

in conjunction with the Diversity Task Force, presented a workshop on providing services to students with disabilities to the campus and surrounding community. Finally, UIS hosted a faculty workshop on accommodating students with psychological disabilities.

UIUC, UIC, and UIS reached a reciprocity agreement that facilitates the transfer of disability documentation to ensure service continuity for students transferring between UI campuses.

An adaptive technology computer lab with three workstations will be available in the fall of 1999. The workstations will provide some of the most innovative technology available for students with disabilities. Training on the use of the new technology has also been arranged.

Focus Topics

Workforce Preparation and Placement for Students with Disabilities

Note: The Office of Disability Services is one of the campus' newest service units. Established in 1994, the office had been staffed by part-time personnel until this year when a director was hired. In the years since the office opened, staff have been working to identify its clientele, publicize its services, and standardize its procedures. No formal surveys have yet been done. UIS, however, offers the following anecdotal information reported by the staff of the office.

Please describe the programs and fields in which students with disabilities have enjoyed success in securing appropriate entry positions.

The Office of Disability Services has determined that the majority of UIS students with disabilities are enrolled in programs in human development counseling, history, psychology, and criminal justice. Staff have not yet had the opportunity to track student success in obtaining employment in these fields.

Please describe programs in which students with disabilities have encountered difficulty in gaining entrance. What kinds of accommodations, if any, have and can be made to increase student success?

Students have recounted difficulties in the computer science program due to a lack of adaptive technology and a perceived lack of faculty support. In the past the campus has used individual instructional assistants in computer science to help students in completing assignments. This arrangement, however, does not support a primary goal of the Office of Disability Services – to advocate that students become as functionally independent as possible. The campus' new adaptive technology lab, along with training conducted by the office, is expected to provide a more effective accommodation.

The perceived lack of faculty support is at odds with the office's experience with computer science faculty, who have worked diligently on strategies to help students with disabilities overcome obstacles. The campus hopes that the addition of the new lab will positively affect students' perception of the level of support available to them on campus.

To what extent do students with disabilities enter programs/fields of high occupational demand such as allied health, computer science, etc. What obstacles, if any, exist to student entry into these programs and fields? What accommodations have and can be made to facilitate student success?

See previous discussion.

Please give examples of the kind of obstacles that students with disabilities encounter in pursuing programs and entering careers. What kinds of accommodations have been made to improve student success? What types of obstacles have been difficult to accommodate?

The Office of Disability Services characterizes the obstacles to the accommodation of students with disabilities as a lack of understanding about what can and must be done rather than a lack of willingness to accommodate students. The director suggests that additional training be made available to faculty and staff to become familiar with the responsibilities according to the laws and titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. She has taken a step in this direction by providing faculty workshops on the topic.

Please describe any special programs, activities, or practices that have proven especially effective in improving the workforce preparation of students with disabilities.

As noted above, the campus has taken steps to purchase computer software that will enable students with disabilities to prepare themselves for the workforce. The first step, however, was to formalize a unit (the Office of Disabilities Services) to coordinate services to students with disabilities and to staff it with professionals who could inform the campus of its responsibilities toward these students and guide it to an accommodating environment for them. With this accomplished, the campus looks forward to expanding its service role in this arena.

Improving Representation in Teacher Education

Provide any information that is relevant to understanding the efforts of your institution in improving minority and female student participation and success in teacher education.

The University of Illinois offers a sequence of teacher education coursework that leads to Illinois certification at the elementary or secondary level *when combined with an academic major*. Students graduating from UIS thus benefit from the additional career options that a full academic major offers along with the teaching credential. UIS was a leader in adopting this approach, which also offers students who have already completed undergraduate or graduate degrees the flexibility to return to school to earn just a teaching certificate. On the other hand, the teacher education sequence requires the completion of 39 semester hours of coursework. Few students are able to complete the requirements for both an academic major and the teacher education sequence in the four semesters of upper-division study at UIS.

Note: Since teacher education is not a degree program, UIS has had to overcome technical difficulties in gathering statistical data for the offering. Many of these have now been resolved, but the campus does not yet have data history sufficient to establish trends for participation in the teacher education sequence. Data are presented here to the extent that they are available.

What is the enrollment and degree completion rate of minority students compared with majority students in teacher education at your institution? What is the enrollment and degree completion rate of women in teacher education programs in fields of low female participation such as science and mathematics? What is the trend over the past ten years of participation and degree completion of these two groups compared with majority students?