

1. Range and Adequacy of Services for Students with Disabilities

Since its founding in January 1995, the UIS Office of Disability Services (ODS) has been committed to maximizing the academic success of UIS students. Centrally located in the Student Life Building, it provides a comprehensive variety of services and adaptive technologies for students with disabilities. During this reporting period, 162 persons registered with the office and requested services. Because that number represents 3.8% of the total campus enrollment, the UIS Office of Disability Services leads all Illinois public campuses in percentage of students served. The unique needs of each student are met on a case-by-case basis, with functional independence being the underlying goal.

General Services. The Adaptive Technology Computer Lab, adjacent to the ODS staff office, promotes access to a learning environment for individuals with physical, psychological, mobility, learning, visual, and auditory disabilities. The lab is a convenient place for students to take proctored examinations, meet with ODS staff, pick up e-text, study, check e-mail, conduct research, and relax between classes. Personal technology assessments are conducted by ODS staff, and individualized training is offered on ergonomic devices, magnification software, scanners, text conversion devices, screen reading and voice recognition software, and a variety of writing and study aids. Training is provided to any UIS student, faculty, or staff member upon request.

The UIS Office of Admissions assures that the Adaptive Technology Computer Lab is visited on all Open Campus and Transfer preview tours, and ODS staff or representatives participate in Admissions information fairs. All prospective students receive the ODS handbook. At the annual New Faculty orientation, the ODS director reviews available services and provides referral information. The Office of Academic Affairs further suggests that the ODS telephone number and other contact information be placed on the syllabus of every UIS course.

p Highlights p

This reporting year, the UIS Office of Disability Services provided assistance to 3.8% of enrolled students, the highest percentage for any Illinois public campus.

Distance learners as well as campus-based students are eligible to use the Adaptive Technology Computer Lab and other services of ODS.

Among ODS services are study workshops, mobility training, priority registration (when appropriate), peer notetakers, ASL interpreters, academic study kits, test proctoring, advocacy with UIS faculty and staff, and a semester newsletter with program updates. The ODS website contains FAQs for prospective and current students, introduction to staff and services, and explanations of confidentiality issues. Online and Peoria campus students have equal access to ODS staff and services. (A summary of services, accommodations, and software available to students registered with the Office of Disability Services appears elsewhere in this report.)

Meeting the ever-changing technological needs of UIS students is of utmost importance. For that reason, ODS has made text conversion to .wav and audio Mp3 formats a major priority. Before .wav and Mp3 technology, books

for students with visual impairments and other learning disabilities were recorded onto cassette tape, a medium that proved fragile, cumbersome, and inefficient.

Adaptive technologies are also found in the Health and Sciences Building main computer lab and at the circulation desk of Brookens Library. Library patrons with hearing disabilities can communicate and print via a TTY system (also known as TDD, telecommunication device for the deaf), which consists of a telephone and text-display keyboard. To assure greater access to information, Brookens Library is also installing a CCTV (closed circuit TV) system that will enable visually-impaired people to scan and magnify text, cards, maps, photographs, and other library media.

Resources Provided by the UIS Office of Disability Services

Services for all students with disabilities

ODS newsletter with program updates
Advocacy with faculty and administration
Adaptive technology assessments
Software training and support
Educational resource support
Facilitating Requests for Accommodation
Test proctoring or extended test time
Disability resource support
Campuswide education
Referral support
Priority registration

Learning Disabilities

Voice recognition software for writing and Internet navigation (DragonDictate)
Screen reading software for writing style and accuracy (Kurzweil 3000; TextHELP!; TextHELP! GOLD)
E-text public domain material
Audio text
Peer notetakers
E-mail Connection
Academic Study Kits

Psychiatric Disabilities

Screen-reading software for writing style and accuracy (TextHELP!; Read & Write)
Peer notetakers
Academikit Study Organizers
Priority registration

Medical Disabilities

Advocacy
Mobility training
Priority registration

Mobility Disabilities

Programmable keyboard (IntelliKeys)
Ergonomic keyboard (Cruise Cat)
Voice activated software (DragonDictate)
Ergonomic mouse (Touchpad; TrackBall)
Adjustable classroom tables
Physical access assurance through Physical Plant and Operations
Peer notetakers
Mobility training
Priority registration

Auditory Disabilities

TTY text telephone with keyboard
CART reporters
ASL interpreters
Peer notetakers
Priority registration

Visual Disabilities

Text scanning and screen reading software (Kurzweil 1000)
Screen reading software for text and the Internet (TextHELP! GOLD; JAWS for Windows)
Text conversion to audiotaped formats (Text to Tape)
Screen magnification software (Zoom Text)
Closed Circuit TV
Braille
E-text public domain material
Large screen monitors up to 27"

The UIS Adaptive Technology Computer Lab has become a model for other campuses, especially for its success in text conversion training. Recently, ODS staff have provided tours and presentations at the request of faculty, counselors, directors, or coordinators from Illinois State University, Lincoln Land Community College, Chicago State University, and the University of Alabama. Teachers and parents from the local School District 186 have also sought training.

Individualized Services for Students. Specific accommodation plans are determined through a cooperative process that promotes consistent communication between ODS staff and the student. Entering students submit self-identification documentation and an application for services, which are the first steps in the intake assessment. Requests for Accommodation (RFA) for courses, facilities, activities, or services are mutually determined. RFA facilitation is available to online and Peoria students as well as those on the Springfield campus. When accommodations involve classroom issues, ODS staff prepare and distribute notifications for faculty.

RFAs must be renewed at the end of the semester, and they can be reviewed whenever the individual's needs change, ensuring that the requested accommodations continue to be reasonable and appropriate to the student's current level of functioning. Accommodations and requests are documented in the student's file for review or follow-up. With the implementation of each RFA, the student is asked to respond to an informal, verbal satisfaction survey. If the student identifies outstanding issues that need to be addressed, a meeting is scheduled to review and implement modifications. The process is repeated each semester.



This year, ODS introduced two innovative programs that have proven to be extremely powerful tools for time management, productivity, and scheduling for students with disabilities. The E-Mail Connection is a tracking and reminder system for important deadlines and project dates. Developed by ODS staff, it synchronizes electronic reminders to particular dates and activities identified by the individual student. E-Mail Connection has proven to be so successful that it is highlighted as this year's Institutional Best Practice.

p Highlights p

More than half of students registered with ODS have opted to use the E-Mail Connection or the Academikit system. Among students trained in these services, the dropout rate has been zero.

The Academikit Study Organizer system was purchased this year and has been distributed to more than ninety students registered with ODS. A three-ring binder portfolio pre-printed with academic calendars, study tips, writable bookmarks, and various organizational tools, the Academikit encourages mastery of several executive functioning skills. The binder is divided into sections into which the student is guided to take notes, create target questions, and prepare for tests.