The University of San Francisco
Student Disability Services

PROGRAM REVIEW
2015

Student Life
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1. Write an introductory paragraph describing the Unit and support services provided. What is the Unit trying to accomplish?

Student Disability Services, (SDS) a unit within the division of Student Life, functions to determine eligibility for services based on disability status. Disability specialists determine reasonable accommodations and services through a collaborative process between the student, faculty, and SDS staff. SDS strives to empower each student to become as independent as possible. Our services are designed to encourage independence, backed by a comprehensive system of support. The services we provide can be categorized into three areas: services to students with disabilities, services to students without disabilities, and services to the University community.

Services to Students with Disabilities:

- **Prospective Students:** SDS staff meet with prospective students and their families to provide information on the SDS program, discuss disability services offered at USF, and assist with SDS program registration.

- **Intake and Eligibility Process:** Disability specialists determine reasonable accommodations based on a collaboration between the student, faculty, and SDS staff. The student is responsible for submitting qualifying documentation to facilitate this process. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, and may change based on the nature of the course being taught or as disability status changes.

- **Academic Guidance:** SDS helps students learn to optimize their potential for success. This includes, but is not limited to, teaching time management skills, allowing access to priority registration times, guidance on course load, management, major, etc.

- **Disability Education and Management:** SDS offers guidance to students to further their understanding of their disability in the academic setting.

- **Disability Instruction:** SDS promotes self-advocacy, by educating students on how to use accommodations and communicate effectively with faculty and university staff.

- **Crisis Intervention:** SDS staff assesses and gives appropriate referrals to students in potential crisis situations. Referrals can include, but are not limited to: the Crisis Management and Behavioral Intervention Team, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Financial Aid, academic departments, or the student’s treatment provider.
• **Auxiliary Assistance:** SDS provides support for students regarding notetakers, scribes, readers, captioners, lab assistance, textbooks, writing tutors, etc.

• **Assistive Technology Training:** SDS educates students and faculty on how to access alternative media services, and use assistive technology and adaptive equipment.

• **Exam Accommodations:** SDS arranges exam accommodation services such as extended time, alternative testing environment, scribe services, document conversion, access to alternative technology, rescheduling of exams, etc.

• **Housing Accessibility:** SDS works with Student Housing and Residential Education (SHaRE) to arrange appropriate housing for students based on disability, including but not limited to: single room, access to elevator, accessible furniture, assistance animals, alternative meal plans, contract release, etc.

• **Legal Consultation/Referral:** SDS works in collaboration with University General Counsel to ensure that the University is following appropriate state and federal laws.

• **Parking/Shuttle Access:** SDS works with Public Safety to assist students with access to on-campus transportation (e.g., shuttle services, parking).

• **Employment Opportunities:** SDS participates in the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), a federal program for students with disabilities to gain interview skills and potential jobs with participating government and public agencies.

• **Referral Services:** SDS coordinates services with other offices as required (e.g., Public Safety, Student Housing and Residential Education, Facilities Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Center for Academic and Student Achievement, One Stop Enrollment and Financial Services, Dean’s Office, etc.).

• **Student Groups:** SDS advises student groups, including chapters of Project Eye to Eye and Active Minds. Project Eye to Eye is a mentoring program which pairs college students with disabilities to elementary school aged children with disabilities. Active Minds is a student group which aims to promote mental health awareness on college campuses.

**Services to Students without Disabilities:**

• **Referral Services:** University faculty and staff can refer students to SDS if they are experiencing academic difficulty, or if they think they may have a disability. SDS also provides community referral services to students (e.g. medical, mental health, therapeutic, etc.).
• **Free Screening for Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** SDS provides free screening for all USF students who think they may have a learning disability and/or ADHD.

• **Academic Guidance:** SDS provides on-going academic support to non-disabled students who contact the office for help (e.g. students who are struggling in their courses, in the process of getting diagnosed with a disability, etc.)

**Services to the University Community:**

• **Campus Wide Awareness:** SDS provides faculty, staff and student staff training around university policy and procedures, such as, disability awareness week, fall open house, parent and family workshops at New Student Orientation, and student panels. This promotes a multicultural understanding of disability issues for all USF students and the wider university community.

• **Consultation:** SDS provides consulting support to all University programs and departments on a wide range of access issues (e.g. physical, academic, etc.)

• **Student Employment Opportunities:** SDS provides employment opportunities to the student community (e.g. note takers, writing/content tutors, scribes, etc.).

• **Community Partnership:** SDS provides consultation services for service units at other educational institutions.

2. **Describe how the Unit’s mission is aligned with the University of San Francisco’s Mission and strategic priorities.**

The mission of Student Disability Services, (SDS) is to help USF students with disabilities become fully contributing and actively participating members of the University community while acquiring and developing the knowledge, skills, values, and sensitivity to become women and men for others. Toward that end, SDS promotes a fully integrated University experience for students with disabilities by ensuring that students have equal access to all areas of university life and receive appropriate educational support and services to foster their academic and personal success.

The core mission of the University is to promote learning in the Jesuit Catholic tradition. The University offers undergraduate, graduate and professional students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals, and the values and sensitivity necessary to be men and women for others. The University will distinguish itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice. The University will draw from the cultural, intellectual and economic resources of the San Francisco Bay Area and its location on the Pacific Rim to enrich and strengthen its educational programs.
The SDS mission aligns with the university’s mission by fostering diversity in the university community, and promoting a responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice. By ensuring that students with disabilities receive equal access to all areas of university life, SDS reinforces the values and sensitivities to allow students to become men and women for others. Furthermore, this aligns with the University’s strategic priority of delivering an academically rigorous education that gives students’ the skills necessary to contribute to a more just and humane world. SDS fosters learning as a humanizing, social activity rather than a competitive exercise.

SDS provides a high level of service for students throughout the university community. This service has helped establish a reputation in the greater higher education community which appeals to a diverse student body and contributes to the strategic priority of an integrated enrollment. SDS encourages students to be fully participating members of the university and ambassadors to a diverse community.

The University has identified that utilizing technology to extend USF’s reach and enrich both the learning environment and the student’s engagement as one of its strategic priorities. This folds neatly into the SDS mission to ensure equal access and provide appropriate educational support for our students. A number of our students rely on access to assistive technology in order to fully integrate themselves into the community; SDS fosters the use of this technology as a way to promote independence. The department strives to stay on the forefront of such technology, so we may provide the most comprehensive support possible.
II. HISTORY

1. What is the recent history of the administrative and / or service Unit and what are the most noteworthy changes? What changes have taken place since the last program review (if appropriate)?

SDS has changed considerably since we fully merged our two offices in 2006 when we moved into our present location in Gleeson Library. In recent history, the most noteworthy change we have made would be the digitalization of our services. Please see section VII for a more in-depth explanation of the impact of this change.

2. What is the relationship of the administrative/service unit to academic programs and other administrative units within the University (e.g., interdisciplinary programs, research centers, etc.)?

SDS students are integrated throughout the University community, and SDS holds a unique position that requires our staff to collaborate with nearly every department and academic unit on campus. Through accommodation implementation, consulting and training, SDS has opportunities to develop partnerships and address equal access concerns. SDS staff must coordinate with many academic and non-academic departments to implement and determine appropriateness of accommodations. This includes but is not limited to: Dean’s offices, Information Technology Services, Enrollment and Financial Services, Gleeson Library, Facilities Management, Public Safety, SHaRE, and Events Management.

3. Does the Unit form partnerships with other Units within the university? (e.g., academic or non-academic)? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the various units?

Please see above.

4. What were the main recommendations of the previous program review? How did the Unit and institutional administration respond to the earlier findings and recommendations? What changed after the last program review?

This is the first formal program review for SDS. However, there was an informal review conducted by an outside expert in the area of campus-wide accessibility in January 2011.

The recommendations made to SDS included establishing an earlier “touch point” for new students regarding information about SDS. Prior to 2011, SDS did not contact new and incoming students directly; students had to contact SDS first to get information about our services. After 2011, SDS implemented a procedure where all deposited students (i.e. accepted students who made a tuition deposit indicating their intent to enroll at USF) were sent an informational email from SDS. This email describes our services and invites
students with disabilities who think they may need accommodations to register with our office.

Another recommendation was for SDS to explore ways to “decentralize” our services (e.g. assistive technology solutions, housing accommodations, physical access issues, online education, etc.) so that SDS staff, who are already overburdened with ever increasing caseloads, would not have to acquire expertise across so many different areas; establishing equal access specialists in a variety of campus departments and programs would be the goal. This would also further the idea that equal access is a University-wide responsibility. SDS has made progress in this very important and daunting area, but we have more work ahead of us.

5. If this is the first program review, discuss the origins of the Unit. Why was the Unit created?

Disability services at USF began inauspiciously as a post hoc response to student needs. In the post-WWII era, students with visible disabilities (e.g. mobility impairments, vision impairments, and hearing impairments) were slowly integrated into the higher education community, thanks in large part to the passing of the GI Bill. At USF, there was no designated office, and services to students with disabilities were marginal at best. Unfortunately, this was a common practice on many college campuses. The University then created an office to provide services to students with visible disabilities. In the 1980s, as understanding of learning disabilities (LD) increased and more students with LDs were admitted to colleges and universities, USF opened another office dedicated to supporting this growing student population. At that time, the two offices, Disability Related Services and Learning Disability Services, were under two different divisions, (Academic Services and Student Affairs, respectively). During the academic year 1999-2000, these two offices merged under Academic Services under the new name Student Disability Services in order to provide a more comprehensive and streamlined experience for students, although policies and procedures remained distinctly different for each office. In January 2006, following the renovation of Campion Hall (now Kalmanovitz Hall), the two offices were fully merged and relocated to our present location in the lower level of Gleeson Library.

5a. GLEESON LIBRARY

1. What is the relationship of the administrative/service Unit with the Gleeson library? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the units?

2. How do the services offered by the Gleeson Library support the Unit’s goals and objectives?
The resources available to students through Gleeson Library play a major role in students’ academic success. SDS ensures that all students with disabilities are provided equal access to such resources. This includes connecting our students directly to library staff and coordinating alternative media for library resources. Our Alternative Technology Coordinator works with library staff to ensure books, periodicals, and other resources can be made available in an alternative format. In addition to this, it should be noted that we foster a close relationship with the library staff due to our location within Gleeson Library. The Library staff are generous with their time and resources (such as meeting space) whenever the need arises.

5b. UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

1. What is the relationship of the administrative/service Unit with the University Ministry? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the units?

2. How do the services offered by the University Ministry support the Unit’s goals and objectives?

SDS meets weekly with a representative from University Ministry as part of our work on the Crisis Management and Behavioral Intervention Team (CMBIT). In our work triaging certain students, we are cognizant of the unique role that University Ministry holds on campus to help us with this task. When we have students who may be in crisis, but are not necessarily eligible for hospitalization or other professional services, we often call upon University Ministers (UM). We have asked the UMs to check in on our students in the Residence Halls, or make themselves available for spiritual counsel to our off-campus students.
III. ADMINISTRATION/SERVICE UNIT GOALS

1. List the goals that will allow the Unit to fulfill its mission. Please provide a curriculum map aligning the University Mission, Unit goals, and the services provided.

Program Goals:

1. Students with disabilities will have a comprehensive understanding of their disability and how it impacts them.
2. Students will identify and engage strategies that effectively offset disability and enhance academic success.
3. SDS will increase disability awareness within the USF community.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to clearly articulate their accommodation needs to others.
2. Students will be able to complete the process for requesting and receiving reasonable accommodations at USF.
3. The University community will increase awareness of disability-related issues and share responsibility of making the USF experience accessible for all.

2. For each goal list measurable objectives (it’s not about the number of goals or outcomes but rather about generating evidence that support the Unit fulfill its stipulated mission). That is, what a student should know, do and value as a result of utilizing the services.

1. SDS will assess students at various times in their college experience on how knowledgeable they are about their disability and how it impacts them. SDS will do this by adding a question to the application for services that asks: “If you have been diagnosed with a disability, please rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 5 (or an applicable Likert scale) how knowledgeable and confident you are with understanding your disability and how it impacts you”. We will also ask them, “Do you know how to articulate your accommodation needs to your professors or University staff?” These questions will be asked again periodically at various times during their academic experience (i.e. after a LD/ADHD screening, when getting registered, once a year, or post-graduation).
2. Through online and/or in-person tutorials students learn how to utilize the SDS database system, which includes requesting accommodations, access to faculty notification letters, and actively utilizing their accommodations. Outcomes will be measured by whether or not student requested accommodations and utilized them.
3. SDS will design and implement various disability awareness programs (e.g. Disability Awareness Week, faculty and staff trainings, community outreach, guest speakers, etc.) throughout the academic year. Outcomes will be measured through participant feedback and surveys.
3. How do these goals facilitate the Unit’s overarching mission geared toward supporting student learning, development and/or academic success?

These goals promote and uphold the department’s overarching mission by increasing self-awareness and self-advocacy skills within our students, and facilitating their full integration into the USF community. By the very nature of participating in our services, students are receiving appropriate educational support to foster their academic and personal growth. Our students’ successful integration into the full university experience will be achieved by such engagement and programming opportunities.
IV. QUALITY ASSURANCE

1. What services/products does the Unit provide? Whom do they serve?

SDS provides services to students with disabilities to ensure equal access to all University programs and services. (Please see Section I for a detailed list of services provided).

2. How does the Unit learn about the needs of those served and obtain feedback regarding service delivery?

Through standardized policies and procedures (see Appendix A, SDS Student Handbook) that are reflective of applicable federal, state, and local laws, SDS assesses the equal access needs of qualified students with disabilities through a collaborative and interactive process. The interactive process includes the student, faculty, and staff. SDS obtains service delivery feedback through a variety of methods (e.g. student/faculty surveys, one-on-one feedback with the disability specialist, program assessments, etc.).

3. How does the Unit know it is meeting the stakeholder’s needs?

First and foremost, SDS knows it is meeting students’ needs when the intake, eligibility, and accommodation process is put into place and the student is receiving reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Because of the unique needs of students with disabilities, it is the responsibility of SDS to work with faculty, staff, and administration to ensure that students with disabilities receive equal access to all University programs and services. As such, each of these entities holds a specific stake in SDS services. Using a variety of assessment methods (e.g. department trainings, surveys, unsolicited feedback, and focus groups), SDS receives feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness and efficiency of our policies and procedures.

In addition to formal assessment tools, SDS maintains strong relationships with other departments and works in collaboration to ensure these departments understand both their role and the role of SDS in the accommodation process. Additionally, SDS participates in yearly retreats with our colleagues in other student service departments (CASA, the Learning & Writing Center, etc.) to collaborate and update changes on an annual basis.

4. What are the Unit’s planning, decision-making, and evaluation processes?

SDS employs a variety of methods to facilitate our planning, decision-making, and evaluation processes. These methods include formal measures such as retreats, weekly consultation (e.g. specialist meetings, meetings with other departments, etc.), and SDS staff meetings. Informal methods include drop-in consultation within and outside the department, and soliciting feedback from other institutions. SDS uses collaboration and consultation to discuss, determine and implement change at every level of service.
Additionally, through a deliberate, consistent process, SDS engages its staff and the stakeholders it serves. The evaluation process involves student/faculty surveys, focus groups, dispute resolution processes, one-on-one meetings with specialists and outside consultations with various professionals. Students are engaged in the evaluation process by completing a survey on the services provided by SDS, every other year.

5. How do stakeholders learn about and access the services/products provided by the Unit?

Students learn about SDS through a variety of ways: media, print, direct mail, referrals, campus resource fairs, etc. Once the student has begun the intake and eligibility process, students then meet with a disability specialist to learn how to utilize services. In these one-on-one meetings, the student is informed of his or her rights and responsibilities, how to request accommodations, sign up for exams, talk to professors about accommodations, etc. SDS provides online tutorials through their website for students and faculty on utilizing services. SDS also provides in-person trainings to faculty and staff at various times of the year by attending faculty and staff meetings. We work closely with other departments (such as CASA, LWC, CAPS) to teach them about our processes so they can refer students to use services. SDS is also available for faculty and staff on a consultation basis regarding individual student cases.

6. How does the Administrative/Services Units compare with peer institutions in terms of structure, responsibilities, size and budget? Specify the criteria by which these institutions were selected for comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Students Registered with DS office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fordham University</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>7,605</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquette University</td>
<td>11,782</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Louis University</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We selected peer Jesuit institutions of relatively similar size to compare caseload information. We contacted these schools in the Fall of 2013 and found variation with the number of students they had registered, relative to size of the institution. SDS has one of
the highest percentage of students with disabilities registered. One can expect that 10.9% of the student population will disclose that they have a disability at any given time (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Digest of Education Statistics, 2012). Most schools have between 6-7% of their population registered on their caseloads; SDS has 8% registered (Canadian University Survey Consortium [CUSC], 2002). By virtue of the fact that we have registered so many of our students speaks to not only our reputation on campus, but our reputation across the globe.

In terms of similarity with structure and budget, we can anecdotally conclude that we are similar to peer institutions. SDS regularly collaborates with private colleges in the Bay Area through the group we founded in 2002, the Private College Disability Resource Centers of Northern California. This group meets once a semester to learn about best practices and collaborate on policies and procedures. In addition, we are in contact with departments of disability services at other Jesuit universities (selected for their size, location and population served), as needed. We reach out to both of these groups to discuss policies, procedures, caseload numbers, as well as their administrative setup.

SDS has adequate staffing for our current caseload. However, as a full-service, comprehensive support service, we are near capacity in terms of the number of students we are able to serve. Seven years ago, the average caseload for each specialist was approximately 125; now, our caseload for each specialist is currently over 200. In addition, we are seeing more and more students use our test proctoring services. We are rapidly approaching a breaking point in terms of being able to adequately accommodate increasing student numbers with our current space and staff. As the caseload increases, we risk being out of compliance without more space and/or staffing or a drastic change in the type and level of service we provide to students.
V. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

1. Provide a budget allocation and expenditure summary for the past three fiscal years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
<th>FY 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Salaries &amp;</td>
<td>$542,322</td>
<td>$535,705</td>
<td>$557,637</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Salaries &amp;</td>
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<td>$104,508</td>
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<td>Benefits</td>
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<td>General Operating:</td>
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<td>$124,470</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc</td>
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<td>$23,936</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreters/ Captioners</td>
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<td>$133,188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY Total</td>
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<td>Summary of Balance</td>
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<td>-$95,023</td>
<td>-$36,540</td>
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We generally view our budget in two major categories: salaries and benefits, and general operating. As one can see, our professional salaries and benefits have remained steady for the past three fiscal years. Our student salaries fluctuate based on the number of accommodation requests we receive for peer notetakers, scribes, readers, and writing/content tutors.

Within general operating, the department must plan and budget for various accommodations, such as real-time captioning and sign language interpreters for our Deaf/HOH student population. Additionally, we must budget for different equipment needed for students with disabilities, such as hardware and software programs to ensure access to University courses and programs. In the past three fiscal years, one can see that there have been major fluctuations, which indicates an increase or decrease in the number of accommodation requests we receive. Please refer to Appendix D for a full budgetary report from fiscal years 2012 - 2014.
2. To what extent does the allocation of resources allow the Administrative/Service Unit to meet its goals and objectives? Is there a close alignment between the costs of running the Unit and budgeted resources?

Until recently, fiscal year 2014 (FY2014), SDS operated over budget, primarily due to the fluctuating nature of our caseload, (i.e. not knowing what students/accommodations would be needed from year-to-year) and the costs of accommodations. Even with the approval of additional budget monies to help offset the cost of accommodations, specifically, real-time captioning and sign language interpreting, SDS remained over budget for the aforementioned reasons.

Since FY2014, SDS has been able to operate within its budget while still delivering a very high level of service to the University community. SDS never compromised service delivery during its budgetary challenges.

Additionally, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, (ACA) SDS encountered new challenges in our service delivery, specifically regarding our notetaking services. Prior to the ACA, SDS compensated notetakers first via hourly, then stipend pay; a system that worked well for several years. Notetakers were paid $150 stipend for each course in which they provided notes. With the passage of the ACA, SDS could no longer compensate students via stipend, and another system had to be put in place. After many iterations and trial and error, SDS currently uses a combination of volunteer and paid (hourly) notetakers to accommodate our notetaking needs. This system is adequately meeting our needs.

3. What changes could be made to produce greater efficiencies or economics of scale (e.g., reduction, modification, elimination of paperwork, reorganization)? What constraints must the Unit address to achieve these?

With the implementation of our database system in 2012, SDS has all but eliminated the use of paper in our program; something of which we are very proud. The SDS database helps not only our students, but faculty as well. Students can register for services, request, modify and manage accommodations, communicate with their disability specialist, and sign up for exams, all with relative ease. Faculty can communicate with SDS, upload exams, and communicate exam instructions through the database. The database has enabled SDS to utilize technology to reduce paperwork, improve our day-to-day efficiency, and handle an increasing number of students up to this point.

With increasing numbers of students requesting accommodations, SDS has experienced a steady increase in exam proctoring requests, (>35% in the past 3 years). Because of space limitations, SDS has had to be very creative in securing additional space to proctor accommodated exams. Renting/borrowing rooms throughout campus, utilizing flexible scheduling, and mobile proctoring are all ways in which SDS has responded to this increasing challenge, but this is not enough. SDS would like faculty to take more responsibility in this area and either employ more universal design features in the way
that they are testing students’ knowledge, or proctor their own accommodated exams. That way, SDS could manage the increasing numbers more efficiently and effectively. It is an imperative need for SDS to explore alternative workflow options, both physical and virtual, to better meet the needs of our growing population.

As stated in the previous section, our notetaking services have gone through significant changes in the past two years. With that in mind, SDS is constantly exploring alternatives to hiring notetakers. The use of SmartPens (an assistive technology device that writes and records simultaneously and syncs with a computer) is a viable option for some students who require this service, but it is not appropriate for all students. SDS will continue to explore assistive technology solutions as we move forward. SDS will continue to work with volunteer notetakers and explore ways in which the student can become more involved in the notetaking process.

4. What improvements are possible through reallocating existing resources?

A major strength of SDS is its creativity and flexibility in accommodating university-wide changes while remaining in compliance with federal laws. Our student population is growing rapidly, which requires changes in the allocation of SDS resources. As outlined above, the budget of a disability office tends to be ever-changing, depending on the needs of particular students. For this reason, SDS regularly assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of its resources.

The move of the notetaker student employee position to a volunteer service rather than a service that was paid by stipend, has been an adjustment for both SDS and the notetakers. Ultimately, this change saved the department money, and allowed us to look more closely at how the notetaking accommodation is implemented. We have managed to fulfill a large number of notetaking requests despite removing the fiduciary incentive for many student notetakers. However, this model does put the university at risk should SDS be unable to find student notetakers who are willing to volunteer.

With our growing SDS student population, it becomes increasingly important that SDS use our current office space to its fullest potential. SDS could proctor more students productively by reallocating our current office space. This may mean new furniture in testing spaces, better insulation along the walls to address student noise complaints, and eventually constructing new private rooms for test taking. Additionally, the university class-schedule extends outside of SDS office hours, causing potential problems for proctoring within class times. This could be alleviated by adjusting staff schedules to cover a wider time span and accommodate more student schedules. These potential changes to our space and staffing could more effectively address student needs.

Currently, the most underutilized resource available to SDS is the help of the larger university community. In our move to volunteer notetakers, SDS worked to use faculty as a resource in the recruitment of volunteers. This worked very well. SDS would continue to improve by using faculty as a resource to proctor exams. SDS currently proctors over 1,000 exams every semester (e.g. 1,113 exams in Fall 2014). Many of these exams could easily be proctored in the classroom with the assistance of faculty. In addition to
spreading our proctoring responsibilities and including more faculty in the administration of exams, SDS would benefit from having more widespread support around technology services. All university students would benefit from having access to assistive technology on university computers. This could be more easily implemented with the support of ITS. An ITS Help Desk that is informed and trained in changes and improvements to assistive technology will make the use of this technology more accessible and effective for all students, but especially students with disabilities.

5. What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources?

As mentioned earlier, SDS proctors over 1,000 exams per semester. As a functioning office, the space is not fully equipped to handle this volume of testers. An additional resource that could provide potential relief for SDS staff and faculty members is a university proctoring center. This would help to improve the quantity and quality of test taking by all university students. Another area of complication arises in trying to accommodate remote or more specialized students. A potential improvement for SDS may lie in hiring two additional specialists. This may mean a specialist with more experience in accommodating law students or a specialist whose responsibilities involve travel to branch campuses. SDS would benefit from having an additional resource to help interpret and analyze student data from semester to semester. The help of a graduate student with a background in math, computer science or business could potentially help SDS assess student data more completely and regularly.
VI. ASSESSMENT

1. Provide a summary of how critical administrative processes and/or the services are assessed or evaluated in the Unit, and the results of those evaluations.

Every other year, SDS surveys our students and faculty to get both qualitative and quantitative feedback on our program and the services we provide. Survey topics include but are not limited to, the intake/eligibility process, accommodations, staff interactions, faculty/staff perceptions, University shuttle services, and facilities. The most recent survey was conducted in May 2014 (please see Appendices B and C for a full list of questions and summary data). From the most recent evaluation, the vast majority of respondents were overall very satisfied, (>96%) with the level of service and accessibility of the University’s courses and programs. Areas of improvement noted from the qualitative data include: noise complaints regarding the testing rooms and University shuttle services, such as wait times and availability.

2. List the number of students using the services provided during the most recent academic year, and the Unit’s role in tracking their success upon completion of the service.

During the past academic year, SDS served 825 students with disabilities. This number does not include the number of students who contacted us for other services, such as screening services, referral services, academic guidance etc. Considering both populations, SDS served over 1000 students during the most recent academic year, or approximately 9% of the general student population.

Tracking student success is an ongoing process to which SDS plays an active role. We track student success through GPA reports, student satisfaction surveys, and direct student feedback from the time they begin receiving services from SDS through graduation. Additionally, SDS gathers and evaluates student academic performance and non-academic satisfaction information from a variety of University programs and departments (i.e. SHaRE, Parking, Shuttle Services, Clubs and Organizations, etc.).

By the very nature of our services, SDS must constantly reevaluate the reasonableness, effectiveness, and appropriateness of our services to students with disabilities. This is primarily because of the nature of the accommodation process; students who seek and receive accommodations to gain equal access to programs and services must check in regularly with both their disability specialist and their faculty to ensure the accommodations are working. This effectively creates a “checks and balances” system where the student, SDS, and the faculty member collaborate to ensure the student is not only receiving the appropriate accommodations, but also demonstrating positive academic progress.
3. To what degree have you achieved Unit goals and outcomes?

Regarding our policy, mission, and expectation statement, and including our operating philosophy, SDS has achieved our goals and objectives of accommodating USF students with disabilities. All SDS students seeking services and accommodations for a disability are either accommodated, or if their request was unreasonable and/or inappropriate, they were redirected to appropriate University resources for further support.

Regarding our new program goals and outcomes, SDS will report on the results beginning Fall 2015.

3a. Describe how data gleaned from meaningful assessments have helped the Unit improve critical processes, Unit key functions, stakeholder needs, delivery of services and identification of best practices (continuous improvement).

Through our faculty and staff surveys SDS has improved our University shuttle services, and one-on-one interactions with disability specialists (See Appendix B). SDS began surveying students regarding their shuttle experiences in order to gain useful information about what could be improved, changed, and modified to provide a better user experience. From that, we learned that many students had negative experiences with the shuttle, primarily surrounding the availability and interaction with shuttle staff, (i.e. dispatch, drivers). SDS then met and collaborated with shuttle staff to explore ways to improve service. Outcomes included: successful implementation of two new shuttle vehicles, improved routes and service, increased customer service and disability sensitivity training for shuttle staff, and increased education for SDS students and the University community.

Another improvement in critical processes was the one-on-one interactions with disability specialists. After learning of negative interactions with SDS specialists, the Director of SDS enlisted the help of our colleagues in Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to create a training for the specialists on improving listening skills, improving sensitivity surrounding disability issues, and collaborative problem solving skills. CAPS counselors participated in the training as “disgruntled students/parents”, “non-communicative students” and “difficult faculty/staff”. The CAPS “actors” were video and audio recorded in a mock appointment with all SDS staff separately. The videos were then reviewed and critiqued by the Director of CAPS, SDS, and the individual staff members. Areas of strengths and weaknesses were noted as well as opportunities for growth. Each SDS staff member met privately with the Director of SDS to review the videos as well. Overall, it was a very good learning experience for SDS staff and led to improved student-specialist experience, (See Appendix B).

3b. Describe how data collected are used to inform and support other Academic and Non-Academic Units in the Institution.

Based on feedback from some of our earliest surveys, we dramatically restructured campus shuttle services in 2004. We purchased two new vehicles, and changed the hours
of operation to reduce wait times for the people who relied on the campus shuttle to access different parts of campus. Based on our most recent survey (see Appendix B), it is time to revisit this system. Students have requested a further reduction in wait times, and also a different system to request shuttle services (i.e. digitally). We will work closely with our Public Safety colleagues to assess the feasibility of these requests.

We have made two major changes based on unsolicited feedback from our students. The first of which is the way that our students with disabilities access tutoring support for foreign language courses. Students reported to SDS specialists and their language professors that there was a need for more comprehensive tutoring options than were currently available; prior to these changes students did not have access to foreign language content tutoring and were only allowed to practice speaking with foreign language native speakers. To address this, SDS, along with the Chair of the Modern and Classical Languages department, revamped the support system to include intense, one-on-one tutoring for SDS students authorized by their specialist.

Based on the demographic information collected through our database, we can see that we are underrepresented in the number of students we have on the caseload from the School of Education. While we can attribute some of this to the universal design of the SOE programs and courses, we can see there is a need for additional outreach to this population.

3c. Describe how staff/administrator in the Unit analyzes trends of Unit productivity (e.g., students serviced, tracking student success in academic programs, etc.)

The department obtains data on our student population every semester. The report we receive has registration information, GPA, academic probation information, and graduation dates. We are also able to see how many students on our caseload are out on a leave or withdrawn from the University. This data enables us to see how our students are doing academically, and which individual students require more outreach.

At the end of the academic year, our staff tabulates year end data. This report includes caseload information, demographic information (school/college, ethnicity, class standing, etc.), and the type and frequency of services offered throughout the year. We can also glean important prediction data, such as projected caseload numbers for the following academic year. This data is all compared to recent years, and the Director and Associate Director analyze the results. From this, they can see areas in which may need more resources and/or funding in future semesters.

3d. Describe changes made to the Administrative/Services Unit using evaluation/assessment data.

In addition to changes in critical processes, SDS has also used feedback to broaden its on campus presence. Based on feedback from a student survey, SDS, in collaboration with ASUSF, began Disability Awareness Week. This week-long event entails student panels,
disability film festivals, and a disability awareness fair. These events not only increased visibility of disabled students on campus, but also increased community awareness of disability related issues.

SDS also being reaching out to all deposited students at the beginning of each semester. This action was in direct response to a suggestion made by an outside consultant. It was also related to the underrepresentation of School of Education students.

4. What factors have facilitated or impeded the Unit’s ability to meet its goals and outcomes?

SDS is equipped with highly competent staff who are eager to improve services and deliver the highest level of care. Staff members solicit formal feedback through surveys and questionnaires. Additionally, each staff members solicits and receives informal feedback from everyday interactions with students. The SDS service delivery model is considered among best practices and contributes to the positive reputation of SDS both within and outside the USF community.

While SDS is equipped with highly competent staff, limited space and resources often impede our ability to deliver the level of service to which we aspire. The SDS office often acts as a test proctoring center; this is especially apparent during the week(s) of final exams. However, this is problematic for an office that must continue operating as a normal student service department. While SDS works tirelessly to advocate for its students on campus, systemic ignorance occasionally impedes our ability to provide students with their rightful accommodations. The role of SDS includes challenging existing stigma around service delivery and around disability, in general. This is an important role especially as it relates to social justice and cultural competence, but is a tall order for a smaller, less visible department.

5. How do faculty/staff roles support the Unit’s delivery of services? Gaps?

The interactive process of determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations involves both staff and faculty. Additionally, SDS relies on faculty and university staff for student referrals, especially in order to reach students SDS may not otherwise be able to reach. Additionally, SDS and the university must always work together to accommodate students. Disability accommodations are the responsibility of the entire University community. SDS plays a major role in the education of faculty and other staff members to ensure their understanding of their role in implementing accommodations. This can include, but may not be limited to: proctoring, housing, shuttle services and helping with the recruitment of notetakers.
VII. GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE

1. What are the Unit’s strengths? What examples of long-term excellence, recent accomplishment, or improvement characterize the Unit’s recent history? In what ways could the Unit be considered a leader in its field?

The service that SDS provides encapsulates the true meaning of "cura personalis". The department focuses on the individualized attention to the needs of the other, distinct respect for the student’s unique circumstances and concerns, and an appropriate appreciation for his or her particular gifts and insights. This is at the core of what we do, and our operating philosophy. Our services are designed to be individualized and personalized for each student. The SDS staff takes the time with each student to develop a plan that is catered to not only the student’s functional limitations, but also their strengths and weaknesses. We spend time with them in developmental conversations to allow them to grow in their knowledge of themselves, their disability, and how it impacts them. We work with them not only on how to implement their accommodations, but to educate them how to articulate their needs to others in a way that will impact them for the rest of their lives.

Furthermore, through our interactions with students, we guide them to a place of self-awareness, self-advocacy, and self-actualization, as they learn to be men and women for others. Our office is visionary and forward thinking. SDS is constantly seeking out gold standard service delivery models to ensure the highest level of service for students and the University community. This is true whether its professional development, cutting-edge technology, or research based developmental approaches to working with students.

SDS has one of the highest percentage of students with disabilities registered. One can expect that 10.9% of the student population will disclose that they have a disability at any given time (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Digest of Education Statistics, 2012 (2014-015), Chapter 3. Most schools have between 6-7% of their population registered on their caseloads; SDS has 8% registered (Canadian University Survey Consortium [CUSIC], 2002). By virtue of the fact that we have registered so many of our students speaks to not only our reputation on campus, but our reputation across the nation.

2. What are the Unit’s weaknesses? Where could the Unit improve most? What challenges or obstacles make it difficult to overcome these weaknesses? What further challenges does the faculty foresee in the coming years?

While SDS enjoys a positive reputation both on and off campus, we have identified areas in which we need to improve. One of those things is developing our ability to model appropriate limit-setting skills. We have a myriad of students contact us for services; sometimes, it is apparent that SDS is not the appropriate support service for them,
although they have been directly referred to us. This is an area in which the University community can play a more active role in supporting students.

One other area of growth is our ability to teach our students to become even more independent in their academic life. A good example of this is assistive technology. Right now, we offer one-on-one trainings with students on this technology; however, we would like to be at a place in the future where we have partnered with CIT or ITS, and have the ability to offer workshops and in-depth trainings on this technology. This is not only to benefit our students, but rather the University as a whole, as a way to move toward universal design in technology.

Another area of growth would be to better educate the University community on their rights and responsibilities when it comes to accessibility. One thing that is commonly said in our field is that it is the responsibility of the entire community to ensure that the programs and courses are accessible. However, in order for this message to be presented to the community in an effective way, we need to be able to give them the tools they would need in order to make their programs fully accessible. While we have the tools, we need to work on our ability to effectively communicate them to our staff and faculty colleagues.

3. What changes have occurred in administrative processes and/or services provided over the past five years that have influenced the Unit’s view of its role in the University and the field?

The most dramatic change that our department has undergone in the past five years has been the digitalization of our services. We had the foresight to see that the field was going digital within the next five years, and we wanted to be on the forefront of that change. The digitalization has led to more opportunity for the staff to work one-on-one with our students and have meaningful developmental conversations with them. We are better able to spend our time educating students on their rights and responsibilities rather than on time-consuming paperwork. The digitization has also helped foster independence in students through the use of the database.

Globally, one of the biggest changes that the field has undergone is a result of the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The ADAAA was signed into law in 2008 and effective in January, 2009. The purpose of the act was to reject reasonings in key court decisions which narrowly defined “disability” or “disabling condition.” The ADAAA widened the scope and depth of the definition of a person with a disability, and also broadened the individual’s rights to services and freedom from discrimination. By virtue of the fact that there was suddenly an increase in the number of people who qualify for services, there was quite an uproar in the field about the ability to fulfill these requests. However, at SDS, we had rejected the narrowly defined definition of disability for years. We knew that this narrow definition was discriminatory and wrong; we always used a broader definition of disability as part of our operating philosophy. Therefore, while other DS providers around the country experienced considerable change due to the ADAAA, we did not experience any change in our operations or policies/procedures.
Another considerable change in the past few years is on the University-level: the push to move certain programs and classes to an online format. From the beginning, SDS made appropriate changes in processes to accommodate online students. We worked with University colleagues to develop protocol and procedures for supporting students with disabilities in online courses. We also conducted a lot of reading, research, and training to ensure that the services we are providing to our online students are still held to the same high standard of service.

Finally, we created an Assistive Technology position within our department. Now, as part of the intake and eligibility process, the student and the specialist discuss the student’s experience with assistive technology and/or if the student is a good candidate for specific AT services. Once the need is established, students then have a follow up one-on-one training with our AT Coordinator. In this session, the AT Coordinator gives an overview of the assistive technology, how it works, features of the program/device, and troubleshooting issues that might come up. Follow up meetings are then set up to go over what was successful for the student and what improvements can be made with the experience. In teaching them new and effective tools to use, they can once more foster independence, self reliance and a new skill to use after degree completion.
VIII. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Describe where the staff would like the Unit to go in terms of services, performance standards, collaboration with other units, synergies, etc.

SDS has innovative plans for the future. The first area in which we would like to expand would be our methods for educating students in their rights and responsibilities in the workplace post-graduation. This education would have to begin their first year, and expand until they have graduated. Information on translating accommodations from the classroom to the workplace would be essential in this educational piece. Plans to begin a mentoring program that would pair up current students with alumni to learn more about how their disability impacts them in the workplace are in development.

SDS is determined to remain on the cutting edge of assistive technology. We will keep up with the emerging technologies in our field through trainings and conferences. We then want to take this knowledge base not only to our students, but to the entire University community. Because use of these technologies can benefit all people, not just people with disabilities, it is an easy way to implement universal design throughout the University. To accomplish this, we need to form a collaborative partnership between SDS, ITS, and CIT. Through this partnership, we could accomplish two goals: to roll out assistive technology software to all University-owned equipment, and to train the University community on how to use the software. SDS has two programs that are currently available for the USF community: Read & Write Gold (a text to speech program) and Sensus Access (a document conversion to alternative formats). Through our work with CIT, we would like to increase awareness of the programs to optimize their utilization.

In addition, we would like to increase student meetings with our AT coordinator so that more students can be exposed to the benefits of assistive technology. Often times, students do not follow through with the opportunity to meet with our AT coordinator and/or they do not use the AT software enough to gain mastery of the technology. Other possible ideas for increasing education is to have student liaisons who are masters of the software/device help teach other students how to best use the product.

2. Describe where is the field going based on the literature, professional association meetings, etc. and how the Unit is ready to address those challenges and improvements.

The field of disability service providers has identified an overarching trend in which we are seeing an increase in the number of students on our caseloads, and the student cases themselves are becoming more complex. In order to appropriately accommodate these students, the field must move toward universal design in order to accommodate students with disability and keep pace with our caseloads. By this, it is meant that changes must be made that not only benefit students with disabilities, but the entire population as a whole. The only way that we are going to accomplish this measure is a general recognition that equal access for people with disabilities is a University-wide responsibility, not just the
responsibility of any one person or department. We need to have conversations with key stakeholders such as faculty and academic department heads to rethink how faculty are testing their students knowledge. We need to discuss ways that we can incorporate different forms of media or technology that enables all the students to access the course offerings. We need to embrace faculty use of emerging technologies, and to do so, we need ITS to make them available and the help of CIT to train the community how to use them. Ultimately, it all comes down to this: access doesn’t start and end with us, but it the responsibility of all of us.