



Annual Assessment Report Template: Non-Learning
Academic Year: 2015-2016

Date of Report Submission: July 12, 2016

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Type of Assessment: Needs and Usage

I. Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the way students at the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) use their accommodations to insure their needs are being met and to see if changes are needed in delivery and/or provision of these accommodations and services. “Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). “Services” refers to additional supports above and beyond ADA-mandated reasonable accommodations. CSD wanted to determine what students identified as accommodations and services they needed and used the most with particular attention to accommodations that involve interacting with the administrative staff of CSD at both campuses. The motivation for choosing a needs and usage assessment for the entire department was to help guide decision-making in allocation of resources, since a full-scale assessment involving all students has not been conducted since CSD was created with the merger of the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) in 2011-2012. The assessment has three major components: an examination of student interactions with administrative staff, a student needs and usage Qualtrics survey, and a follow-up meeting with students (at each campus) to interpret the survey results. Key findings include a high degree of student satisfaction in four key areas of student service: Advocacy, Advising, Accommodations Revision, and Academic Coaching.

II. Assessment Question

What services and accommodations do CSD students perceive themselves as needing, and how do they utilize these accommodations? How do these perceptions compare to actual usage tracking data (assessed by administrative staff and CSD database records)?

III. Introduction & Context

University Context

Vision 2018: (1a) Enhance and expand learning support services. This assessment will allow us to learn where our services can be enhanced or expanded.

SA Division: Persistence and Academic Achievement

Divisional Learning Outcome: Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will be able to achieve their personal and academic goals while at DePaul through acquisition of academic and cognitive skills.

This assessment will help us understand how accommodations and services at CSD have helped students achieve academic goals.

SA Division: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Development

Divisional Learning Outcome: Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will develop a strong sense of personal identity and form mature, respectful relationships with others.

This assessment will help us understand how CSD students see themselves as a group within the greater culture of DePaul.

Supporting Scholarship

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education established a set of standards for disability services providers (Gomez 9). Administrative Standards for Higher Education “ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations so as to have equal access to all institutional programs and services regardless of the type and extent of the disability” (“Program Review”).

According to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), the administrative organization representing university disability service providers, program standards include the use and dissemination of assessment, disability service administratives must:

“[c]ollect student feedback to measure satisfaction...[a]ssess the effectiveness of accommodations and access provided to students with disabilities...[ensure that] [s]tudent satisfaction data is included in evaluation of disability services (“Resources”).

Disability service units should also:

“[c]ollect data to monitor use of disability services...to assess the effectiveness of services provided... to identify ways the program can be improved... [and] to project program growth and needed funding increases (“Resources”).

Finally, imperative to this standard, providers must, “[r]eport program evaluation data to administrators” (“Resources”).

IV. Data Collection & Methodology

Student Interactions Tabulation

In late summer of 2015, after extensive discussions between the assessment team, a need for concrete data about how students interact with CSD administrative staff (director, associate and assistant director, learning specialists) was identified. A general sense among staff that an increase in student interactions (face-to-face, phone, and email) had occurred at both campus locations spurred interest in assessing the nature and type of the interactions overall. Analyzing data for the entire quarter was necessary to accurately capture any trends, since some interactions are more common at particular times in the quarter. In consultation with Scott Tharp, Student Affairs Divisional Assessment Coordinator and Jen Sweet, Associate Director of the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Elisabeth Sullivan and Beth Ann Bryant Richards discerned possible strategies for examining these interactions.

During autumn quarter, CSD staff developed a paper method for recording interactions with students. A draft of the recording form was circulated for feedback, and revised several times. Revisions included discussions about various types of situations and scenarios and where those would fall on the recording form. The data collection form was also shared with Scott Tharp and Jen Sweet for feedback, and then returned to the department stakeholders. With the exception of the Director, who was out of the country, the assessment team (CSD administrative staff) met during December to decide how to fill out the form in various scenarios so that data collection would be as consistent as practically possible. The data collection form (initial and revised) is included in Appendices 1 and 2.

All CSD administrative staff members (Director, Associate and Assistant Director and the Full and Part-Time Learning Specialists) tracked their interactions with students using the data collection forms with the predetermined criteria. After the second week, staff met to discuss any ambiguities within the consistency of data collection. At that time, the form was altered to reflect the staff's clearer understanding of some of the types of interactions that were consistently arising to be coded. "Partner with Other DPU" was added, eliminating much of the need for "Other." In addition, a "Compliance" checkbox was added so that staff did not have to scribe a "C" on the form. Each form represented a discrete student interaction, but multiple activities could occur within that interaction. Several times during weeks three and four of the quarter the administrators conferred to insure that similar situations were being coded in similar ways. The Associate Director was not available to capture data the first week of the quarter (email forwarded to other loop staff), and the Director was not able to record data consistently for the first several weeks of the term. These variables were considered in the overall interpretation of the data.

Qualtrics Student Survey

During December, CSD administrative staff met to discuss how to best survey the entire CSD population about their need for accommodations and services, their perception of their usage of accommodations and services, and some open-ended questions to tease out any additional issues. Sampling was ruled out as a technique so that every CSD student would have the opportunity for input. Staff determined an automated survey would work best because it provided all CSD students with an opportunity to participate. Several meetings took place with Scott Tharp to narrow the focus and adjust the format of the questions to best elicit CSD student accommodations and services usage and to construct questions so that the survey data could align with the Student Interactions tabulations. Ultimately, the survey underwent six revisions with input from all administrative staff and Scott Tharp. The final version of the survey is included as Appendix 3.

A ticket was submitted to the Student Affairs automated request system to have the survey link sent to all active CSD students. The email is included in Appendix 4. The second week of the quarter was determined to be optimal to distribute the survey—prior to exams, yet after the initial chaos of the first week of the term. However, there was a delay in distribution, and the email with link to the survey did not go out until April 19.

Initial questions in the survey were designed to determine student usage of services with particular attention to location. The next portion of the survey posed questions about needs and use of accommodations and services. Some accommodations (i.e., Exam Proctoring) can be tracked using CSD data collected through PeopleSoft or the CSD database. Other accommodations and services (i.e., Advocacy) have traditionally been difficult to count. One section for both needs and usage was designed to line up with the areas tabulated in the data collection done by the administrative staff. The open-ended question at the end gave students an opportunity to give feedback about what else they might wish to receive assistance from CSD. Finally, the survey gave a chance for students to list their emails if they would like CSD to reach out to them, and to sign up to participate in the feedback session to interpret the survey data.

The Qualtrics tracking showed a spike in responses when the survey went live. After a week and a half, there were few new responses. Another ticket was submitted for a reminder email to go to students, signs were displayed at both campus CSD offices to remind students to take the survey, and the graduate interns, who have frequent contact with students, asked students about completing the survey as they came in during the midterm exam period. The part-time clinicians (who work one-on-one with approximately 20-25% of our students) also reminded their students to complete the survey.

A final reminder was sent to students on Monday, May 16 and the survey closed on Monday, May 23.

Student Interpretations of Survey

As part of the Qualtrics Survey, students were invited to participate in a face-to-face session to assist in interpretation of the survey results. Students indicated their interest by typing in their emails to be contacted for participation. Thirty-two students responded and were invited via email, and later phone follow-up to attend one of the two interpretation sessions held on May 25 and May 26 (One session was at LPC, the other at the Loop. Students chose location based on convenience and availability.) Students were asked to respond to the CSD resource email to RSVP.

A script for the interpretation sessions is attached in Appendix 5, as well as a consent form for students and facilitators to sign (Appendix 6).

Each student participant received a photocopy of the results of the Qualtrics survey. Each copy distributed was numbered to insure that all were returned at the end of the session. There was no identifying information about students who completed the survey. While enjoying the CSD-provided food, students discussed the results and their understanding of the responses, at times adding their own ideas to the conversation. At the Loop session on May 26, the entire session was audio recorded with a SmartPen while one staff member took notes. At the Lincoln Park session, two staff members took notes at the May 25 session.

Data Analysis

Student Interactions Tabulation

Excel sheets were created for the purpose of data input by Ryan Putzstuck, CSD Administrative Assistant. Data from the collection sheets was entered in Excel files, with one intern or administrative assistant entering all the sheets for each administrative staff member into identical Excel spreadsheets. The data was aggregated by campus and category response. Percentages were calculated for this report by Elisabeth Sullivan and Jennifer Spraggins.

Qualtrics Survey

The results of the Qualtrics survey were reviewed by the student volunteers and all of the administrative staff. The comparative numbers and percentages were generated by Elisabeth Sullivan and Beth Ann Bryant Richards and interpreted accordingly.

Student Interpretations of Survey

Student interpretations are summarized in the results section.

Participant Consent

For the Student Interaction tally, no student consent was required since only the types of interaction, not particular student information, was being tracked. CSD administrators were tracking their time. For the Qualtrics survey, consent was obtained at the beginning of the survey (Appendix 3) For the student survey interpretation groups, consent forms were signed at the beginning of the sessions (Appendix 6).

V. Data & Results

STUDENT INTERACTIONS TABULATION

The data from the usage tracking yielded the following results (see the full table in Appendix 7a and 7b):

A total of 1724 service interactions were recorded over the ten-week period of winter quarter 2016. Some of these were a single episode with multiple interactions taking place; others were a single phone call, visit, or email thread. These interactions did **not** involve new student enrollment meetings (72) or clinician meetings (1825), or exam proctoring and related communication/arrangements (1067). The data for those interactions were tracked by other CSD systems.

Of the 1724 service interactions recorded, 567(33%) were with LPC staff, 1157(67%) were with Loop staff. The CSD population consisted of 899 students who were officially enrolled with CSD at the end of winter quarter 2016. This included 497 Loop-based students and 402 LPC-based students.

Thirty-four percent of interactions were for academic coaching. Accommodations revision comprised 12% of the interactions. Advocacy with professors was another highly utilized area, with 18% of interactions identified as such. Career advising, post-DePaul planning and advocacy (e.g. supplying verification of accommodations to Law Board, FINRA, Graduate testing) made up 4% of overall activity. Course selection advising was an overall total of 7%. Consultations with CSD staff (including fellow administrators and clinicians) were 21% of activity. Fifteen percent of interactions involved consultation with other DPC partners (e.g., New Student and Family Engagement, UCS, DOS, Residence). Interactions related to Late Withdrawals were 4% overall and financial aid appeals 1% overall. Parent interactions comprised 1% of all interactions, but note that this does not include interactions related to new student enrollment meetings. Outside consultations (with therapists, providers) totaled less than 1%, as did the "Other" category. Ten percent of interactions were determined to be urgent, while two percent of interactions involved facilities. Overall, 15% of the interactions were compliance-based, and 69 of those compliance-based interactions involved a student with a clinician (17%). Four hundred four discrete students accounted for the 1724 interactions. Total interactions by students with clinician services were 413 (24%). Of the recorded interactions, 35% were face-to-face, 18% were by phone, and 45% were by email.

QUALTRICS STUDENT SURVEY

The second component of the data analysis is the results of the Qualtrics survey of CSD students for winter quarter 2016.

The 833 students active (taking classes and officially enrolled with CSD) for winter quarter 2016 were sent a survey link by email. (Six emails bounced back). Of the remaining group, 197 began the survey, and 145 completed it, for an 18% completion rate and a 24% response rate. See Appendix 8 for graphs of response data and actual responses to the qualitative questions.

One hundred sixty-seven students (86%) indicated they had interacted with CSD during winter quarter. Ninety-one of respondents indicated they had had an in-person interaction (61% LPC, 54% Loop). Ninety-six of LPC-interacting students and 82% of Loop-interacting students indicated that they were comfortable or very comfortable interacting in that setting, 1% (LPC) and 18% (Loop) were neutral, and there were three responses (2 LPC (3%), 1 Loop (1%) that somewhat disagreed. No respondents strongly disagreed.

Survey takers were asked to indicate what accommodations and services they needed and used as two separate questions. Results of these questions were generally within 3% of each other. The following were the results (need/use): Alternate format text (14%/12%); Captioning/Sign Language (2%/3%); Clinician Services (49%/49%); Priority Registration (80%/80%); Technology (e.g. Smart pen) (33%/36%); and Exam Proctoring at CSD (66%/65%).

Again, the needs/use figures were close—within four percentage points: Advocacy: (54%/52%); Career/Post DePaul Assistance: (22%/18%); Accommodation Changes: (27%/29%); Course Selection and Advising: (70%/67%); Late Withdrawal Assistance: (13%/16%); Physical Access/Housing issues: (7%/6%). Twenty-two percent versus twenty-four percent reported need/usage for an urgent consultation with CSD staff.

The qualitative portions of questions and observations of trends were interpreted by students in the last part of our assessment project. The student reports of needs and usage were higher for all categories than the coded records tracking interactions (see Table, Appendix 9).

Fifty percent of respondents indicated they used clinician services.

STUDENT INTERPRETATIONS OF SURVEY

The final step of the assessment was working with student volunteers (solicited through the survey itself) to interpret the results of the survey. Three students attended the session at Lincoln Park on May 25 and four attended at the Loop on May 26. The purpose was to assist CSD staff in interpretation of the survey results.

Students reported that they agreed with the results of the survey in key areas. The use of priority registration and testing accommodations are seen by students as critical to their success. Students also report high satisfaction and positive outcomes from their use of advocacy and course selection advising. In terms of needs, students agreed that priority registration, testing accommodations and clinician services are at the top of their list of needs. Mirroring their responses to their usage, they see advocacy and course advising as top needs.

Students see the CSD offices on both campuses as a sanctuary. When asked about ways CSD could assist their overall DePaul experience, students said that they needed access to more opportunities for both socializing and support. The stigma of identifying oneself as a student with a disability remains a prevalent concern, and students say that being able to find peer support in a social setting would help relieve this anxiety and build networks. One student

mentioned the various groups that overlap with CSD, such as veterans groups and adult or older students. Several students felt that support groups would help many CSD students with ongoing issues they face during their time at DePaul. Another student said that he felt awkward when he first began going into the Loop office since it has a very “businesslike” feel, but that his comfort level improved drastically over time. One student mentioned the idea of creating a “CSD Cultural Center” (or CSD Club, CSD Buddy Program, Peer Support) to give students more of a sense of belonging. Another idea was to create the role of CSD Ambassadors to help get the word out about what kind of things qualify as disabilities and what CSD really offers students. Students also advocated for the concept of creating a physical space or location where students could gather, study, socialize, and offer support to one another.

Students also acknowledged that their professors have a lot to do with how easily or comfortably they access their accommodations. A student said that it was one thing for a professor to have the template statement in their syllabus about CSD and another thing if the professor actually talked genuinely about accommodations as if “it’s an okay thing to do.” Students discussed the difficulty of dealing with professors who are clearly annoyed with their request for testing accommodations. Students experience frustration around this, with one saying, “they don’t know what I go through at home.”

At least one student mentioned the concern with testing accommodations and how the tests should be able to be scheduled at any time of day, as the office hours could be constraining.

Students also reported feelings of concern regarding the amount of documentation required to enroll with CSD and the length of time it takes to get enrolled and access their accommodations. Students report that for first year students with disabilities, the transition to college can be very challenging, especially for those engaged in Immersion Week with Discover Chicago. At least one participant said that the Writing Center has been a source of concern because it can be difficult for students with disabilities to use the center the way it is set up since they feel judged and have to disclose their disabilities. The same student mentioned that the Writing Center not being open during Immersion Week was an issue, and suggested a partnership between CSD and the Writing Center.

Finally, students agreed there was need for assistance with job searching, resume and cover letter writing, help finding internships, and career assistance. This assistance should be specifically targeted to students with disabilities and the issues they deal with, such as when, if, and how to disclose their disability to potential or current employers.

Discussion & Interpretation of Results

Key Findings

- The bulk (71%) of CSD administrative staff interactive time (non-clinician, non- exam proctoring, non- enrollment) is spent on four key areas: Advocacy, Advising, Academic Coaching, and Accommodation revision.
- Student perception of needs and usage of area of support are much higher than that measured by administrative staff.
- The accommodations and services supplied by administrative staff are not duplicated by clinician services role. Accordingly, some students with clinicians will also have significant interactions with administrative staff (about 25% of interactions).
- Students are overwhelmingly satisfied with CSD services. One participant in the interpretation session said:

Thanks for even offering to have something like this. I have never, ever experienced this kind of helpfulness in my life. CSD is always trying to do better, get better, even wanting feedback from us. I never experienced anything like that coming from the City Colleges, I never experienced anything like this, so I appreciate you guys even considering us and asking for our feedback.

- Post-DePaul Career support, the subject of last year's assessment, continues to be an area of concern for students. It is perplexing to CSD staff however, in that previous programs directed to these areas did not have adequate participation to justify continuance.
- Results of the Student Interaction Tabulation show that a full 25% of the interactions were with students who concurrently receive clinician services. Given that these are often among the neediest of CSD students, it does make sense that they would be heavy utilizers of administrative time. Some of these interactions are doubtless for services that clinicians do not typically provide (such as support for a Financial Aid appeal). Other interactions occur because clinicians must escalate their student situations to administrative staff. This scenario happens when the situation spills over into time outside the regular term or day or becomes more complex or time consuming. Data support that 25% of the time spent by administrative staff is in assisting students already served by a clinician.
- Students reported unexpectedly high needs and usage rates in the Qualtrics survey. CSD students may be over reporting, perhaps remembering interactions from other quarters or responding to what they perceive to be a useful accommodation or service. Student numbers on their usage rate were about twice as high as what staff recorded. For urgent situations, CSD administrative staff may have a less reactive view of what an urgent situation is than do the students themselves.

There were some challenges that indubitably influenced our results. The large sample size and the decision to include all CSD students in the survey made the 24% response rate acceptable. Procedurally, there was some documented underreporting, especially at the outset of the data collection. Human error was of course present. For instance, in the completion of the data forms, one percent (25 forms out of a total of 1724) lacked information about the type of interaction that occurred. Though staff worked to norm interpretation and coding, the individual nature of interactions made consistency difficult. The participants of this assessment project acknowledge that these variance may have resulted in under or over reported tabulations. Participants are guarded yet optimistic that the overall summative data is representative of overall student utilization CSD services and accommodations

A number of other data driven considerations for variance in the tabulation data were presented as well. These are articulated in Appendix 10.

The results of the benchmark student needs and usage study for upcoming department assessment and establish a more up-to-date profile of CSD student usage for the division since the last usage studies were for the PLuS Program in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

Recommendations and Plans for Action

Recommendations

-The Loop office should create nameplates for the graduate interns and encourage them to more consistently introduce themselves by name.

Based on the feedback from the Qualtrics survey comment section, where students at Lincoln Park know the names of the interns, making them feel more comfortable and welcome.

- CSD should explore whether there are any time or labor efficiencies to be gained in the 4As: Advising, Academic coaching, Accommodations Revision and Advocacy.

These four interaction types represent the bulk of student interactions at CSD, not including exam proctoring and enrollment meetings.

-Continue to address post-DePaul career concerns, perhaps with a different approach.

CSD programming in the recent past has addressed these concerns and suggestions.

These programs included Career Club, which were discontinued due to lack of student participation.

-In a future year study, focus an assessment on students who are enrolled with CSD but not using services.

In the Qualtrics survey few students responded that they were not using CSD services, and the student discussion group reflected the viewpoints of those who did utilize CSD services.

-Explore the feasibility of addressing CSD students' social concerns through looking into common space or activity options.

In both the Qualtrics survey and the student discussion groups, a strong sentiment for having a social outlet for CSD students was expressed.

-Explore partner relationships with the Writing Center and/or First Year Programs to address CSD student transition concerns.

This was a suggestion from the student discussion group.

Action Plan

The first item can easily be implemented. The remaining items should be part of a larger discussion as a new director comes on board.

Sharing the Results

Generally, the results of the assessment report and the annual report are shared with CSD staff at our annual fall retreat. The results will also be shared with our colleagues in Student Affairs through the poster session in October. The incoming director will decide how and when to share with additional stakeholders. Information for students can be shared by creating a poster for each campus office to display when students return to campus in the fall.

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