

Disability Services for Students Annual Report 2023-2024 Fiscal Year

Slide 1: Disability Services for Students

Mission - Disability Services for Students at Western Michigan University strives to make education accessible and remove barriers to student success.

Vision – Disability Services for Students strives to strengthen full, diverse campus participation including those with disabilities. We will guide advocacy for universal design of facilities, programs, and activities. The office will promote inclusion, acceptance, respect, and empowerment.

Supports and Partnerships – Disability Services for Students supports student campus wide through accommodations, AURA, Glean, and test proctoring. Disability Services for Students has partnerships with the Autism Service Center (ASC), the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), and provide referrals to various WMU services.

Unit Overview - Disability Services for Students (DSS) serves the university with the goal of providing services for students with disabilities with the intention of retaining students, recruiting new students, providing current students support, and emphasizing student success. DSS serves as a mechanism for students to request reasonable accommodations across campus to increase the equitable access of education. During the Fall 2023 semester DSS had 1,468 students registered with the office, with 103 of those students completing their degree. During the Spring 2024 semester, DSS had 1,339 students registered, with 182 of those students completing their degree. From last fiscal year to this fiscal year, this reflects an average of a 13% increase in registered students. During the 2023-2024 academic year, DSS conducted 1,151 individual meetings with disabled students.

Responses from the Disability Services for Students end of year survey – “What do you find most beneficial about being registered with Disability Services for Students?”

- “Feeling heard, understood, and supported to be my best academic self.”
- “I find I do not have to work twice as hard as the average person to do the same task; I can be myself and take care of my needs without worrying about being looked down on or judged by my professors.”

Slide 2: Campus Supports

Accommodations - Students who have met the academic eligibility requirements and are admitted to WMU, provide documentation, such as medical records, psycho-educational testing and school records and meet with a coordinator at DSS. DSS includes the student in the process by doing an interactive process. We meet with the students and review their documentation and have conversations around their unique needs. During the meeting with the DSS coordinator, barriers and strategies, including reasonable accommodations and adjustments, are discussed to determine the requirements for providing access to learning for the student. It is essential to adhere to the rights of individuals with disabilities as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These individuals are entitled to equal access to programs and services, along with necessary protections to promote their success and integration into society (persistence*).

- Summarization of a horizontal bar graph titled 'Most Request Accommodations for Fall 23 and Spring 24'
 - o X-axis gold color is Spring '24 and brown is Fall '23. Y-Axis shows
 - Attendance Accommodation gold - 244 brown - 226
 - Individual Testing Room gold - 345 brown - 338
 - Audio Record Lectures gold - 338 brown - 351
 - Lecture Material Copes gold - 418 brown 452
 - Time and 1/2 for Quizzes, Tests, and Exams, Including Online gold - 525 brown - 577

Glean - Empowering all students to take better notes: Record classes, add notes, slides, transcripts, and more with Glean, the personal study tool for students – available on mobile, desktop, and tablet.

- Reasons for accessing Glean as a DSS student: Struggles with organization and concentration, information processing, cognitive overload, connecting materials to prior learning, deaf/hard of hearing
 - o Summarization of a graph – Student utilization of the Glean app increased from 38% in January, to 58% in February and 66% in March.

Slide 3: Campus Supports Continued

AIRA – A live, human-to-human professional assistance service for people who are blind or have low-vision, also free of cost to anyone on WMU campus.

Campus Accessibility - Western Michigan University is comparatively large campus with 39 miles of sidewalk and 26.5 lane miles of roadway. There are approximately 96 buildings on and around main campus, though not all are student related. These facts alone impact how all students, staff, faculty and visitors are able to navigate the campuses, especially for students with conditions involving mobility.

- By making WMU campus more accessible, recruitment* is increased through creating a more welcoming space for students and their families.

Test Proctoring - DSS provided test proctoring services for the 2023-2024 academic year. The purpose of testing proctoring is to aid WMU faculty and staff in providing students testing accommodations. DSS sees test proctoring as a program that services as a student retention* tool, a student support service, and a program that aids in student success.

- Summarization of a horizontal bar graph titled 'Comparison of Test Requests vs Tests Taken'
 - o X-axis shows gold as taken and brown as requested as well as numbers 0-1600 in increments of 200 and Y-axis shows:
 - Spring 24 hours gold – 1204 and brown – 1356
 - Spring 24 count gold – 587 and brown – 666
 - Fall 23 hours gold – 1255 and brown – 1395
 - Fall 23 count gold – 605 and brown – 666
- Summarization of a pie graph labeled '# of Courses with Exams Requested at DSS by College'
 - o College of Arts and Sciences - dark orange 109/180 - 60%
 - o College of Engineering and Applied Sciences - brown 28/180 - 15%
 - o Haworth College of Business - light green 22/180 - 12%
 - o College of Health and Human Services - peach 12/180 - 6%
 - o College of Education and Human Development - maroon 5/180 - 4%
 - o College of Fine Arts - dark green 3/180 - 2%
 - o College of Aviation - yellow 1/180 - less than 1%

Slide 4: Campus Partnerships

Autism Service Center (ASC) - These services are beyond the reasonable accommodations provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act and include weekly one-on-one meetings with the ASC coordinator or graduate assistant; workshops and informational sessions; organized social events; and increased communication between students and professors, staff and parents. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the ASC worked with 53 students per semester.

- Mission Statement - To improve the lives of young adults with disabilities by:
 - o Helping to reduce the barriers that exist in higher education by supporting students, staff, and faculty through training and communication
 - o Supporting students with disabilities once on WMU's campus in collaboration with DSS
 - o Helping students prepare for part-time employment during their time at WMU and for a career after attaining a degree

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) - DSS and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) have previously had a partnership built to better serve the DSS students who have been identified with blindness or low vision. As this partnership has evolved over the years, DSS has continued to support students through various services and programs. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, DSS connected students to BSBP to achieve skills around employment and independence.

- Mission Statement - The mission of BSBP is to provide opportunities to individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employment, and/or achieve maximum and meaningful independence through comprehensive rehabilitation services.

Slide 5: Campus Partnerships Continued

Referrals to WMU Services –

- Mentoring Services
 - o Mentoring for Success
 - o Peer Academic Success Coaching
 - o Peer2Peer
 - o TRIO Student Success Program
 - o TRIO Future Educator Success Program
- Tutoring Services
 - o Bronco Study Zone
 - o Writing Center
 - o Math Tutor Lab
 - o Statistics Tutor Lab
 - o Supplemental Instruction
 - o Physics Help Room
- Other:
 - o Residence Life
 - o Faculty
 - o Career Services
 - o Academic Advisors
 - o Seita Scholars
 - o Student Affairs Case Worker
 - o Counseling Services
 - o Dining Services
 - o Athletics

The Disability Services for Students (DSS) office plays a crucial role in promoting accessibility and inclusivity across campus by offering comprehensive training programs to various university departments. These sessions educate faculty and staff on disability awareness, legal requirements, and best practices for accommodating students with diverse needs.

- By equipping university personnel with essential knowledge and skills, DSS ensures a more supportive and accessible learning environment for all students.

Slide 6: Career Support

The Disability Services for Students (DSS) office provides crucial support in helping students with disabilities further their career development through collaboration with career centers and employers to improve access to job opportunities for these students.

The Gregory S. Fehribach Center - The Disability Services for Students (DSS) office serves as a liaison between students with disabilities and the Fehribach Center. These are paid, full-time internships in fields related to the student's major, with housing and transportation assistance offered when needed. Interns are matched with programs and departments that align with their academic pursuits, interests and/or career goals. Weekly professional development workshops have included topics such as interviewing skills, disclosure and self-advocacy, leadership skills and opportunities, personal finance, professional etiquette, and strategies for advancement in the workplace.

- Summarization of a bar graph titled 'Fehribach Participant Growth'
 - o X-axis shows students labeled as the color black and y-axis 0 and 10
 - o X-axis 22-23 = 2 students and 23-24 = 6 students

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) - The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) recruits college students, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities, compiling their information into a comprehensive database. This database serves as a powerful tool for federal and select private-sector employers nationwide to identify and hire qualified candidates for both internships and permanent positions. By facilitating these connections, the WRP provides students and graduates with disabilities the opportunity to showcase their abilities in the workplace, while simultaneously offering employers access to a diverse pool of skilled potential employees.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) - MRS provides vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals with disabilities, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, to prepare for and engage in employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Slide 7 – Grade Reports

Fall 2023 Grades - There were 1,468 students with disabilities enrolled during the Fall 2023 semester. 25 students withdrew from all of their classes. 103 students with disabilities were awarded degrees and 14 students with disabilities were academically dismissed in Fall 2023.

The breakdown of GPA's for the 1,468 students with disabilities is:

- GPA listed first, then number of students:
 - 4.00 = 238 students
 - 3.00-3.99 = 722 students
 - 2.00-2.99 = 293 students
 - 1.00-1.99 = 77 students
 - 0.01-0.99 = 23 students
 - 0.00 = 115 students
- Note that a 0.00 GPA is not necessarily a failing grade, because:
 - 25 students withdrew from classes
 - 38 students earned credit for their classes
 - 11 students received an incomplete for their classes
 - 20 students received an E or X for all their classes
 - 21 students had a combination of either a withdrawn class, an incomplete class, a failed class, or a credit/no credit class

Slide 8 – Grade Reports Continued

Spring 2024 Grades - There were 1,339 students with disabilities enrolled during the Spring 2024 semester. 19 students withdrew from all of their classes. 178 students with disabilities were awarded degrees and 26 students with disabilities were academically dismissed in Spring 2024.

The breakdown of GPA's for the 1,339 students with disabilities is:

- GPA listed first, then number of students:
 - 4.00 = 246 students
 - 3.00-3.99 = 642 students
 - 2.00-2.99 = 248 students
 - 1.00-1.99 = 92 students
 - 0.01-0.99 = 2 students
 - 0.00 = 89 students
- Note that a 0.00 GPA is not necessarily a failing grade, because:
 - 19 students withdrew from classes
 - 32 students earned credit for their classes
 - 10 students received an incomplete for their classes
 - 13 students received an E or X for all their classes
 - 15 students had a combination of either a withdrawn class, an incomplete class, a failed class, or a credit/no credit class

Slide 9 – Goals for the 24-25 Fiscal Year

DSS Staffing - In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, DSS plans to hire a full-time Deaf and Hard of Hearing Accommodation Specialist. This position is designed to conduct initial meetings to establish accommodations (primarily for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students), schedule American Sign Language interpreting and real-time transcription services for DSS students, and provide workshops and presentations to faculty and the campus community on best practices when accommodating Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at WMU. Having this accommodation specialist will allow DSS to provide more specialized support to students, and more training and education to the campus community. In addition, we will be able to respond to accommodation requests and meet student needs more quickly and efficiently. In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, DSS plans to hire a part-time Graduate Assistant (GA). This position is designed to create and present workshops, increase outreach and student support through social media, and assist in daily DSS operations.

Summary - Disability Services for Students (DSS) serves the university with the goal of providing services with the intention of retaining students, recruiting new students, providing current students support, and emphasizing student success. During this fiscal year, DSS has provided these services using test proctoring, coordinating accommodations, and DSS staff providing training and presentations for the faculty and staff. This has been done despite numerous challenges and changes throughout the year. Moving forward, towards the next academic year, the goal of DSS is to continue to serve as a mechanism for students to request reasonable accommodations across campus. DSS will continue to serve as a resource for the WMU community to increase equitable access to education.