McMaster University

Centre for Student Development
Services to Students with Disabilities

REPORT TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
1997 - 1998
PART I

Section 1

1997 - 1998 Year End Activities

Centre for Student Development

The Centre for Student Development provides services to the entire University community. In fulfillment of our services we have adopted the following Vision and Mission Statements:

CSD Vision

The Centre for Student Development will make a positive difference in the lives, personal growth and academic success of students, regardless of their background, stage in life or abilities.

CSD Mission

The Centre for Student Development facilitates and enhances academic success and personal growth of students. We do this by providing support, counselling, instruction, accommodation, accessibility, facilitating student development and leadership, advocating for students on issues related to diversity, educational equity and academic achievement.

The Centre was confronted with some unique challenges and opportunities in 1997 - 1998. It was the Centre's second year of operation under the "self-managed work team" concept. The year was a growth year, one which had the team moving from a perspective of orientation and familiarity with the concept of team and new colleagues into one where closer working relationships and responsibilities were developed.

We experienced some changes in the team dynamics in the process. Bill Hoch, the former Manager of the former Office for Ability and Access, left the University to pursue other opportunities. His leaving created an opportunity for the department to re-evaluate its position with respect to direct student services. As a result an additional front line position was created and Marge Marriott was hired as a new Programme Co-ordinator (Disability Specialist) on January 15, 1998.

Caroline Cayuga, our Programme Co-ordinator (Learning Specialist) left us for a maternity leave between July 1997 and April 1998. During Caroline's leave the Centre's services to students with learning disabilities was aptly provided by Anne Chaffee.
The Centre also introduced another Counsellor position to meet the University's growing demand for personal assistance in counselling. Beverly Dullaert was hired into the position of Counsellor. Beverly came to us as a Ed.D. candidate from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She has been able to provide tremendous support to students with disabilities seeking assistance for issues of a personal nature.

Services to Students with a Disability

The Centre continued to provide a broad range of support to students with disabilities in 1997 - 1998. The services included academic accommodations, assistance with tests and exams, assistance with notetaking, assistance from volunteers, tutoring, timetabling and scheduling, assistance with the provision of taped textbooks, assistance and training on adaptive technology, disability related counselling, awareness training and advocacy. The Centre also introduced a peer helper program for students with disabilities, continued to provide a support group for students with learning disabilities and assisted the McMaster Disability Advocacy Group (MDAG - an advocacy group of students with disabilities, formerly known as McSNA).

The newly introduced assessment and screening service for students with a suspected learning disability was continued in 1997 - 1998. Unlike the previous year where all suspected learning disability assessments were conducted at McMaster, the majority of assessments were sent off campus (because of Caroline Cayuga's maternity leave). However, the screening and evaluation system was continued and worked very well. Over 50 students were screened for a possible learning disability or attention deficit disorder. Fourteen students were subsequently referred for a full psycho-educational assessment. Caroline was able to complete 4 assessments prior to her leave and Anne Chaffee referred 10 students for external assessment. Those students whose assessments were positive were able to receive accommodations and assistance. For those students whose screening and/or assessment did not disclose a learning disability they continued to receive academic and learning skills assistance from the Centre in order to help them be successful at their studies.

In 1997 - 1998 the Centre's services for students with disabilities introduced two peer helper volunteers. The two volunteers were hired on with many other peers who volunteer and gain work experience through the program in other areas such as academic skills and career services. The two CSD peer volunteers who worked with students with disabilities undertook a number of initiatives. They worked directly with students with disabilities providing assistance with study skills, time management, writing skills, research, recording print material to tape and they completed a survey of students regarding the need for volunteer assistance. As well, the two peers were very instrumental in helping the Centre to evaluate the usefulness of the peer program with a view to hire two peers for 1998 - 1999 in a co-ordination capacity for a one-to-one volunteer program and for a new notetaking service.
Throughout the school year the Centre was able to hire a student under the work study program to assist students with disabilities to use the newly installed computer technology in the main library. Instruction was given on the use of Windows, word processing, scanning, use of large print, voice activated programs and speech.

With funding made available by the McMaster Students' Union, the Centre was able to purchase six computer systems with related peripheral software and hardware for use by students with disabilities. These systems include Pentium processors and have scanners, Braille printers, JAWS text to speech software, Dragon Dictate and Naturally Speaking voice activation software, Omnipro 3000 optical character recognition, Vista large print software/hardware and 21" monitors. Three of these computer systems have been located in the library. Three other systems will be set-up in the Centre. All systems will be available for the completion of term work and to assist with completing tests or exams.

Additionally, CSD worked with the University's physical plant staff to construct a writing surface for students to use while writing exams. Some students are not able to sit to write an exam and need to be able to stand to do so. We worked together to design and construct a desktop writing unit that is adjustable and can be used by any student needing to stand at any time while writing a test or exam, either during the formal exam period or during the academic term.

The Centre purchased additional new computers for exam writing in 1998. Over the past eight years students with disabilities have been able to write exams in a separate location with the use of a computer. Old DOS based computers were replaced with new systems to be used for December and April exams. CSD purchased three systems in the spring and had them ready for use for the April exam period. One system has speech (JAWS) and a second has large print (Vista) along with a 21" monitor. The third system is a standard system without any special peripheral software. Each computer has a Windows based environment and a personal printer attached.

The Centre was also able to purchase two new computer servers for the completion of our updated web site and to enhance the technology used by staff in the Centre.

CSD invigilated a number of tests or exams on behalf of instructors and the Examinations Office. A total of 266 tests and 50 exams were invigilated. During the December 1997 and April 1998 exam periods the Examinations Office invigilated approximately 930 exams for students with disabilities.

Staff of the Centre continued to provide assistance at both spring and fall Convocations to students with disabilities and disabled guests of all graduands.
Awareness, Advocacy and Other Activities

The Centre continued its active involvement with the University and local community. Presentations on issues related to disability were made to first year and third year Social Work classes. The Centre participated again in a "shadowing" experience for first year Occupational Therapy students. Numerous consultations took place with students from various programmes to assist them with the completion of research and assigned studies. As well, the Centre continued to be represented on the local CNIB Client Services and Regional Accessible Transportation Services Advisory Committees. CSD was also able to initiate contact between WorkAble Services and PATH Employment Services with the University’s Career Planning and Employment Centre as a means to providing a better and more effective employment and career planning service to students with disabilities.

CSD participated in many University organized presentations to the public and to prospective university students. We participated at the University’s Discovery Days, Liaison Days and Welcome Day for prospective and incoming students. As well, we attended a fair organized by the McMaster Association of Part-time Students. Additionally, the Centre held two separate orientation sessions for new incoming students with disabilities.

Working closely with the McMaster Special Needs Association (now called the McMaster Disability Advocacy Group - MDAG) the Centre re-introduced Disabilities Awareness Week after a five year absence. As this was a re-introduction of events the activities were limited but the participation, organization and support was tremendous. A wheelchair basketball game was held between the Hamilton Steel City Wheelers and the McMaster Women’s and Men’s varsity ball teams. An agency and technical devices fair was hosted to provide disability groups and suppliers of low and high tech products or services an opportunity to display their information. We also hosted a simulation exercise for senior management and faculty of the University and student groups so they could experience some of the daily barriers that exist on campus for many students with disabilities.

The Centre hired a work study student to evaluate our web site and begin to make changes that will more accurately reflect our services and to update our information. As the work progressed we realized how complex and time consuming an accessible web site can be, so the work continues to move along with the goal of having it completed by September, 1998.

Two major initiatives were also undertaken during the past year. The Centre worked very closely with the University community to initiate an undergraduate policy for students with disabilities. As a result of the initial work completed on this task a policy implementation committee has been introduced by the Associate Vice-President (Student Affairs) and the work of the committee is ongoing. The objective is to have the policy complete and ready for submission to the University’s Senate as soon as possible. Secondly, a set of standards for addressing emergency situations for students
with disabilities was also developed. University crisis intervention policies already exist to deal with serious emergency situations. The new procedures are designed to assist students in situations where any situation confronting a student could be considered as a safety or security issue.

The Centre met with members of the University's faculty association to improve communication between the association and the Centre. Numerous consultations were held and issues such as notices to instructors and the development of an undergraduate policy were discussed. As well, staff of the Centre were able to provide information to association members about the distinction between learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. Additionally, the Centre worked closely with an advisory committee comprised of faculty, staff and students to assist with evaluating and recommending to the Centre ways in which services and delivery could be improved.

Staff of the Centre attended professional development sessions including the Ontario Psychological Association Annual conference, and sessions on the diagnosis of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. Many of the staff of the Centre also attended a Canadian University and College Counselling Association sponsored workshop on learning disabilities featuring Dr. Loring Brinkerhoff. The staff also attended a workshop on the impact of gender and culture in a changing environment.

Ongoing support was provided to the University on issues related to access. Consultations continued on issues related to parking and drop-off for people with disabilities at the front entrance to the new Applied Health Sciences building currently under construction. Consultation with representatives of the Physical Plant were held regarding snow removal, updating signage, sidewalk reconstruction, access to various buildings on camps, retrofitting various classrooms, and capital renewal. As well, many consultations occurred with Associate Deans and faculty in regard to specific or general issues related to students with disabilities.

Section 2

Client Statistics

The following tables provide a breakdown of the number of students with disabilities served by the Centre for Student Development in 1996 - 1997.
### 1997 - 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty / Disability</th>
<th>Deaf/Deafened/Hard of Hearing</th>
<th>Blind/Visually Impaired</th>
<th>Learning Disability</th>
<th>Chronic Medical Psychological</th>
<th>Mobility Disability</th>
<th>Multiple Disability</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Other category includes the Arts and Science Programme, Continuing Education and any other non-degree programme courses.

There was a total of 306 students with disabilities registered with the Centre for Student Development in 1997 - 1998.

### Comparison 1994 - 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind/Visually Impaired</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Medical/Psychological</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Disability</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Disability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>267*</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Note:** It should be noted that the number of students registered with the Centre in 1996 - 1997 did not include the number of inquiries from prospective students as was the practice in previous years. The 1996 - 1997 statistics including inquiries is 348.

The Centre is involved in an ongoing process to manage its statistics. After the Centre was created two separate databases and statistical requirements emerged. The Centre has been taking steps to incorporate all of its statistical needs into one unified data system. This is an ongoing process that will still take some time to work out. Changes that will be made will allow the Centre the opportunity to modify its data to more closely reflect the statistics asked for by the Ministry.

**Section 3**

**1997 - 1998 Year End Financial Statements**

See Appendix A for the year end financial statements.

**PART II**

**Section 1**

**CSD Initiatives**

**Planned Activities**

The Centre for Student Development has a number of new and continued activities planned for 1998 - 1999.

The Peer Helper Programme will again play an instrumental role in providing services to students with disabilities. Five Peers have been recruited to work on two separate initiatives. One initiative will have three of the Peers working directly with students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders and acquired brain injuries as coach/mentors. These Peers will assist the Programme Co-ordinator (Learning Specialist) with assisting these students with study skills strategies, writing skills and developing proper essays and lab reports, test writing strategies, time management and other skills pertaining to improving their academic performance. The two other Peers will undertake a co-ordinating role to assist the Centre to implement a new notetaking program for students and to recruit and co-ordinate other volunteer services. All of these initiatives are new to the Centre and have emerged from other similar initiatives undertaken in 1997-1998.
Another new initiative for 1998-1999 is to provide alternative physical therapy to students with disabilities. The two types of therapy will be reflexology and massage therapy. Many students with physical disabilities (chronic medical conditions, chronic back, neck and shoulder pain usually as a result of an injury, etc.) seek therapy outside the campus. This initiative, which is funded by the McMaster Students Union, will allow students the opportunity to receive treatments in a more cost effective and practical way because they will be co-ordinated through the Centre for Student Development. This is a pilot project for 1998-1999 and will be evaluated for its effectiveness. Along with this initiative the Centre is working with the University’s Athletics and Recreation Department to determine if some type of co-operative effort can be achieved to provide similar services to students with disabilities on a more permanent basis.

The Centre will also be producing a new faculty and staff guide book on issues and services related to students with disabilities. Along with the guide CSD is producing a day planner for students. The faculty guide is a revision to that which was produced in 1991 but had not been reproduced since that time. There is a strong need to disseminate information to faculty and staff about the Centre and the needs and accommodations of students with disabilities. As a result the Centre has also been able to arrange with the University to have basic information included in a University published faculty handbook. As a service to students with disabilities we are producing a student day planner which will include a wide variety of information about the University, community and financial resources. The day planner will also include material to assist students with scheduling and time management practices. The day planner is a new initiative that we feel will be a very useful tool for students.

The Centre will also be working closely with the McMaster Disability Advocacy Group on a Disabilities Awareness Week. A wide variety of activities are planned to reach out to the entire University community. Activities will include a wheelchair basketball game between the Hamilton Steel City Wheelers and McMaster’s Women’s and Men’s varsity ball teams. There will be a disability fair, a guest lecture by Dr. Mark Nagler from Waterloo University, a film night, radio shows, displays and many other activities. This will be the second awareness week activity after it was reintroduced in 1997-1998.

The Centre will again organize a support group for students with learning disabilities. This is a continuation of a support group that has been ongoing for the past two years. As well, the Centre will introduce a similar type group for students with mental health type disabilities. The latter group is a new initiative that students have identified as something they would be interested in participating in. We hope these two groups will be very successful and will assist students to meet their individual and collective objectives.
Also under way is the completion an undergraduate policy for students with disabilities. A policy has been drafted and is now in the process of being evaluated and modified for presentation to the Deans and Senate. A committee has been struck by the Associate Vice-President (Student Affairs) to complete this task and the Centre is represented on this committee by Marge Marriott. The work of the committee is moving along well and it is hoped the policy will be ready for presentation by early fall.

The Centre will again look to its advisory committee for support and assistance. Part of this advisory group will include representation from students, student groups, staff and faculty. We hope to continue our deliberations with members of the faculty association in order to bring about a better understanding of students with disabilities and to provide a better level of service to meet everyone’s needs.

The Centre will be setting up three computers in its resource area to assist students with their technology needs. The computers will be available to students to complete tests, exams and assignments. The systems will be configured the same as the systems located in our library and will include a Braille printer, scanner, speech software, e-large print, a 21" monitor and voice activation (both continuous speech and navigation software). Along with this, CSD will also be purchasing new furniture for the computer resource area so that all our computer furniture is practical and accessible.

Another initiative the Centre will be looking to implement is an attendant care program. Preliminary discussions have taken place with a representative from the Ontario March of Dimes with a favourable response. CSD will continue deliberations with the University’s Housing Services to determine whether such an initiative is practical or possible. This is an exciting venture and it is hoped that we will be able to have an attendant care program in place for September 1999 or 2000.

Funding support from the McMaster Student’s Union has allowed CSD to hire a full-time computer support person on contract through until the end of December 1998. The support person will be responsible for configuring and maintaining special computers in the University’s library, systems in the Centre for Student Development and for updating and maintaining the Centre’s web site. Along with this, the computer support person will reconfigure the University’s campus map to update access points to buildings and to make it more user friendly on the web site. As well, the Centre will hire a student to train students with disabilities on the use of the access technology located in the Centre and the library.

CSD will be using the increase in funding from the Ministry to establish a bursary for students with disabilities. The bursary will be administered similar to the existing BSWD, but will be available to students who are former VRS clients and to those students who do not qualify for the BSWD due to financial restriction. This bursary will be available to assist students with meeting the costs of both educational and disability related expenses. The value of this bursary will be equal to the increased allocation from the Ministry, that is $51,487.
Section 2

1998 - 1999 Budget

See Appendix B for the 1998 - 1999 Budget

The surplus from the 1997 - 1998 budget will be used by CSD for the revised faculty and staff handbook, the new student day planner, implementation of a new undergraduate policy, additional staff support for training students with disabilities on the use of adaptive technology in CSD and the library, new accessible furniture for CSD’s resource and computer/testing area, complete no-fee LD assessments and costs associated with the implementation of the CSD’s new notetaking service.

Section 3

Revisions/Changes to the Centre for Student Development

The Centre filled the Programme Co-ordinator (Disability Specialist) position on January 15, 1998 when Marge Marriott, formerly of Brock University, accepted the position.

The Centre purchased nine new computers in 1997 - 1998. All systems are Pentium pc’s with Windows '95. Three of the systems have been set up, and are used specifically for December and April exam periods. One of the systems also includes a 21" monitor with large print (Vista) and another includes speech (JAWS). Three systems have been set-up in our main library. One system is configured with a Braille printer and scanner using OmniPro software. This system also includes speech (JAWS). A second system has a 21" monitor with large print (Vista). The third system is standard, but does have Dragon Dictate navigation voice activated software and Naturally Speaking continuous speech voice activated software. Three systems identical to those purchased for the library have also been purchased for the Centre for use by students writing tests and completing other course work.