McMaster University

2003 – 2004 Year End Report to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities
October 29, 2004
2003 – 2004 Year End Report

Office for Students with Disabilities - Staffing and Organizational Changes

The Centre for Student Development brought on board a new Director, responsible for, among many areas, services to students with disabilities. Desmond Pouyat assumed this position effective August, 2003.

Staff member, Kerri Ann Fitzgerald, returned to the position of Disability Coordinator, following one year of maternity leave. A half-time Disability Coordinator was hired to assist with accommodations of students with mental health disabilities. Andrea Liss assumed this role. Beginning in term two, a sessional evening (Monday to Thursday) Disability Coordinator position was created with Cheryl Bossé being appointed.

Total disability-related staffing included:

- 2.5 Programme Coordinators (Disability Specialists)
- 1 Learning Disabilities Coordinator (Disability Specialist)
- .5 Programme Coordinator (Evenings - Sessional January – May)
- 1 Accommodations Assistant
- 1 Learning Strategist
- 1 Assistive Technologist
- .5 administrative assistant

Disability Services is also heavily supported by other staff including Reception, Systems Administrator, Marketing and Promotions Assistant, Academic Skills, and Director.

Additionally, Peer Helper volunteers and part time students are also appointed to assist with a number of initiatives including Notetaking services, day planner development, disabilities awareness and our ATLAS (Assistive Technology, Learning and Academic Support) program.

See appendix I for CSD organizational chart.

Services and Accommodations

Our new ATLAS lab which assists students with specific learning disabilities, was opened in October, 2003. The lab offers support to a large number of students, and houses the Learning Disabilities Coordinator (Disability Specialist), the Learning Strategist and Assistive Technologist.

To assist with the demand for screening and possible assessments of students suspected of having a learning disability or attention deficit disorder, the Centre introduced group sessions offered to students suspecting a disability. Sessions
provided detailed information about what constituted a learning disability and ADHD as well as information regarding normal learning problems. If, following the session, a student strongly believed a disability may be present, screening was then conducted. To assist with the screening and assessment process, PhD level interns were arranged to assist with the process. As well, a psychoeducational consultant was contracted to conduct assessments, under the supervision of CSD staff.

To address the increased demand for service, the Centre introduced evening hours four nights per week, beginning in January, 2004. As mentioned, Cheryl Bossé took on the position of Disability Coordinator, working evenings Monday to Thursday each week, up to the middle of May. This allowed for increased student appointment times, and, just as importantly, additional times were offered to accommodate students writing class tests and exams.

The Centre implemented changes to the procedures for administering in class tests on behalf of instructors. The change was intended to facilitate better communication among students, instructors and the Centre. Though the change was considered important, it resulted in a new set of issues and concerns that will be re-addressed in the coming year.

The Centre continued to provide a number of support services through the peer Helper Program. These include Notetaking, volunteer assistance, LD peer support, transcription and library resource.

**Equipment and Technology**

Purchased for the ATLAS lab to assist students with specific learning and other disabilities was the following:

- 7 desktop computers
- 1 scanner
- 1 printer
- 5 Kurzweil 3000
- 1 Dragon Naturally Speaking
- 5 Text Help Read and Write Gold
- 7 Inspiration
- 7 Head Sets
- 6 work stations
- 1 height adjustable station
- 7 workstation chairs
- 8 office side chairs

Purchased for the ATLAS lab to accommodate staff working in the area was the following:
- 2 printers
- 1 scanner
- 3 complete office deskwork stations
- 1 supply cabinet
- 1 file cabinet
- 1 pint-size fridge
- 1 pint-size microwave oven
- 1 water cooler
- 1 pint-size photocopier
- 1 height adjustable table
- art work for decoration

The Centre purchased the following items for the main office to accommodate staff and students in the process of service delivery:

- 1 upgrade to Zoomtext Plus

**Professional Development**

Staff attended a number of conferences, seminars and workshops in 2003-0-4. These include:

**Conferences**

CSUN – California State University Northridge – Disability and Technology
CACUSS – Canadian Association of College and University Student Services
Destination Success
Bridging the Gulf Between Mental Health and Student Success

**Seminars and Workshops**

Barbara Wand Symposium
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for General Anxiety Disorders
Autism Spectrum Disorders
ADHD in Children and Adults
Integrating Learning Strategies with Assistive Technology
Psychological Assessment Part 1
Bridging the Gap: Partnering Strengths and Abilities with Technology
Federal Privacy Legislation

**Outreach to the Campus and Broader Community**

A number of Disabilities Awareness activities were introduced this year. The most notable changes included a demonstration of wheelchair rugby, and a guest speaking engagement by Christy Smith a former television celebrity from the Survivor series. Additionally, McMaster introduced a unique poster campaign,
using images of students with disabilities. The poster campaign was extremely successful, to the point where a number of requests from other schools, and the Ontario Citizenship Ministry requested copies for display.

Additional outreach activities took place including:

Learner in Difficulty Workshop* (Presentation to McMaster Health Sciences Faculty)
Training session for McMaster exam invigilators
AT information session/presentation for staff at Hillfield Strathallan and Hill Park Secondary Schools
Technology forum for local University and College ATs

Policy Review

No changes

Client Statistics

See appendix II for client data.

McMaster experienced a sizeable increase in the number of students with disabilities served in 2003-2004. The specific increase in 2003-2004 over 2002-2003 is 98. This equates to a 22.7% increase. The most significant increase is in the area of chronic medical/psychiatric disabilities.

Additionally, the Centre screened a number of students enquiring as to whether they had a learning disability or attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder. Seventy-eight (78) students were screened. From that group, fifty (50) students received further screening or testing. A total of thirty-seven (37) students received a full psychoeducational assessment, of which twenty-seven (27) were completed in house and ten (10) were referred to the community.

2003-2004 Year End Financial Statement

See appendix III

Other income contributed by the university included funds for disabilities awareness, an inflationary adjustment, proceeds from the sale of our student day planner, funds for a library transcription staff person, funds for the construction of our ATLAS lab.
Organizational Structure of the Centre for Student Development at McMaster University

Associate Vice President (Student Affairs) and Dean of Students
Dr. Phil Wood

Director
Centre for Student Development
Desmond Pouyat

ESL Instructor/Coordinator
Rossette Anez

ESL Instructor/Coordinator
Clair P. Rivlin

Counsellor
Patrick Burek

Counsellor
Igor Sukonik

Counsellor (Evening)
Kayla Workman

Psychologist
Dr. Nathan Cooper

Psychologist/Clinical Leader
Dr. Debbie Nifakis

Psychological Intern
Elyse Peasley

Psychological Intern
Diana Cassie

Academic Skills Counsellor
Peter Walsh

Academic Skills Counsellor (Evening)
Kathleen Doerner-Miller

Leadership Program Coordinator
Marie & Huntley

Administrative Assistant
Noreen Myers

Receptionist
Rachel Diaconu

Systems Administrator
Mike Dinunzio

Marketing and Promotions Coordinator
Brad Coburn

Program Coordinator, Disability Specialist
Disability Lead
Tim Nolan

Program Coordinator, Disability Specialist (Evening)
Cheryl Bossé

Program Coordinator, Disability Specialist
Kerri-Ann Fitzgerald

Learning Disabilities Coordinator (Disability Specialist)
Caroline Cayuga

Learning Strategist
Nancy McQueen

Assistive Technologist
Kim Shaw

Accommodations Assistant
Julia Shelley

Counsellor (Disability and Personal)
Andrea Liss
APPENDIX II
Students by Disability Category (2003-2004)

- Chronic Medical / Psychological: 45%
- Learning Disability / ADHD: 31%
- Deaf / Deafened / Hard of Hearing: 2%
- Acquired Brain Injury (cognitive disability): 3%
- Blind / Vision Impaired: 3%
- Mobility: 8%
- Multiple: 8%
- Other: 0%

Note: The chart shows the distribution of disabilities among students in the specified period.
Students by Disability and Faculty (2003–2004)

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![Bar chart](image-url)
Breakdown of Disabilities and Accommodations 2003-2004

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Breakdown of Disabilities and Accommodations 2003-2004
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![Graph showing comparison of disabilities by year]

Legend:
- □ 2001-2002
- ■ 2002-2003
- □ 2003-2004
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**Increase**

- 1990-1991: +23.80952%
- 1991-1992: +51.53846%
- 1992-1993: +58.37563%
- 1993-1994: +37.17949%
- 1994-1995: +15.1869%
- 1995-1996: -4.13223%
- 1996-1997: -12.069%
- 1997-1998: -11.1111%
- 1998-1999: +3.308824%
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- 2000-2001: +2.34604%
- 2001-2002: +29.42943%
- 2002-2003: +22.73782%
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