams/committees and continue to advise campus leadership, faculty and staff on the legal requirements, and value of, technological accessibility.
3. Promote Read and Write Gold - a reading, writing and study tool designed to support the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities - to students, staff and faculty.
4. Engage in database implementation planning, including the following tasks: identifying the goals and needs of the new database product, defining a timeline for purchasing the product, partnering with the appropriate units to install the product, designing a training plan, and notifying key campus partners.
5. Launch redesigned Disability Resources website that emphasizes clarity of navigation and welcoming, inclusive language while using a fully accessible Drupal or Dreamweaver template.
6. Develop and implement a presentation for faculty partners pertaining to current trends in disability and higher education which includes these key features: technology accessibility, increases in students with mental health conditions, service animals versus emotional support animals, and disability as an aspect of diversity.
7. Implement the Employee Engagement Action Plan, which focuses on collaborative team building and supportive problem solving.

2015-2016 Strategic Plan - Assessment

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Student Learning Outcomes

1. Student knowledge of ADA rights and responsibilities
2. Student employee professionalism

Program Outcomes

1. Evidence of achievement of Objective 1: Resources and learning opportunities for students with disabilities entering the workforce
2. Evidence of achievement of Objective 2: Continue to engage in work related to advancing technology accessibility
3. Evidence of achievement of Objective 3: Promote Read and Write Gold to the campus community
4. Evidence of achievement of Objective 4: Development of plan for implementing new database
5. Evidence of achievement of Objective 5: New accessible website for Disability Resources
6. Evidence of achievement of Objective 6: Development and implementation of faculty presentation
7. Evidence of achievement of Objective 7: Implementation of Employee Engagement Action Plan

Looking ahead to 2015-2016...

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2014-2015 was an incredible year for Disability Resources! This year presented challenges that compelled our team to think about how to continually meet the needs of the students, faculty, and staff that rely on this office for support in ensuring equal access to UMD's programs and services.

2015-2016 will be a year of great achievement and innovation as well. In the year ahead, our team will work on advancing our work in technology - as an aid to learning, as a tool to improving office processes and efficiency, as well as communicating the message that technology is a place of public accommodation. We'll work to be an even more connected, highly functioning team. And we'll continue to partner with our colleagues in Student Life to ensure that our students are prepared to flourish after leaving UMD.

The Disability Resources team looks forward to continuing to make meaningful contributions in advancing access in our division and in the campus community.

