

Student Accessibility Services

Annual Report: May 2008

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1. **WHAT STUDENTS SAY (TESTIMONIALS)**

“After the class she spoke to me individually and described what a difference it has made for her to have a definite diagnosis and strategies to enhance her learning.”

“You certainly have made a tremendous difference for many of our nursing students.”

“I want to thank you for all of your support and encouragement this past year. You have been so helpful and it is truly appreciated.”

“I am writing to thank you for all of your help over the years and teaching me to cope with my learning disability. I feel an overwhelming sense of accomplishment being able to work independently on my papers last semester. I wanted to pass on the good news to you. I enjoy a great deal of satisfaction now being able to work independently. Thank you for instilling that confidence in myself! I hope you are able to help many more students, like myself. You are making such a positive contribution to so many lives. Keep up the excellent work!”

“I really appreciate all your time, effort and support.”

“Thanks again for your assistance with my needs.”

“I just want to say thank you soo much! I got 100% on my math midterm and 86% on my biology midterm! I can't believe it!!! I can't thank you enough for setting me up for success! I never thought it was possible. I guess I proved the theory, “you can do anything you set your mind to”.”

“Thank you so much! I feel like I'm getting somewhere!”

“I can't believe I am already finished of my first year at UPEI! I would like to thank you for everything you did for me this year!”

2. **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the year's activities, statistics, success and challenges and recommendations for the future.

The general highlights and key achievements for 2007-08 are:

- Continued to increase campus awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of people who have disabilities
- Provided out-reach sessions to AVC, School of Nursing and the Transitions Program

- The Accessibility Audit was accepted by the President and two Vice Presidents
- Celebrated the Plan for Accessibility with an official Launch, chaired by Wade MacLauchlan
- Improved accessibility on campus was included in the President's State of the University address
- The assistive software obtained from the Easter Seals was installed across campus
- Worked successfully with Dr. Carla Digiorgio (Faculty of Education) on research study involving students and faculty
- Enhanced the mentoring services
- Worked with Health and Safety and Security to improve physical access on campus
- Continued to tighten and improve test and exam procedures
- Completion of and access to new renovated facilities in the Webster Centre.

3. NUMBER OF ENTROLLED STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES BY DEGREE PROGRAM

Degree Program	# of Students with Disabilities
Arts	130
AVC	4
Business	4
Math & Computer Science	6
Nursing	9
Education	2
Science	14
Family & Nutrition Science	4
Engineering	1
Total:	174

3.1 STATISTICS

- The above numbers indicate a 24% increase in the number of students with disabilities over the 2007 academic year even though 15 students graduated in 2007.
- 51% of these students have learning disabilities
- 50 students self-referred for academic assessments during the 2007-08 academic year.

4. TYPES OF DISABILITIES REPORTED BY STUDENTS*

- Learning Disability
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Anxiety Disorder (Panic Disorder, Test Anxiety)
- Hearing Impairment
- Asperger Syndrome
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Legally Blind
- Visual Impairment
- Paraplegia
- Quadriplegia
- Head Injury/Neurological Disorder
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Lupus
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Scent Allergies
- Sleep Disorder
- Other disabilities

* Several students report multiple disabilities

5. ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES REQUIRED BY STUDENTS

- Review of documentation to determine types of assistance needed
- Letters to professors regarding disability
- Use of computer to write exams/tests
- Extended time for exams/tests
- Writing exams/tests in a quiet environment
- Need of a note-taker or access to professors' notes
- Need of a tutor and/or strategy instructor
- Proofreading of assignments
- Early access to course work
- Scribe for exams/tests
- Requirement for Read-to/Kurzweil software
- Use of tape recorder
- Enlargement of exams/tests
- Use of carbonless paper
- Use of closed-captioned TV
- Need of read-to service

- _ Use of Kurzweil, Dragon Naturally Speaking, computer software and/or other assistive technologies
- _ Need for technical training & support
- _ Additional lighting
- _ Help with language
- _ Advisory services
- _ Mentoring services
- _ documentation for Canada Student Grants, budget planning
- _ time management and study skills
- _ referrals to and from counselors
- _ screening for Learning Disability assessments
- _ provision of information on available resources
- _ case conferences with professors
- _ assistance with physical accessibility issues
- _ provision of mock exams to reduce anxiety
- _ lab exam accommodations
- _ alternate formats
- _ one-on-one support for accuracy

6. TEST & EXAMINATION ACCOMODATIONS

Statistics:

Year	# of Accommodated Tests & Exams Written by Students With Disabilities	# of Hours for Supervision & Accommodations	% Increase over the past year
2005-2006	385	1866	26%
2006-2007	555	2346.5	30%
2007-2008	689	2972	21%

Individualized supervision is required for 5 high needs students with disabilities and for 2 EAL students who have fallen under the Academic Dishonesty Policy.

- _ The attached proposal speaks to the possibility of a further expansion of test and exam accommodation services to include other students as indicated and the related issues.

7. ACCESS-ABILITY COMMITTEE

The coordinator of Accessibility Services & Adaptive Technology is the Chair of the UPEI Access-Ability Committee. During the year 2007-08 progress was made in the following areas:

- The Plan for Inclusion (plan from Audit) was accepted by the President and two Vice Presidents.
- Excellent improvements have been made to begin to enhance physical access to campus life
- The committee meets regularly with the Director of Facilities Management of plan for on-going improvements.

8. TECHNOLOGY

Many students with disabilities rely on technology and software in order to “level the playing field”. Accessibility Services is fortunate to be able to keep the hardware and software up-to-date. The technological services provide a model for and training related to what is possible for students. Students are then inspired to purchase their own technology and software.

9. GOALS FOR 2008-09 ACADEMIC YEAR:

- To install new furniture and technology in renovated facilities
- To examine and perhaps pilot an expanded test and exam concept
- To continue to build our bank of research articles regarding various faculties
- To continue outreach to faculties with a focus on the Biology faculty
- To complete the website update
- To facilitate student initiatives
- To maintain regular contact with the Access-Ability Committee and Facilities Management regarding accessibility projects as per the Accessibility Plan
- To continue to work with the Health and Safety Committee to advocate for enhanced accessibility
- To update and improve access to adaptive technology
- To complete the employee handbook
- To continue outreach to the community

10. ENHANCERS

- _ Support of Webster Centre colleagues, the Director, SMG and the President
- _ Continuously increasing numbers of students who have disabilities and require services.

11. CHALLENGES FOR 2008-09

- _ A growing and developing program in an environment of fiscal restraint
- _ Increasing numbers of students, increasing needs, same staff
- _ Short work year ie. 10 months for the Coordinator and 8 months for the Adaptive Technology Assistant. Attempting to run summer services with Summer Student.
- _ Always the potential of a shortage of physical space
- _ Possible expansion of test and exam services to further target groups (EAL, LSAT, on-line, correspondence, etc.)

12. POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF TEST & EXAM SERVICES...COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

We believe that the proposal to centralize test and exam services within our unit makes sense. However, there are some issues that will need to be dealt with in advance of the integration

- a) The need for additional funds
- b) The need for additional professional staff to ensure academic integrity (eg. proctors and extend Adaptive Technology Assistant from 8 months to 10 months as most of the professional exams occur in May and June)
- c) The need to ensure that test and exam accommodations for students with disabilities are the core/majority of the work.

13. LONGER-TERM PROACTIVE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- _ Improve physical accessibility to the campus of UPEI,
- _ Advocate for year-round services for students with disabilities. All other UPEI students have year-round access to required services, for example, International Students, students who require counseling and students who have intellectual disabilities. As a student with a learning disability said to President Wade MacLauchlan, *"You wouldn't ask a student who is in a*

wheel chair to leave their wheel chair at home during a certain time of year”.

14. OUTREACH

In its program to educate and advise, Accessibility Services provides printed information on accessibility issues, a website at www.upei.ca/accessibility, and provides presentations and workshops for the UPEI campus and Prince Edward Island communities.