



2023 Disability Resource Center Executive Report

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UtahState
University

Utah State University has a long-standing commitment to disability access, dating back over 55 years. Creating a campus community that is accessible, inclusive, and welcoming of disabled people is a shared responsibility, but the Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves as the cornerstone of this important work. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is designated by the University to provide centralized services, resources, and programs that facilitate equal access for disabled students, and guests of the University.



This annual report features key accomplishments, initiatives, and data from the 2022-2023 academic year, which highlight the DRC's unwavering commitment to empowering student success through equal access.

DRC Vision

A university that is equally accessible,
inclusive, and welcoming to all students.



DRC Mission

Our mission is to facilitate equal access to all university programs, services, and activities by collaborating with the university community, promoting principles of Universal Design, celebrating disability as a natural aspect of diversity, and coordinating reasonable accommodations.



DRC Team

The Disability Resource Center is operated by a team of six full-time staff members and two three-quarter-time employees. Additionally, the DRC engages 15-25 part-time staff and student employees, with the exact number varying based on the requirements of each semester.



David Pruden

Director



Karma Black

Assistant
Director



Lauren

Cordova
Accessibility
Consultant



Karl Burnside

Accessibility
Consultant



Marie Nielsen

Deaf and Hard of
Hearing
Accessibility
Consultant



Sydney

Larsen
Staff Assistant



Jake

Grossman
Accessible
Materials
Coordinator



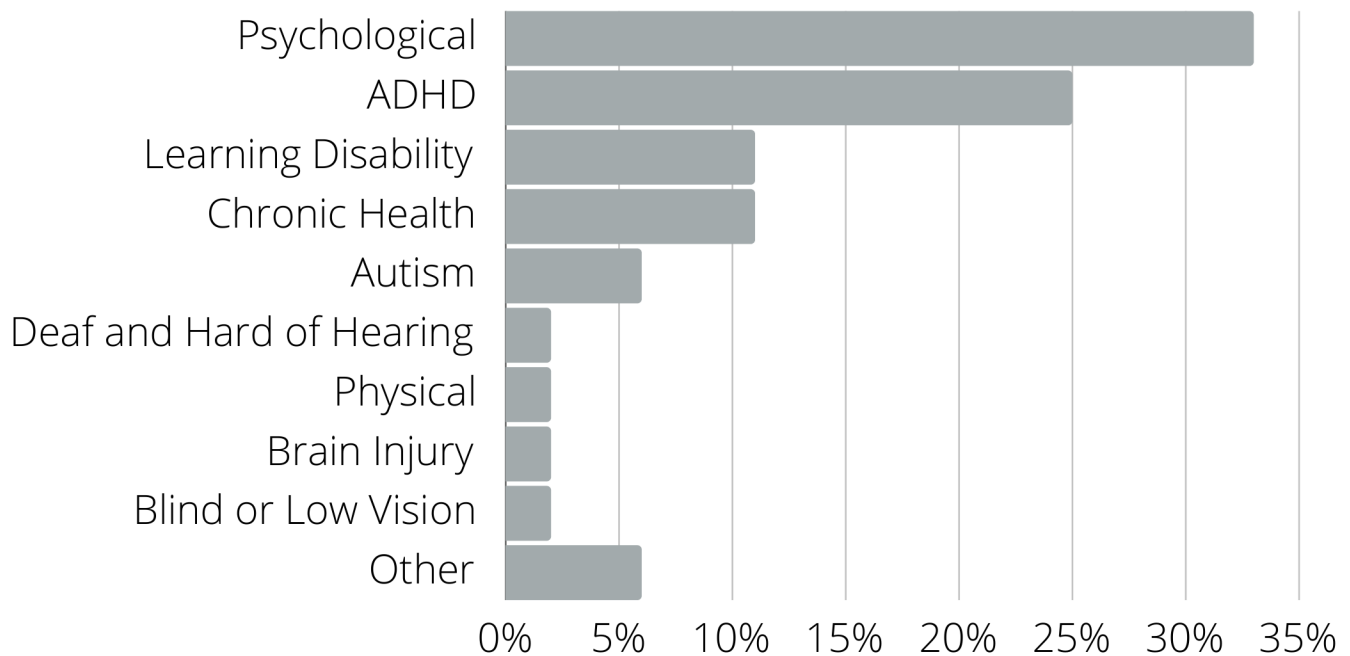
Courtnie

Eddington
Accommodated
Testing
Coordinator

Disabled Students



- About 20% of USU students have a disability.
- The DRC works with over 2,500 students each year.
- Most disabled students have an invisible disability.
- More than half of disabled students have co-occurring disabilities



Psychological disabilities are the most common category for which students seek accommodations.

The number of students with chronic health conditions and autism have also increased relative to other disability categories.

DRC Growth

Over the past few years, the DRC has experienced a significant increase in the number of students seeking accommodations. Three key indicators of this rise can be seen in the increased number of applications for services, the number of initial appointments completed, and the number of course accommodation requests submitted in our online accommodation management system, Aggie Access.

Key Indicators of DRC Growth			
	2019-2020 School Year	2022-2023 School Year	Percent Increase
Applications	918	1,266	37%
Initial Appointments	584	1,071	83%
Course Accommodation Requests	4,439	6,486	46%

In addition to the increase in overall accommodation requests, there has also been a significant increase in the complexity of the requests. Accommodation requests for attendance and due deadline extensions have seen the most dramatic increases commensurate with the dramatic rise in students with mental health and chronic health conditions in higher education. Both attendance accommodations and due deadline accommodations require Accessibility Consultants to spend considerable time interacting with the student making the request and faculty members in whose class the accommodation has been requested.

Accommodations

While Utah State University seeks to be proactively accessible, accommodations may still be necessary. The University is committed to providing students with disabilities reasonable accommodations. This is done through a centralized approach with the DRC as the officially designated unit for reviewing and coordinating student accommodation requests. Accommodations can be requested for anything related to the university experience.

Exam Accommodations

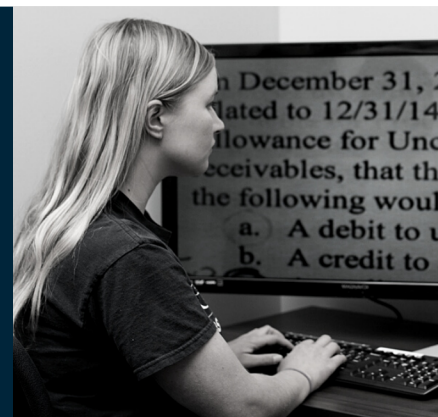
Exam accommodations are intended to mitigate the impact of barriers in a standard test setting for students with disabilities. Examples of exam accommodations might include additional time, reduced distraction, assistive technology, or auxiliary aids. Accommodations are provided within Canvas, at USU Testing Centers, and in the Disability Resource Center.

Exam Accommodation Data 2022-2023 by Semester				
	Number of Students	Course Accommodation Requests	DRC Administered Exams	Reduced Distraction Testing Room Exams
Sumer 2022	138	329	12	64
Fall 2022	670	2547	464	1,450
Spring 2023	686	2595	442	1,626

Accessible Materials

The Accessible Materials Team works to create course materials for students whose disability impacts their use of traditional print.

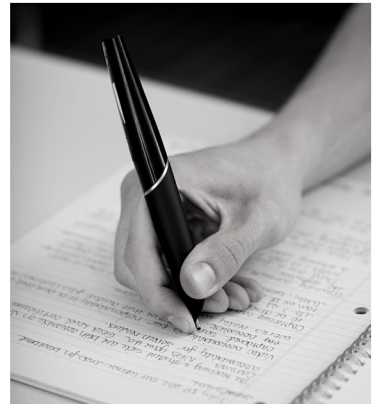
- 1,747 documents totaling 20,069 pages converted for accessibility.
- 363 books converted for accessibility.



Accommodations

Lecture Recording and Notetaking

Notetaking support is provided for students through several different methods including peer notetakers and assistive technology like Livescribe Smartpens, Glean, and Otter Ai.



Student Notetaking Accommodation Methods			
Glean	Otter Ai	Livescribe Smart Pen	Peer Notetaker
213	63	61	30

Interpreting, Transcribing, and Captioning



While the number of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students remains lower than in the past, providing high quality interpreting and transcribing remains critically important. During the 2022-2023 school year the DRC provided **1,368 hours of ASL interpreting** and **1,064 hours of live transcribing** for students.

The DRC also **captioned 71,901 minutes of video** for 3,975 videos in 287 classes.

Housing Accommodations

The DRC reviews and coordinates accommodations in housing. The two most common requests are for private rooms and for Emotional Support Animals. Requests for both of these accommodations have increased over the past few years in keeping with the dramatic increase in students experiencing significant mental health conditions. During the 2022-2023 school year **the DRC approved 119 Emotional Support Animals in housing.**

Notable Changes

Fall 2022

- Adjusted the ESA process to improve turnaround times.
- Updated internal process manuals to reflect current processes and procedures.
- Deployed Glean lecture recording and notetaking technology.
- Provided support/training for new Accessibility Consultant (first fall semesters require coordinated support from the whole office to develop and train a new consultant).
- Worked on move to new website.

Spring 2023

- Moved caption work under the Accessible Materials Coordinator.
- Worked with CIDI and Digital Learning and Innovation to develop Canvas reports to guide caption work.
- Set a goal to reduce three hours turnaround time caption requests to less than 10 percent.
- Increased supervision and training of hourly student employee's.
- Evaluated software options for text-to-speech software to improve digital voice quality.
- Worked with ServiceNow Team to develop internal software.
- Prepared budget request for new Accessibility Consultant Position.

Goals for the Coming Year

- Creating support programs for neurodiverse students.
- Updating faculty and departmental training materials.
- Implement new technologies to further enhance accessibility and communication.
- Advocate for increased awareness and understanding of disability-related issues within the university community.

Conclusion



The 2022-2023 academic year has seen significant growth in demand for the Disability Resource Center's services, emphasizing the importance of the university's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. As we move forward, we are committed to building upon our successes, embracing new challenges, and ensuring that every student, regardless of disability, has the opportunity to fully participate at Utah State University.

Together, we can create a vibrant learning environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to achieve their full potential.

