The University of San Francisco

Student Disability Services

2023
SELF STUDY
PROGRAM
REVIEW

Student Life
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I. MISSION

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 initiating the intake and eligibility process.

- *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, program requirements, or as disability status changes.

- *Academic Guidance:* SDS helps students learn to optimize their potential for success. This includes, but is not limited to, educating and connecting students to study skills resources like 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 Office of the Dean of Students Care Response Team, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Financial Aid, academic departments, or the student's treatment provider.
- *Auxiliary Aid Assistance:* SDS provides support for students regarding electronic

texts, notetakers, scribes, readers, interpreters, captioners, lab assistance, textbooks, 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 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 qualified 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, Facilities Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Center for Academic and Student Achievement, Enrollment Services, and Financial Services, Dean's Office, etc.).

- *Student Groups*: SDS advises student groups, including chapters of Delta Alpha Pi. Delta Alpha Pi is an honor society founded to recognize high-achieving students with disabilities who are attending colleges and universities as undergraduate or graduate students.

Services to Students without Disabilities:

- *Referral Services:* Students can self-refer, and university faculty and staff can refer students to SDS if they think they may have a disability. SDS 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 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 SDS policy and procedures, disability awareness and education, accommodating students, anti-ableism, etc. Examples of events include: faculty and staff in-service trainings and workshops, disability awareness week, fall open house, parent and family workshops at New Student/Faculty Orientation, special guest lectures, 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, attitudinal, etc.)

- *Student Employment Opportunities:* SDS provides employment opportunities to the student community (e.g. note takers, proctors, 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.

Student Disability Services, (SDS) mission statement reads:

The University of San Francisco is committed to the full participation of all students. SDS recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and works to facilitate equal access and an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.

University Mission

Since 1855, the University of San Francisco has dedicated itself to offering a daring and dynamic liberal arts education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. As a community, we empower and hold accountable our students, faculty, librarians, staff, administrators, alumni, and community partners to be persons for and with others, to care for our common home, including the native lands on

which our campuses reside, and to promote the common good by critically, thoughtfully, and innovatively addressing inequities to create a more humane and just world.

We seek to live USF's mission by nurturing a diverse, ever-expanding community where persons of all races and ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, generations, abilities, nationalities, occupations, and socioeconomic backgrounds are honored and accompanied. We are committed to educating hearts and minds to cultivate the full, integral development of each person and all persons; pursuing learning as a lifelong humanizing and liberating social activity; and advancing excellence as the standard for teaching, scholarship, creative expression, and service. Inspired by a faith that does justice, we strive to humbly and responsibly engage with, and contribute to, the cultural, intellectual, economic and spiritual gifts and talents of the San Francisco Bay Area and the global communities to which we belong.

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 continues to change and adapt to student and university needs. We have experienced many changes since our last program review in 2016. Aside from the increase in student services requests, (+18% since 2016) there has also been an increase in the complexity of student cases that we are seeing. More and more students have two or more diagnoses, and multiple access needs, which translates to increased workload for SDS staff. Recently, the COVID pandemic was the most noteworthy and disruptive change to our services. The 2020 COVID outbreak and subsequent lock-down and remote operations processes, followed by the 2021 partial reopening, forced SDS to quickly reimagine and adapt to a new way of post-secondary disability service provision. Section VII provides a more in-depth explanation of the impact of the COVID pandemic.

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 across the university community. 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, Dining, and Financial Services, Gleeson Library, Facilities Management, Public Safety, Athletics, Student Housing 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?

The recommendations made to SDS from the 2016 program review included hiring an additional full-time 1.0 FTE Disability Specialist. This was accomplished in the Fall 2022, and the (hopefully) positive impact on caseload reduction and continued "high-touch" service delivery model approach has not been felt yet.

Another recommendation was to decrease the number of exams proctored by the SDS office, since we are not a testing center but, rather, a disability office that provides proctoring services as a courtesy to our faculty colleagues. While the number of proctored exams have decreased since pre-pandemic levels, we do not know if this is a result of the pandemic and numbers slowly increasing since then, or a result of our continued efforts to promote universal design concepts for learning, (e.g. designing exams with extended time built in, etc.).

Finally, it was recommended that the SDS office be moved to a more accessible, destigmatizing, and welcoming space that could better serve our students and program needs. Unfortunately, this recommendation was not recognized.

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?

SDS enjoys a positive and collaborative relationship with our library colleagues. While most library materials can be acquired in the user's preferred format, our library colleagues can also assist. Gleeson has dedicated staff available to assist patrons with a variety of alternative material needs, (e.g. scanning books/documents, converting to pdf, word, audio file, etc.). We also consult with each other and conduct faculty and staff trainings on disability awareness topics.

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. SDS staff work 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?

SDS enjoys a positive relationship with our campus ministry colleagues. While we do not collaborate with them on a regular basis, we do refer students to them (and they to us) on occasion. We feel we can reach out to UM whenever the need arises.

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

SDS works closely with the University Chaplain in University Ministry in a variety of ways: community building, providing spiritual guidance, crisis intervention, and support to students and staff, attending SDS events, and providing in-services and trainings on self-care, and Jesuit teachings. 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 request accommodations that effectively offset

disability and enhance academic success.
3. SDS will increase disability awareness within the USF community and promote disability as a valued aspect of diversity.
4 SDS will work to facilitate equal access and an inclusive environment for all students.

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, ableism, and share responsibility for making the USF experience accessible for all.

4. 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, signing up for tests and actively utilizing their accommodations. Outcomes will be measured by whether or not students requested accommodations and utilized them.

5. SDS will design and implement various disability awareness programs (e.g. Disability Awareness Week, faculty and staff training, community outreach, guest speakers, etc.) throughout the academic year. Outcomes will be measured through number of attendees, participant feedback and surveys.

6. SDS will provide training to faculty and staff on the interactive process of determining accommodations, disability as an aspect of diversity and universal design practices for inclusion.

7. The SDS program will be a container for the disabled student affinity group to help foster an inclusive environment at USF where the disabled student experience is valued.

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. SDS will do this by administering a survey every 2-3 years asking students questions about their experience registering with SDS, utilizing accommodations, working with faculty, working with their SDS specialist, and their experience as a disabled student on campus (questions will be about the USF culture of inclusivity and physical access to the campus environment).

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 centering inclusion for our students, and facilitating their full integration into the USF community through the use of accommodations and UDL. By the very nature of participating in our services, students are receiving appropriate educational support to foster their academic and personal growth to prepare them for the working world.. 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. feedback from ASUSF representatives, 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 connects with our colleagues in other student service departments (Admissions, Housing, 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: website, orientation, outreach email communication, social media, referrals, campus resource fairs, word of mouth, 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, Housing) 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.

Name of Institution	Student Population	Students Registered with DS office
Creighton University	8,654	850
Fordham University	16,364	1600
Gonzaga University	7,295	817
Marquette University	10,881	975
Saint Louis University	13,546	700

Santa Clara University	8,546	3,500
Seattle University	7,121	760
Loyola Marymount University	8,855	1165
St. Mary's College	2,199	382
University of San Francisco	**9,688**	**1172**

We selected peer Jesuit institutions of relatively similar size to compare caseload information. We contacted these schools in the Spring of 2023 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 19.4% of an undergraduate student population and 11.9% of graduate students will disclose that they have a disability at any given time (National Center for Education Statistics. (2018, May). Table 311.10. Number and percentage distribution of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions, by level, disability status, and selected student characteristics: 2015–16 [Data table]. In *Digest of education statistics*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_311.10.asp.). Most schools have between 6-7% of their population registered on their caseloads; SDS has 12% 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, Director Tom Merrell is frequently 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. Several staff members in SDS also facilitated AHEAD Start mentoring groups whereby colleges and schools in the west gathered remotely on a quarterly basis to consult, discuss trends in disability service provision and discuss best practices.

While SDS has been fortunate to add an additional specialist in 2022 to support our caseload, our needs are still growing. As a full-service, comprehensive support service, we are near capacity in terms of the number of students we are able to serve on our branch campuses. Seven years ago, the average caseload for each specialist was approximately 125; in 2015 our caseload was over 200. Today, in 2023, the average caseload is 250. 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.

SDS Budget	FY 2020		FY 2021		FY 2022	
	Allocated	**Actual**	**Allocated**	**Actual**	**Allocated**	**Actual**
Professional Salaries & Benefits	*$639,081*	$626,828	*$713,937*	$660,220	*$772,283*	$633,295
Student Salaries & Benefits	*$53,993*	$43,755	*$23,596*	$20,180	*$114,299*	$58,169
General Operating:	*$77,434*	$481,023	*$77,434*	$473,116	*$77,434*	$504,678
Office Supplies		$4883		$415		$3994
Interpreters/ Captioners		$365,665		$444,920		$444,717
Software licenses		$9,589		$16,559		$16,125
FY Total	*$770,508*	**$1,531,743**	*$814,967*	**$1,615,410**	*$964,016*	**$1,660,978**
Summary of Balance	-$761,235		-$800,443		-$696,962	

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 our accommodation needs for a given semester/academic year. For example, depending on our accommodated

exam, scribe, readers, and document conversion/alternative format requests, this will dictate how many student assistant hours we will need for a particular semester. Our student assistants also help with front desk coverage and general office duties.

Within general operating, the department must plan and budget for various accommodations, (as much as we are able) such as real-time captioning and sign language interpreters for our Deaf/HOH student population. Additionally, we must also budget for other access related costs such as: document conversion, video captioning/audio description, and accessible software platforms for university learning management systems. In the past three fiscal years, one can see that there have been major fluctuations in accommodation costs, which exemplifies the "ebb and flow" of accommodation requests received. The COVID pandemic contributed to these fluctuations as well.

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?

On average, SDS operates "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, SDS remains in a deficit spending model for the aforementioned reasons.

Despite these challenges, SDS has been able to meet its legal and contractual obligations to accommodate our students while still delivering a very high level of service to the University community. SDS never compromised service delivery, even during budgetary challenges.

Additionally, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, (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 still cannot effectively and efficiently compensate our note takers. <u>This remains a difficult and challenging process for SDS and its note taking student assistants.</u>

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, view SDS students in their course sections, 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. We continue to work with our database vendor, Accessible Information Management, (AIM) on how to best use the database, take advantage of applicable updates, and recommend additional features to maximize efficiency. One feature we would like to see AIM adopt would be a phone app version so students can more easily request accommodations and sign up for exams.

With increasing numbers of students requesting accommodations, SDS has experienced an   increase in exam proctoring requests. 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 promoting and encouraging universal design concepts for learning, 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.

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.

With our growing SDS student population, it becomes increasingly important that SDS use our current office space to its fullest potential. The only way SDS could proctor more students productively would be to provide additional testing space, either in the form of a testing center or repurposing other campus space. In our current location, better insulation is needed to address student noise complaints. Additionally, the university class-schedule extends outside of SDS office hours, creating challenges for proctoring within class times. All these challenges can be alleviated by the addition of a university testing center, open nights and weekends, and available to all students. 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. When we used volunteer notetakers, SDS partnered with faculty as a resource in the recruitment of volunteers. This worked very well. SDS can continue to improve by using faculty as a resource to proctor exams. SDS currently proctors approximately 1,200 exams every semester Many of these exams could easily be proctored in the classroom with the assistance of faculty. Approximately two-thirds of our extended time accommodation requests are for 50% more time only. If faculty proctored these exams it would drastically reduce the number of accommodated exams we have to proctor in the

SDS office.

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

As mentioned earlier, SDS proctors approximately 1,200 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 testing center. This would help to improve the quantity and quality of test taking for all university students. Another area of complication arises in trying to accommodate our students at our additional campuses. A potential improvement for SDS may lie in hiring additional staff to work at these campuses; helping students with accommodation-related needs as well as providing exam proctoring support.

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, student/faculty/staff perceptions of SDS and its staff and services, university shuttle services, and facilities. Because of the COVID pandemic, the most recent student and faculty surveys were conducted in the Fall 2019, and Spring 2018 respectively. In response to the COVID pandemic and subsequent lock-down, and move to remote learning, SDS conducted a brief student survey in May 2020. (Please see Appendix B for a full list of surveys, questions and summary data). From the most recent student survey, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SDS documentation and eligibility requirements were made clear to them, and that accommodations contributed to their success. Additionally, over 84% of student respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their disability specialist. Conversely, only 67% of respondents indicated that the university environment was welcoming to students with disabilities.

In the brief survey sent to students at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, many of our students followed national trends, reporting increased mental health challenges, adjusting to remote learning, and equity challenges, (e.g. finding stable living environment, quiet study space, reliable internet, etc.).

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 1100 students with disabilities. This number does not include the number of students who contacted us for other services and support, such as: learning disability and ADHD screening, referral services, academic guidance etc. Considering both populations, SDS served approximately 1250 students during the

most recent academic year, or approximately 12% 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. faculty, student housing, Center for Academic Student Achievement, (CASA) parking and shuttle Services, and Student 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 effectiveness of the accommodations. This process creates a "checks and balances" system where the student, SDS, and the faculty member collaborate regularly to ensure the student is receiving the appropriate accommodations - this is also an effective way to measure student progress. In addition to this on-going tracking model, all student files are audited every summer by their specialist. At that time, eligibility decisions and accommodation adjustments may be made as appropriate.

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 to a large degree, our goal of facilitating equal access and full participation for qualified students. All SDS students seeking services and accommodations for a disability are either accommodated, or if their request was unreasonable and/or inappropriate, they are notified as such, given information on appeal processes, (as appropriate) and redirected to appropriate University resources for further support. SDS students also work with their specialists on an on-going basis, primarily through one-on-one meetings, on understanding their disability and developing strategies to offset disability and enhance academic success, (evidence of positive outcomes can be found in our student survey in Appendix B).

Regarding our student learning outcomes, evidence suggests we are achieving the following outcomes to a large degree: Students ability to complete the process of requesting and receiving their accommodations, and ability to clearly articulate their accommodation needs to others, (see student survey in Appendix B). We do not believe we have achieved our goal of educating the university community on disability awareness and a shared responsibility of equal access to a high degree, as evidenced in both our data and anecdotal experiences with our campus colleagues. Although progress has been made, for example in areas like Universal Design for Learning, (UDL) awareness, much more needs to be done on this front to enlist the entire university community on the idea of shared responsibility for equal access.

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 processes, communication, and faculty relationships. (See Appendix B).

In the results of our 2019 student survey, we learned only 33% of students using a peer notetaker reported that they received their notes in a timely manner and were satisfied with their notes. Given this low indicator of satisfaction and timeliness, we implemented the use of software platforms like Glean and Otter.ai, giving students multiple formats (audio, written, etc.) of notes that better meet their needs. This also helps students become more self-reliant on their accommodation needs, a skill they will need beyond college. Additionally, students also indicated that making SDS appointments was a challenge. In 2019, pre-COVID, we were exclusively making appointments via phone and in-person. Now, students can use the option of email or live chat to set up in-person or Zoom appointments, letting students choose what is most convenient and accessible to them. We also started using the 10to8 appointment platform which has greatly improved the appointment request process for both students and SDS staff.

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

Based on feedback from our previous surveys, we increased our efforts to provide more resources and training for the university community on the SDS intake and eligibility process, faculty and staff responsibilities in the accommodation process, UDL, and equal access as a university-wide responsibility.

For example, SDS attends all new student and faculty orientation events and resource fairs, as well as provides a variety of trainings - from "SDS & disability 101" style to individualized, custom in-depth trainings for specific affinity groups, (e.g. academic and non-academic departments/programs/courses, student/staff groups). All trainings, regardless of audience, begin with an overview of the SDS Mission statement, the social model of disability, and the importance of equal access as a shared responsibility. Most trainings introduce the concept of UDL, and how faculty and staff can begin to implement UDL concepts in their work, however small. We are excited to learn how our efforts have increased knowledge and understanding in the community in the next survey cycle.

Additionally, SDS spearheaded the design and creation of the first "USF Accessibility Toolkit" for faculty and staff. Because of the inherent challenges of scheduling live/synchronous trainings, we created the toolkit as a "one stop shop" for faculty and staff to go to for help, information, and resources on UDL, creating accessible course materials, and accessible event planning. There is also a wealth of supplemental information on a variety of access topics. Early anecdotal evidence on feedback for the toolkit's usefulness is overwhelmingly positive. We look forward to more quantifiable feedback in the next survey cycle.

3c. Describe how staff/administrators in the Unit analyze trends of Unit productivity (e.g., students serviced, tracking student success in academic

programs, etc.)

The department obtains and receives data on our student population throughout the semester. Data received includes 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 and off campus presence. Based on feedback from a student survey, SDS, in collaboration with ASUSF, continues its Disability Awareness Week. This week-long event includes student panels, a disability film festival, featured guest lectures, and a disability awareness fair. These events not only increase visibility of disabled students on campus, but also community awareness of disability related issues. Additionally, SDS now maintains an online presence through social media, promoting SDS events and sharing important information to students.

SDS continues to contact all deposited students at the beginning of each semester, describing our services as well as how to request accommodations.

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 member is trained to solicit and receive 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 continue to 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 during this busy time.

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. SDS relies on faculty and university staff for student referrals, especially students SDS may not otherwise be able to outreach. Additionally, SDS and the university must work together in the interactive process 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: academic accommodations, exam proctoring, housing, shuttle services and the use of assistive technology and auxiliary services. Oftentimes, the "heavy lifting" of educating faculty, especially resistant faculty, can involve complex and time consuming 1:1 interactions and teachable moments that allow the faculty to realize the value of access for all on their own timeline. While this winning of "hearts and minds" can be a valuable experience for faculty, it can also be labor intensive and emotionally taxing for SDS staff.

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?

SDS services encapsulate the true meaning of "cura personalis." The department focuses on individualized attention to the needs of the other, distinct respect for the student's unique circumstances and concerns, and an appropriate appreciation for every student's particular gifts and insights. This is at the core of what we do, and our operating philosophy. Through the lens of the social model of disability, our services are designed to be individualized and personalized for each student, with an understanding that environmental barriers are the problem for students with impairments, not the students themselves. The SDS staff takes the time with each student to develop an accommodation plan that is catered to not only the student's functional limitations, but also their strengths. We spend time with students in developmental conversations to allow them to grow in their knowledge of themselves, their disability, and how it impacts them. We work with students not only on how to implement their accommodations, but to educate them on how to articulate their needs to others in a way that will empower 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 persons 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 it is professional development, cutting edge technology, or research based developmental approaches to working with students.

Despite 19% of undergraduates reporting a disability, (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015-16) SDS has one of the highest percentage of students with disabilities registered with our office, (approx 10%). One can expect that 19% 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 12% 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 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 mostly positive reputation both on and off campus, we have identified areas in which we need to improve. One of the most visible and pressing

is our testing space. As mentioned in previous sections of this report, SDS does not have enough room to proctor thousands of exams each academic year in our office. A university testing center is needed for all students, not just those who need exam accommodations. A testing center for the entire university would not only alleviate the pressure and constant administrative challenges for SDS students and staff, but also benefit faculty who are overworked and struggling to manage their class loads. In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, more and more classes are taught in the early mornings, late evenings, and on weekends - times when SDS is not open or available to proctor. With increased medical, personal, and family obligations, all students and faculty are looking for alternative ways to not only take and administer exams, but also deliver and assess course curriculum.

This brings up another challenge: Faculty awareness and understanding of disability rights as human and civil rights, including a student's right to equal access. Faculty come to the classroom with their own world view, whole selves, and experience with and preconceived ideas of disability, and who should "belong" in a particular course, major, or program. Unfortunately these perceptions and beliefs can oftentimes create attitudinal barriers to access. More faculty training is needed to address these attitudinal barriers, and educate them on UDL concepts. Training must be done with buy-in and support from faculty development and administration.

Additionally, our Deaf/HOH services have "outgrown" our current paradigm, resulting in a variety of administratively burdensome and chaotic challenges for both our specialists and support staff. Because our Deaf/HOH services continue to grow, we must reimagine how we accommodate and support this student population, perhaps with a staff role dedicated to Deaf/HOH services. Finally, our shuttle services continue to be a "pressure point" for our students: frequency/availability, ease of use, logistics, and staff training continue to be issues that students raise both formally and informally.

Finally, USF has physical access barriers that make it difficult for our students and community members to access their classrooms and campus facilities. If these issues are not addressed, the university is in danger of an OCR/ADA complaint being filed against them.

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 recent years has been the COVID pandemic. Like all university services, SDS had to pivot immediately to remote work and accommodations - something no one knew much about. Ensuring our students maintained and were allowed equal access to their academic programs, while at the same time reimagining and reconfiguring our services to the remote environment, was an incredibly difficult challenge. Along with that, addressing the subsequent mental health crises that arose as a result of the pandemic was also challenging. These factors overwhelmingly confirmed and emphasized the importance of SDS and our mission and role in the university, as well as the importance of working collaboratively with all our university partners.

Another important change for SDS has been its relationship with student housing. Over the years, SDS worked with many iterations of housing policies and practices, frequently encountering barriers to access for our students, and challenging processes for SDS staff. Currently, the processes in place for arranging housing accommodations for our students is streamlined and efficient; accommodations are implemented quickly with minimal back-and-forth between our respective offices, and students are given clear and informative messaging.

We also redesigned our attendance modification accommodation process to better support students and faculty, and emphasize the interactive process. Our previous model relied heavily on our students to communicate and negotiate with their faculty on their needs, creating a power dynamic that put the students at a disadvantage, and oftentimes created confusion for both students and faculty. The new model includes a brief student survey that gathers course attendance policy information, and asks students to communicate any concerns as well as whether or not they would like their specialist to facilitate a conversation between themselves and their faculty. The new model has drastically cut down on the number of complaints and disputes that previously arose, especially at the end of the semester. Formal data on our new model will be collected in the next round of surveys.

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.

As previously mentioned, SDS has outgrown its exam proctoring space - a testing center is desperately needed in order to continue to serve our students and the university community. As our numbers continue to grow, so do requests for alternative testing accommodations. And while educating the university on UDL principles and practices such as universally designed assessments is moving forward, creating systematic and philosophical change takes time.

SDS enjoys a very positive and collaborative relationship with our IT & ETS colleagues - but this is not enough. The increase in requests for accessible course and program materials necessitates a different approach to ensuring equal access for all. SDS would like to move beyond our current practice of converting materials for faculty and staff to empowering them to do so themselves. SDS would like to help the university design and create a program like the University of Virginia's The Captioning Project, a program that encourages the provision of accurate captions and transcripts for recorded academic course content.

SDS is determined to remain on the cutting edge of assistive technology. We keep up with the emerging technologies in our field through trainings and conferences. We then share this knowledge base not only with our students, but 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 will continue to cultivate our collaborative partnership between SDS, ETS, and ITT. Through these partnerships we can accomplish two goals: to roll out assistive technology software to all University-owned equipment, and to help train the University community on how to use the software. For example, SDS is currently working with our ITT colleagues to acquire the Texthelp suite of assistive technology software applications for university-wide adoption.

Finally, we want to continue our work educating the university community on UDL and anti-ableism. Continuing our faculty and staff one-on-one and in-service trainings, and increasing our collaboration with the newly formed office of Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, (ADEI) and the Center for Teaching Excellence, (CTE) are two ways to further this goal.

2. Describe where the field is 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 provision has identified an overarching trend in which we are seeing an increase in the number and complexity of accommodation requests. In order to effectively accommodate students, and keep pace with our caseloads, the field must move toward promoting a universal design model for learning and instruction. Adopting UDL would not only decrease the number of accommodations the university would have to provide, but would also create a more inclusive environment. This can only be accomplished by acknowledging that equal access is a university-wide responsibility, and not the responsibility of any one person or department.

Disability service provision must also embrace the digital age; from digitizing and streamlining processes and procedures, to promoting inclusion through technology. Continuing to cultivate relationships with our IT colleagues both internally and externally, is imperative if we are to keep a pace with technology.

SDS will address these changes through continued conversations with key stakeholders such as faculty and academic department heads to rethink how faculty are assessing their students' knowledge as well as communicating information to them. We need to help faculty explore ways that UDL concepts for learning can be incorporated into the classroom such as different forms of media or technology, that can promote full inclusion and access to 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 ETS 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 is the responsibility of all of us.

Appendix A: SDS Handbook

https://myusf.usfca.edu/sds/handbook

Appendix B: SDS Surveys

SDS Covid Survey.pdf

2019 SDS Student Survey Report (September 2020) (2).docx

SDS 2018 Faculty Survey Brief Report 20180427.pdf