Division   Enrollment Management & Student Affairs

Department   Disability Resources & UCAM

1. **What are the main objectives of your unit, and how do you measure success in achieving them?**
   - DR--To maintain institutional compliance with ADA/Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Provide educational opportunities for disability as a part of diversity and university EDI strategic goals. Ensure SOU students requesting ADA accommodations receive them:
     - For 202201, DR has 422 students actively receiving/requesting accommodations. With 3370 enrolled students, DR has 12.5% of that population requesting accommodation. This term alone we have had 126 new students apply for accommodation. DR averages supporting 10-14% of SOU's student population.
     - Success is measured by meeting student accommodation needs and qualitative support for institutional stakeholders in meeting these needs. Avoiding litigation.
     - DR student's success is comparable or statistically significant to the general population.
       - 202101: General term GPA = 3.39; Students with disabilities term GPA = 3.31. This difference is statistically significant (p=.048). General cumulative GPA = 3.30; Students with disabilities cumulative GPA = 3.21. This difference is statistically significant (p=.036).
       - 202102: General term GPA = 3.82; Students with disabilities term GPA = 3.78. This difference is statistically significant (p=.000). General cumulative GPA = 3.46; Students with disabilities cumulative GPA = 2.96. This difference is statistically significant (p=.000).
       - 202103: General term GPA = 3.44; Students with disabilities term GPA = 3.26. This difference is statistically significant (p=.000). General cumulative GPA = 3.35; Students with disabilities cumulative GPA = 3.22. This difference is statistically significant (p=.000).
     - Compare GPA breakdown for students with disabilities who use accommodations to students with disabilities who do not use accommodations:
       - Retention, graduation and DFWI rates are comparable to the general population.
   - UCAM--to provide academic coaching services for contracted students.
     - Retention to university; student attendance to coaching appt; credits earned; graduation rates.

2. **What are the services that your unit provides and to which customers (students, faculty, staff, donors, others)?**
   - DR provides services to students, faculty, and staff.
     - Students are rendered accommodations and advised on self-advocacy and engagement with the institution writ large.

- ○ Faculty are supported with "how to" information and training for a range of compliance based requirements.
  - ○ Staff are similarly supported as above.
  - ○ Provision of larger campus accommodations or universal design/access for all. (Convocation, Commencement, President addresses, program/department performances or presentations etc.)
- DR operations have been understaffed <u>according to national averages</u> from a 2018 survey of institutions of similar size which hold a staff to student ratio of 1:136 for staff working directly with students and managing caseloads. SOU's DR office currently has a 1: 380 staff/student ratio and if a currently open position is filled it will hold a 1:227 staff to student ratio.
- UCAM provides supportive services primarily to students, but collaterally impacts the time/attention required of other faculty and staff who also interact with these students.
  - ○ UCAM students are provided 1:1 attention for academic engagement as well as all of university life. (i.e. pre-advising for registration, clarifying assignments, understanding FAFSA/fin aid..etc.)

3. **List each position in your unit, and briefly describe the responsibilities of each. Include part-time and work-study student hours. Indicate if functionality of the position is tied to federal, state, or institutional compliance.** (All DR positions are directly tied to federal and state compliance)
   - 2 Co-Directors of DR & UCAM: 50% split of director duties; overseeing operational functioning of both programs; supervising employees; assessment; works with ADA Coordinator for larger institutional compliance concerns. Oversees Accessible Technology concerns for the institution in collaboration with IT, HR, CATL and Business Services. Provides training on DR topics across the university. High level of collaboration with ODOS for at risk students. Budget oversight for both programs. Oversee UCAM coaching activities, managing student numbers and associated fees.
   - Assistant Director of DR (full time): 30% accommodations & learning specialist conducting intakes and caseload management; oversees DR student career transition planning and programming (WRP; SourceAbled; Broadfutures internships); student worker oversight; oversees rendering single room accommodations and engagement with Fin.Aid and housing to ensure compliance; broad systems management; engaging higher need students.
   - Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator (DR part-time): supervises interpreting and pool of interpreting; renders interpreting; coordinates delivery of CART services; oversees accommodation needs of DHH students. Provides/coordinates interpreting services and CART services for larger institutional performances, speeches, meetings.
   - Assistive Technology & Alternative Formats Coordinator (DR): converts course materials into appropriate formats to be used by students with various industry technologies; provides insights and instruction for Technology Council, training on assistive technology for staff and faculty; oversees alt. tech student worker team (2); conducts OER reviews of new text adoptions for faculty to ensure WCAG compliant.

- ● Accommodations & Learning Specialist (x2) (DR part-time): 100% direct student hours; determining accommodations and managing the provision of accommodations for a large student caseload.
- ● Disability Support Specialist (full time): Testing coordinator providing oversight of DR's testing center and provision of appropriate accommodations; manages provision of complex accommodation processes (flexibility accommodations; specialized furniture accommodations). Supervises front desk student workers (2)
- ● UCAM coach (x3): provides contracted 1:1 academic coaching and mentoring. (These positions are not tied to federal or state compliance, but provide needed wrap-around services easing the lift in many other campus areas; as a self-funded program, we don't see these positions as eligible for reduction).

4. **Do you see needs and demands for services that your unit cannot currently meet? If so, what are they, and how do they relate to the university's mission?**
DR has seen an increase in students registering for services (to the tune of about 4%) since 2019. Since we have been understaffed, we have stopped providing learning strategy appointments that formerly went above compliance to support students in retaining to the university. This service was/is an inclusion initiative to increase DR student success.
Maps to Strategic Direction Goal : SD4 Goal 2: Establish supportive pathways to increase access; retention & success of learners from underrepresented backgrounds
Maps to Core Theme Objective): II. Institutional Practices C. Diversity Inclusivity and Equity

5. **How could the university help your unit do its job better?**
Supporting DR in staffing accordingly to permit employees the hours needed to provide learning strategy appointments and support for specific subpopulations in DR (eg. ASD) . Other units may be able to provide this service, but would require students already over-resourced/outsourced to access other areas. Providing a "one-stop shop" of wraparound services is most efficacious for this student population.

Centralizing student support services and expanding on student centered success initiatives that are intersectional with other departments (ODOS, TRiO, UCAM, DR, Tutoring) would consolidate the staff support needed for many of these initiatives and provide proximal access for students who are currently navigating many areas on campus to access these resources, which disincentivizes and creates barriers for access on many different levels.

6. **In what ways does your unit relate to other units of the university, academic and non-academic? For example, what services do you provide to other units? What services do other units provide to you? On what tasks do you collaborate with other offices?**
DR provides compliance-based training and orientation to technology for faculty and staff across units. DR & UCAM collaborate with HR, CATL, Housing, ODOS, TRiO, UGS/Bridge, SJEC , and more to invest in available support for students, raise awareness about disability-related topics, and practically address compliance-based issues on our campus.

7. **What skill sets and resources does your unit possess that can be shared with other units at slack times?**
Our staff are adept at meeting students where they are at, in crisis etc. Right now, we are assisting with some case management with ODOS and assigning cases to our Access Consultants and folks who have had the most interaction with a student who comes through the CARES system.

8. **Which individuals in your unit are cross-trained and in what areas?**
Leandra, Jen and Aubrey have been heavily involved with ODOS; supportive outreach to students in crisis and resourcing them to appropriate entities on and off campus.

9. **What resources do you need to improve your services to a superior level?**
We need additional staffing to bring caseloads down to the national average of 1:136 (one staff per 136 students). Current staffing levels for caseload management are at 1:380. If we are able to fill a current open position, this will bring our staff levels to 1:227, which is still significantly higher than the national average.

To bring services to a superior level we would need to hire at least one additional full time staff to lower the caseloads and permit the resumption of learning strategy support services. DR's Assistant Director has worked to develop some career preparedness opportunities in collaboration with the Workforce Recruitment Program, SourceAbled and other agencies that don't charge a fee to the student. Additional staffing would support developing this work further which aligns with SOU's mission and institutional core themes for professional preparation and equity.

10. **What technologies are available to you to provide your services better? What training do you need to be more effective users of the technology?**
Any of the technologies that DR has explored to assist with the production of alternative text materials costs money that would exceed our current budget. For example, we've previously explored a document conversion tool: CodeMantra which has quoted $25,000 for a period of 5 years @$5000 per annum for 10 users with unlimited PDF remediation access and helpdesk support.
Now with CATL's investment in Brickfield, this initiative may be moot for the purposes of folks outside of DR to convert documents to be accessible.
DR engages in regular professional development trainings through national leaders to stay current on disability trends and technology advancements.

11. **What one thing do you wish you could do differently to improve your effectiveness but have not had the opportunity, time, or resources to do?**
A universal testing center for all of campus would be an inclusive design and supportive for faculty and students who are not DR students.

A "student success center" modeled after our power hour in UCAM is something that we would like to pursue. Offering a professionally staffed space for students to get individualized support

from a professional coach and accountability to complete academic tasks. We are in discussion with Bridge currently to pilot this concept in Winter 2023. The current machination would be limited to Bridge/DR/UCAM students, but scaling this up to any student who would like additional support is a long-term goal that would require funding and staffing. Another initiative we'd like to pursue would be to offer group coaching to students outside of UCAM.

12. **How do you review and evaluate your department's yearly performance?**
Improve contains our assessment outcomes tied to strategic directions and annual results. A majority of this is quantitative data aimed at ensuring university compliance, as well as comparing DR students with the general population and DR students to those who use accommodations vs. those who do not. We aim to include a DR student survey for qualitative metrics this year. The latest report (AY 20-21) will be included as an appendix. Also see question 1 above.

Similarly, UCAM has success and retention data as well as student satisfaction survey information available. The continued demand for and growth of UCAM speaks volumes as to its model and performance. UCAM continues to have a waitlist of students each year that it cannot serve based on current levels of staffing.

13. **Explain how your unit could function with:**

    a. A 10 percent reduction to staff -
    DR: Reduction to staff would result in a delay of delivery of accommodations, which will become a compliance issue if accommodations are not delivered within a reasonable time frame. Current SOU policy requires us to respond to students requests for accommodations within 10 business days. This timeframe will be delayed with reduction to staff.

    Reduction in staff would also decrease availability of cross-campus training that DR conducts for faculty, pro-staff, and students staff in multiple departments.

    UCAM: Not applicable. Enrollment covers staffing costs.

    b. A 20 percent reduction to staff - See above. Potential for noncompliance and subsequent litigation is increasingly likely with a 20% reduction to staff. Reduction in staff at this level will also decrease the desirability of SOU for students with disabilities, which will result in lower UCAM enrollment. UCAM increases enrollment to the university, attracts students that pay full tuition rate and generates income for SOU.

    c. A 30 percent reduction to staff - Not at all advisable. See above.

    d. A 10 percent reduction to non-personnel resources

If we were to reduce our non-personnel resources, that would be a reduction of approximately $3000 in savings. With this reduction we would have to eliminate all staff travel for training and additional education.

e. A 20 percent reduction to non-personnel resources.
In addition to eliminating all travel, we would also have to reduce virtual trainings and memberships in professional organizations. Reducing trainings would limit our ability to stay current in the disability field, opening the potential for compliance related concerns. Membership is vital to staying current in the field and abreast of the changing legal landscape. and supplies expenses for DR's office efficient operational purposes and appropriate functionality of DR's Testing Center.

f. A 30 percent reduction to non-personnel resource
Reduction at this level would decrease our office and testing supplies, reducing the efficiency of DR's office operations and the appropriate functionality of DR's Testing Center. Not at all advisable.

g. What would be the consequences or other effects on service delivery in each case?
Impacts on service delivery described in each section above.

14. **What opportunities exist for greater collaboration and team approaches in the delivery of services?**
Expansion of UCAM power hour--"academic support center" in collaboration with Bridge is a current initiative we are exploring and possibly piloting in Winter 2023. This will be funded by Bridge grant monies for the moment. Should the grant be renewed this may create opportunities for building on this concept and scaling up. We are also in conversation with the Dean of Students office regarding needs they have identified. DR team members are assigned cases through ODOS currently for students who are more connected with DR or have disability specific concerns. DR continues to work closely with TRiO SSS as well. Future exploration of a Disability Specific TRiO has been discussed and targets for both programs will need to be carefully assessed to ensure compliance with grant requirements.

15. **How many "middle managers" do we have? Are there opportunities to reduce middle strata in the organization and expand the span of control?**
One assistant director. AD is only paid $2000 more annually than Accommodations and Learning Specialists so the savings would be minimal.

16. **What technological improvements could be made that would result in labor savings?**
See question 10. Other technological options do not result in a savings, actually cost more albeit slightly, and lower the service standards. Specifically, switching to Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), rather than in person interpreting. VRI is often not preferred by the deaf/hard of hearing community and is less cost effective than maintaining an interpreting pool. Other issues with VRI include internet stability on campus, many classrooms cannot connect to WiFi, or have a poor

connection which creates a delay and thus reduced equal access. Ethernet is possible but requires IT support at times, and ethernet jacks are not always easily accessible or present.

Cost of interpreting options:
- Sorenson (VRI) - $2.50 for 1st 15 minutes, then $1.25 after that - 2 hour minimum
    - One hour is $93.75/hour; two hours is $84.38/hours
- Interpreting pool = $36/hour = 2 hours @ $72
- 202201 Pool interpreting - $260/week of 7 hours of interpreting that Elizabeth Scheppler is currently covering vs. $295.33/week VRI coverage

17. **How can a service be more efficiently delivered?**
Some of the accommodations offered by our office would be more effectively delivered if academic divisions engaged in a collaborative process to streamline responses to our offices outreach. Namely, accommodations for extended time on assignments and/or occasional absences. Two divisions (STEM & USEM) thus far have provided a "standardized procedure" for rendering these accommodations, which expedites our ability to relay expectations and what the accommodation will look like to the student(s) in these courses. Every other division still has individual faculty responding to our template agreement each term and responses are not always reasonable or considerate of providing the accommodation. In 202201 alone, we have already processed 444 requests from students for these accommodations and emailed the corresponding faculty for responses. To date (10/26/22), we have received 203 responses from faculty; 50% or less response rate is typical. Lack of responding results in continued outreach from our office and hours spent trying to elicit responses from faculty so that we can be sure the accommodations are being considered and the interactive process is taking place. This remains a compliance-based concern.

18. **What processes do we have that can be streamlined or eliminated to improve service delivery?**
See above. As well as questions 5 and 11. Consolidating student support services to one location may help centralize efforts and consolidate a front facing line.

19. **Restructuring: What efficiencies might be gained by consolidating similar entities?**
No other campus entities do exactly what DR and UCAM do. So maintaining program individuality, but moving similar programs together in one location would help efficiency for students and staff.

20. **Personnel: Have we worked around or structured around non-effective personnel and other personnel issues, and is this the time to stop indulging and start confronting the issue(s)?**
Yes. We did this recently. Last year we replaced a non-effective staff member who was coordinating our deaf and hard of hearing services. All current personnel are meeting job requirements.

21. **Outsourcing: Are there other opportunities to outsource non-mission-critical services to private contractors who could do it better, faster, cheaper?**

Maybe. We've explored options for outsourcing interpreting. Providing services through VRI or the interpreting pool is less expensive than providing it through full time salaried staff. However, while VRI is an accepted accommodation it is not a best-practice within the DR community. Pool interpreters are not available for many classes that need interpreting, so the more we rely on pool interpreters (as opposed to salaried staff) the less likely we are to be able to deliver interpreting services to our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. SOU pays pool interpreters at a lower rate than other employers in the Valley, so it is difficult for us to contract and retain pool interpreters. This area is under continued review and consideration.

22. **Customer focus: How might our services be structured or delivered to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff, donors, and others better?**
Our department has been very flexible and offered a variety of modalities (remote and in person) to meet student needs. Students must submit requests for accommodations each term to engage the interactive process AND because they have the right to not use accommodations. This step can be perceived as an additional barrier but we have created the Peer Engagement Coordinator position (student position) to reduce this barrier and offer peer to peer support with engaging necessary accommodations processes.

We are working with campus departments to streamline the flexibility in attendance process so that we can reduce work for individual faculty members and streamline this process for students.

23. **Benchmarking: Compare your unit with similar units at other institutions or national norms.**
We are significantly understaffed in our department when compared to national norms and recommended caseloads. Recommended staff to student ratio for Disability Access Consultants in higher ed is 127:1. SOU's ratio based on current level of staffing is 1:380.

Despite this, we continue to garner recognitions and awards.

24. **What can we stop doing?**
We've already stopped offering learning strategy appointments to students as a result of our high staff to student ratio. Everything we do is compliance related. We could outsource more of the accommodation delivery (eg. interpreting) but this would not result in a cost savings. Even though the SOU population and FTE is declining, the need for disability services continues to grow. We cannot scale DR services based on population. We see increased mental health needs every year and given the short-staffing in other areas on campus, we are seeing students with greater needs and less resources.