2023 Report:

Disability Resource Center

University of Nevada, Reno

06/15/2023

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# **Mission, Vision, and Philosophy**

## **Mission**

The purpose of the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is to ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all university programs.

## **Vision**

The DRC is dedicated to providing a collaborative and coordinated program of support services that are not furnished by other University offices or outside organizations. The DRC assists students in negotiating disability related barriers and strives to improve access and opportunity. This enables all levels of students with disabilities to become integrated into campus life, and become more successful undergraduate or graduate students while maximizing their independence. Our services are free of charge.

## **Philosophy**

Access-Opportunity-Engagement

# **Fall ‘2022 - Spring 2023 Highlights**

Facilitated academic accommodations for University of Nevada, Reno at Lake Tahoe after institutional acquisition

Provided academic accommodations for NSHE member institution Great Basin College as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement

* 81% fall ’21 to fall ’22 retention rate
* 65% 6-year graduation rate
* 113 unique disability types served
* 3,358 students with disabilities served in spring ‘23
* 2,812 students requested academic accommodations in their courses
* 14,060 academic accommodations were provided
* 3,360 classroom hours of transcription provided, with a $173,450 cost savings through facilitation of classroom transcription services in-house
* 3,016 alternative testing exams proctored for 524 courses in 458 unique classes, totaling 5994:41 proctored hours
* 186 course requests, 42 individual textbooks, and 287 class materials processed for alternative media format
* 38 students were provided a note taker for 53 courses, totaling 2,544 classroom hours
* DRC facilitated skill sessions for college readiness and academic success during NevadaFit
* All DRC students were provided an iPad as part of the Digital Wolfpack Initiative (DWI)
* DRC Mentor Program provided mentorship for 19 freshman with 17 upper classmen mentors

# **DRC STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

The Disability Resource Center at the University of Nevada, Reno is committed to the mission set forth by the Division of Student Services to uphold the model of continuous assessment regarding student retention and completion for the students we serve. By incorporating the institutional values of inclusion, persistence, and graduation into the programs we conduct, we help better serve our students in reaching their goals and developing into contributing members of the Pack.

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| **DRC DEMOGRAPHICS BY GENDER** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **FEMALE** | **1,347** | **1,488** | **1,577** | **1,572** | **1,713** | **1,796** | **1,784** | **1,981** |
| **FEMALE%** | **53%** | **52%** | **53%** | **54%** | **55%** | **58%** | **56%** | **59%** |
| **MALE** | **1,195** | **1,374** | **1,399** | **1,340** | **1,401** | **1,300** | **1,401** | **1,377** |
| **MALE%** | **47%** | **48%** | **47%** | **46%** | **45%** | **42%** | **44%** | **41%** |
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| **DRC STUDENT INSTATE & WUE** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **INSTATE** | **1,779** | **1,975** | **2,053** | **2,213** | **1,993** | **2,012** | **2,293** | **2,451** |
| **INSTATE%** | **70%** | **69%** | **68%** | **76%** | **64%** | **65%** | **72%** | **73%** |
| **WUE** | **244** | **279** | **288** | **349** | **405** | **433** | **573** | **604** |
| **WUE%** | **10%** | **10%** | **10%** | **12%** | **13%** | **14%** | **18%** | **18%** |
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Individuals with disabilities experience an array of barriers attaining gainful employment. Ultimately, the pursuit of a college degree lends to the promise of a viable employment outcome. **According to the last US Census, 13% of Nevadans identify as having a disability, while 66% of Nevada adults over the age 24 do not have a college degree, making the university’s commitment to students with disabilities vital to the growth of a well-educated workforce.**

## **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

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| **DRC STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC BY RACE** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **WHITE** | **1,856** | **2,032** | **2,113** | **2,126** | **2,149** | **2,167** | **2,102** | **2,317** |
| **HISP** | **356** | **458** | **446** | **466** | **592** | **565** | **605** | **672** |
| **BLACK** | **127** | **114** | **119** | **107** | **158** | **155** | **168** | **144** |
| **ASIAN** | **153** | **202** | **238** | **175** | **155** | **161** | **249** | **179** |
| **NATIVE** | **21** | **24** | **29** | **21** | **29** | **27** | **36** | **27** |
| **PACIFIC** | **29** | **32** | **31** | **17** | **31** | **21** | **25** | **19** |
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| **DRC STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC BY RACE PERCENTAGE** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **WHITE** | **73%** | **71%** | **71%** | **73%** | **69%** | **70%** | **66%** | **69%** |
| **HISP** | **14%** | **16%** | **15%** | **16%** | **19%** | **18%** | **19%** | **20%** |
| **BLACK** | **5%** | **4%** | **4%** | **3%** | **5%** | **5%** | **5%** | **4%** |
| **ASIAN** | **6%** | **7%** | **8%** | **6%** | **5%** | **5%** | **7%** | **6%** |
| **NATIVE** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** |
| **PACIFIC** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** | **1%** |
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A crucial component of institution success is the inclusion of all students, reflective in the diversity of the student body across gender, ethnicity, cultural, and ability. The unique characteristics that define individual personas are the same across disabilities. The advancement of our community lies in the bodies and minds of our student, who will lead our campus into the future together. Students with disabilities are a direct reflection of the general student body population. The institution makes every effort to ensure that all students are not confronted with discrimination of any kind and are equivocally non-marginalized by indifference. Diversity is a representation of the qualities and characteristics that makes us each unique. Continuously building on the foundation for a culture of inclusion is what sets us apart as a University and what will encourage our success in the future.

## **DRC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

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| **DRC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **HONORS** | **53** | **87** | **91** | **89** | **92** | **88** | **96** | **99** |
| **NCAA** | **76** | **85** | **89** | **94** | **104** | **110** | **108** | **113** |
| **HOUSING** | **359** | **458** | **506** | **498** | **529** | **526** | **573** | **604** |
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| **DRC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BY PERCENTAGE** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **HONORS** | **2%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** |
| **NCAA** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** | **3%** |
| **HOUSING** | **14%** | **16%** | **17%** | **17%** | **17%** | **17%** | **18%** | **18%** |
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Students that are registered with the DRC are actively involved in every facet of campus life; each unique in his or her contribution to our University’s culture. Participation and inclusion are the foundation of the values and mission of the institution. Students with disabilities indoctrinate into our engagement programs, which inevitably enhances their academic achievement. A vital component to the success they find once they have graduated and enter the workforce is the holistic development that occurs during these formative years. Through the support of a multitude of campus resources, students with disabilities are able to not only perform equal to their peers, but also rather excel far past any attribute associated with their particular disability. Through perseverance and determination, students that are registered with the DRC overcome any obstacles set before them, and negate all stereotypes devised to repress their scholastic success.

## **DRC STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION REPORT**

The DRC serves approximately 15-18% of the 21,000+ students on campus. Roughly, twice the national average (8%) for a campus our size. The University’s commitment to scholastic equity further supports our corner stone values of inclusion and access for all students. On campus, students with disabilities perform at the same standards and rates of achievement of the general student population. **The University’s first-time full-time retention rate for students is 80% which aligns with the DRC retention rate of 81-83%.**

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| **DRC STUDENT ENROLLMENT** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **UNDER GRADS** | **2,288** | **2,404** | **2,470** | **2,390** | **2,584** | **2,601** | **2,644** | **2,787** |
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| **DRC TRANSFER STUDENTS** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **ENROLLED** | **2,542** | **2,862** | **2,976** | **2,912** | **3,114** | **3,096** | **3,185** | **3,358** |
| **NEW TRANS STU** | **203** | **343** | **417** | **379** | **467** | **402** | **478** | **470** |
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| **DRC STUDENT AVERAGE UNITS PER SEMESTER & GPA** |
|  | **Fall ‘19** | **Spring ‘20** | **Fall ‘20** | **Spring ‘21** | **Fall ‘21** | **Spring ‘22** | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **UNITS** | **12** | **12** | **12** | **12** | **12** | **13** | **12** | **13** |
| **CUMGPA** | **2.81** | **2.82** | **2.84** | **2.89** | **2.91** | **2.96** | **2.98** | **3.08** |

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| **DRC GRADUATION RATES** |
|  | **Four Years** | **Six Years** |
| **COHORT** | **N** | **Graduated** | **Rate** | **Graduated** | **Rate** |
| **Fall 2016** | **393** | **140** | **35.6%** | **258** | **65.6%** |
| **Fall 2018** | **487** | **173** | **35.5%** |  |  |

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| **UNR GRADUATION RATES** |
|  | **Four Years** | **Six Years** |
| **COHORT** | **N** | **Graduated** | **Rate** | **Graduated** | **Rate** |
| **Fall 2016** | **3,507** | **1,321** | **37.7%** | **2,168** | **61.8%** |
| **Fall 2018** | **3,651** | **1,528** | **41.9%** |  |  |

# **Equal Access in Higher Education**

**Section 504 – Rehabilitation Act (1973, Amendment 1974)**

*“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.”*

*“Individuals with Disabilities are:*

*any person who (A) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities, (B) has a record of such an impairment, or (C) is regarded as having such an impairment.”*

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (2008)**

“The Purpose of this Act are:

to carry out the ADA’s objectives of providing “a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination” and “clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination” by reinstating a broad scope of protection to be available under the ADA.”

# **The Position of the University of Nevada, Reno**

The University of Nevada, Reno does not discriminate in the admission or service of students on the basis of disability. It is the responsibility of all members of the university community to adhere to the philosophy of equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities as defined by ADA and Section 504.

While ensuring the academic integrity of its programs, the university is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for individuals with verified disabilities from an appropriately credentialed professional. Academic requirements that are defined by the University of Nevada, Reno and the NSHE Board of Regents as essential to courses, programs of study or any related licensing or certification requirement are not regarded as discriminatory.

## **Institutional Responsibilities**

Qualified students with disabilities are entitled to equal access in all programs. Consistent with necessary and legitimate academic programs, they may not be excluded from any legitimate academic requirements; they may not be excluded from a course, course of study or other educational program or activity; nor may the university impose on them rules that have the effect of limiting participation.

## **Student Eligibility**

Students who claim to have a disability are responsible for providing the university with verification of their disability by providing documentation from an appropriately credentialed professional to receive any necessary academic modification and/or reasonable accommodation. The documentation must substantiate limitation(s) to a major life activity. In order to establish a current need for accommodation, documentation for a learning disability must include a complete adult-based (18 years of age or older) psycho-educational assessment which should be conducted every three years with the understanding that requests for assessments will be determined based on the individual's situation.

The DRC will then provide an interpretation of the evaluation and determine the need for appropriate accommodation. Supplemental assessment may be required to justify the student's request for a specific accommodation.

## **Determination of Provisions of Reasonable Accommodations**

Reasonable adjustments/modifications may be required as necessary to provide equal access in order to prevent discrimination. Tests must measure the student's achievement, not his/her impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills (except when that skill is the factor being measured). The university may need to inquire whether an accommodation in the student's physical environment would permit continued participation in the program. Substantial modifications are not required (e.g. the university is not mandated to modify requirements essential to the program of instruction or directly related to any licensing requirement).

## **Referral Identification**

The Disability Resource Center is committed to a reasonable approach in the identification of disabled students. The DRC will contact all students who have voluntarily identified themselves in writing as having a disability after the university admission process is completed.

Faculty members who observe student difficulties that are indicative of a disability should refer that student for assistance to the DRC.

Students who have a disability or suspect that they have a disability should contact the DRC for information and assistance. Before a faculty member is expected to provide reasonable accommodations, the student must submit his/her request in writing to the DRC to be considered as a candidate for eligibility for services. Subsequently, the DRC will schedule a meeting with the student to review the request.

# **Roles & Responsibilities**

## **The University is Responsible For:**

1. Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
2. Informing students of services available for disabled students
3. When requested, the DRC will provide written verification relative to the student's eligibility to receive reasonable accommodations.
4. Evaluating the information provided by the appropriately credentialed professional to determine eligibility and reasonable accommodations.
5. Keeping the information regarding the student's disability confidential unless the student signs a release of information form
6. Maintaining the academic integrity of its programs

## **The Student is Responsible For:**

1. Self-identification
2. Submitting required documentation before requesting any accommodation
3. Any costs associated with obtaining the required documentation for verification of disability
4. Making reasonable and timely disclosures and requests for accommodations as well as confirming the arrangements for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids
5. Notifying the DRC of any concerns they may have regarding equal access
6. Following the institutional appeal process before filing a complaint with the EEOC Title IX Office

## **The EEOC Title IX Office is Responsible For:**

1. Serving as the 504/ADA Compliance Officer for the campus
2. Overseeing compliance with state and federal regulations
3. Consultation relative to complaints of discrimination or noncompliance at any time

## **Appeal Protocol**

1. If a student believes he was denied equal access, the student must inform the DRC in writing about his/her concern or problem immediately.
2. The DRC will investigate the allegation to determine if equal access was denied.
3. The DRC will serve as the student's advocate to resolve the problem/situation.
4. If resolution cannot be reached, the DRC will refer the student to the EEOC Title IX Office.
5. If anyone continues to have a concern about the provision of equal access, the individual may contact the EEOC Title IX Office to review the situation based on established timelines and procedures associated with the office.

It is the policy of the University of Nevada, Reno, in compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide reasonable accommodations to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is authorized by the President of the University of Nevada, Reno to prescribe such accommodations. Failure to honor an institutional reasonable accommodation authorized by the DRC is a violation of university policy and federal regulation and may result in disciplinary proceedings and sanctions as provided in the NSHE Handbook (Title 2, chapter 6.6.2(m) or Title 4, Chapter 8).

For more information, please call the Equal Opportunity and Title IX office at (775) 784-1547.

# **Protocols & Procedures**

The Disability Resource Center follows best practices of protocols and procedures supported by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) in the advocacy, resources, and services provided to students with disabilities at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The following practices are recommended for institutions of higher education to facilitate compliance with federal mandates by AHEAD (2012):

## **Individual Review**

Each situation must be considered individually to understand if and how the student is impacted by the described condition. Disability is defined by the ADA as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities, a record of such impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment.” There is no listing of covered impairments. Therefore, the salient question is not whether a given condition is a “disability,” but how the condition impacts the student. This determination is to be liberally construed to the maximum extent possible.

There is no one-to-one correspondence of disability to accommodation. Institutions should consider the student’s disability, history, experience, request, and the unique characteristics of the course, program, or requirement in order to determine whether or not a specific accommodation is reasonable. A clear understanding of how disability impacts the individual establishes the reasonableness of the accommodation for the individual. However, to determine whether the accommodation is reasonable in context requires an evaluation of the unique attributes and requirements of the course, program, or activity. Course modifications or auxiliary aids or services that are ineffective or constitute a fundamental alteration will not be reasonable and therefore will not meet the ADA and Section 504’s minimal standards. The ADA establishes the “floor” not the “ceiling” of protection. The ceiling is established when a proposed accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration to a course or the program of study

## **Commonsense Standard**

Disability and accommodation requests should be evaluated using a commonsense standard, without the need for specific language or extensive diagnostic evidence. Using diagnostic information as a tool in reviewing requests for accommodation is different than using it for treatment. Determining accommodations requires a more limited range, level, and type of information. These two processes should not be conflated.

No third party information may be necessary to confirm disability or evaluate requests for accommodations when the condition and its impact are readily apparent or comprehensively described. No specific language, tests, or diagnostic labels are required. Clinicians’ training or philosophical approach may result in the use of euphemistic phrases rather than specific diagnostic labels. Therefore, reports that do not include a specific diagnosis should not be interpreted to suggest that a disability does not exist. The question is ‘Would an informed and reasonable person conclude from the available evidence that a disability is likely and the requested accommodation is warranted?’

## **Non-burdensome Process**

Postsecondary institutions cannot create documentation processes that are burdensome or have the effect of discouraging students from seeking protections and accommodations to which they are entitled. This was clear even prior to the amendments to the ADA. The non-burdensome standard is applicable to initially establishing a relationship with the disability resource office and to setting up individual accommodations from institutional personnel, including course instructors. Students should not be required to bear responsibility for achieving access through cumbersome, time consuming processes.

## **Current and Relevant Information**

Disability documentation should be current and relevant but not necessarily “recent.” Disabilities are typically stable lifelong conditions. Therefore, historic information, supplemented by interview or self-report, is often sufficient to describe how the condition impacts the student at the current time and in the current circumstances. Institutions should not establish blanket statements that limit the age of acceptable external documentation. Determining accommodations in distinctly new contexts may require more focused information to illustrate a connection between the impact of the disability, the described barrier, and the requested accommodation.

## **Intake Process**

The rationale for seeking information about a student’s condition is to support the higher education professional in establishing disability, understanding how disability may impact a student, and making informed decisions about accommodations. Professional judgment is an essential component of this process. The AHEAD (2012) guidelines state:

“Ensuring that “accommodations” provide effective access requires a deliberative and collaborative process that is responsive to the unique experience of each individual, as advised by the ADA. The disability resource professional should engage in a structured exchange with the student to explore previous educational experiences, past use of accommodations, and what has been effective and ineffective in providing access. The weight given to the individual’s description will be influenced by its clarity, internal consistency, and congruency with the professional’s observations and available external documentation. It is often possible to evaluate whether a requested accommodation is reasonable or not with minimal reliance on external documentation. This is true even if the student has never received formal accommodations or recently acquired a disability and is seeking guidance to determine accommodations that might be effective. However, if the student is unable to clearly describe how the disability is connected to a barrier and how the accommodation would provide access, the institution may need to request third party documentation focused on illustrating that connection. Finally, the documentation process must be accessible: if a student’s disability impacts his or her ability to clearly describe the need for accommodation, the office must consider flexibility in its processes.”

The Disability Resource Center takes a person-centered approach to provide accessible, responsive and flexible services that meet the diverse needs and preferences of students with disabilities in our campus community. Many of these individuals want to remain independent for as long as possible and rely on an array of services and resources to help them achieve this.

Students that seek services from the DRC identify as having a disability, or suspecting the prevalence of a disability, are required to complete an intake evaluation with a qualified DRC faculty member as part of the registration process.

## **Documentation**

The Disability Resource Center follows the guidance of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) to identify acceptable sources of documentation for substantiating a student’s disability and request for particular accommodations can take a variety of forms:

### **Primary Documentation: Student’s Self-report**

The student is a vital source of information regarding how he or she may be “limited by impairment.” A student’s narrative of his or her experience of disability, barriers, and effective and ineffective accommodations is an important tool which, when structured by interview or questionnaire and interpreted, may be sufficient for establishing disability and a need for accommodation.

### **Secondary Documentation: Observation and Interaction**

The impressions and conclusions formed by higher education disability professionals during interviews and conversations with students or in evaluating the effectiveness of previously implemented or provisional accommodations are important forms of documentation. Experienced disability professionals should feel comfortable using their observations of students’ language, performance and strategies as an appropriate tool in validating student narrative and self-report.

### **Tertiary documentation: Information From External or Third Parties**

Documentation from external sources may include educational or medical records, reports and assessments created by health care providers, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system. This information is inclusive of documents that reflect education and accommodation history, such as Individual Education Program (IEP), Summary Of Performance (SOP), and teacher observations. External documentation will vary in its relevance and value depending on the original context, credentials of the evaluator, the level of detail provided, and the comprehensiveness of the narrative. However, all forms of documentation are meaningful and should be mined for pertinent information.

# **Academic Accommodations**

## **Definition: Academic Accommodation**

As is common in practice, the term “accommodation” is used throughout this document as synonymous with the modification of policies, practices, and procedures; the provision of auxiliary aids and services; academic adjustments and modifications to the environment intended to remove barriers to equivalent access.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) offers a wide range of support services and accommodations for all undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities. Appropriate services are determined and provided based upon the impact of the student's disability and the academic requirements of the appropriate department, college, school or program.

The DRC provides accommodations and services tailored to the individual need(s) of each student.

When appropriate, reasonable accommodations may include the following:

* Accommodation Counseling
* ACES Program
* Alternative Testing Services
* Alternative Media Service (textbooks and online/other material processing)
* Assistive Technology & Computer Lab
* Auxiliary Aids: (CART, Remote CART, Interpreter for the Deaf, TypeWell)
* Classroom Aids
* Classroom & Building Access
* Course Substitutions
* Faculty Liaison
* Furniture Placement: Accessible Furniture Request
* Math 019/119 (2 semester course equivalent to Math 120)
* Note-Taking Services
* Other Appropriate Services as Necessary
* Peer Mentor Project
* Reduced Course Load
* Referrals to Campus and Community Services
* Service Animals

The following information is provided as a more detailed overview of some of the accommodations provided by the Disability Resource Center. This overview establishes the continuous process of assessment that we believe to be the foundation of effective person-centered service.

## **Alternative Media**

This program provides eligible students with textbooks, media, and classroom materials in alternative, accessible formats. Accessible formats include searchable documents, Braille and embossed images, and files that students can have read aloud using text-to-speech software such as Read&Write GOLD, TextAloud, and ImmerseRead.

Students are advised to meet with their DRC counselor and complete the appropriate Alternative Media Request form(s) well in advance of the first day of classes to ensure timely delivery of materials. Students who need their textbooks in alternative format are required to submit a Textbook Request Form. Additionally, students needing Course Reserves, WebCampus, or other materials are required to submit a Non-Textbook Material Request Form. The DRC's policy is to process the textbook and/or non-textbook course materials required for the class.

Before receiving materials in alternative formats, students are required to provide proof of purchase for all requested materials, as well as their course syllabi. **All materials provided by the DRC are for the student's personal educational use, and alternative format books are to be used only for as long as the student retains a purchased or rented copy of those books.**

Course materials are processed on a chapter-by-chapter basis and are delivered at least one week prior to syllabus due dates. The DRC delivers all requested course materials via online download. Students receive notification of new material availability through their university email. Students who cannot effectively use the download system may request to receive materials by other methods (CD, flash drive, Braille, etc.) The Alternative Media Program notifies students by email when these materials are available for pick-up.

Requested materials in alternative format are made available to students for 14 calendar days. If a student does not regularly access materials during this period, the Alternative Media Program places subsequent materials on hold. Processing of new materials only resumes after the student contacts their DRC counselor.

Students who have difficulty accessing written material as a result of physical, learning, or psychological disabilities may be eligible for assistance in obtaining written material in an alternative format. A Disability Resource Center works with each student individually to determine the most appropriate accommodations based on the student's medical documentation and specific needs. To ensure the success of all students with disabilities, the DRC works individually with instructors to ensure that alternative formats of course materials are made available to the student. In the instance that such materials are not accessible, the DRC works with instructors to process the material, and distribute it to the student in a format that is accessible.

## **Alternative Testing**

This program provides eligible students with alternative testing formats and environments that ensure equitable access to education. Test accommodations are any modifications made to tests or testing conditions that allow students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or psychological disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a testing situation. Common modifications include extending the amount of time students are given to complete a test, reducing the number of test items, having someone else write down test answers, or listening to questions read aloud by text-to-speech conversation software.

The general goal of providing testing accommodations is to create a level playing field for students whose disabilities or language abilities may adversely affect their ability to show on a test what they have learned. A few obvious examples include offering Braille-based exams to blind students, providing written rather than oral instructions to deaf students, or making a testing location wheelchair accessible for wheelchair-bound students. There are, however, less obvious—but often equally necessary—accommodations, such as extended testing time for students with documented learning disabilities, neurological conditions, or psychological disabilities that may cause them to take more time to process certain kinds of information. In addition, students with disabilities may also be eligible to complete alternative forms of assessment rather than sitting for a test—one example would be submitting a portfolio of their work that is then evaluated by educators.

### **Protocol**

* Students that are eligible for alternative testing accommodations are required to:
* Request instructor letters and proctoring forms
* Have the instructor fill out all necessary information on the proctoring form, which indicates to the Alternative Testing team what the necessary proctoring protocol should be for a particular exam
* Return the proctoring form and schedule all quizzes/examinations for the semester based on the designated date and time on the syllabi
* Students take the examination, proctored by the DRC, and return the exam to the instructor

### **Modes of Receiving and Returning Examinations**

* Student delivery
* Email
* Fax
* Scan
* Student Return
* DRC Return

Students with certain physical, learning, and psychological disabilities may use the same test format as their peers but be eligible for adjustments in testing time and/or environment. The Disability Resource Center will determine the amount of time and the appropriate environment based on the student's medical documentation and specific needs. The student is responsible for making arrangements with the instructor prior to each exam. Space for testing is provided either by academic departments or by the DRC.

Students with certain physical, learning, and psychological disabilities may be eligible for alternative test formats. The Disability Resource, in consultation with the instructor, will determine the appropriate format, based on the student's medical documentation and specific needs. The student is responsible for making arrangements with the instructor prior to each exam. The DRC ensures that the student is provided an accessible format for each exam administered.

## **Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology refers to the use of technological devices and situational modifications by or for individuals with disabilities to enable them to improve or maintain their functional capabilities. Because students with disabilities at institutions of higher education may use assistive technology in demonstrating their ability to meet the requirements of the programs in which they are enrolled, college and university personnel need to be cognizant of relevant legal issues. This entry provides an overview of federal legislation related to assistive technology and examines the ways in which assistive technology can enable students with disabilities to use such devices to meet the requirements of the programs for which they are qualified.

While the impact of technology on the lives of persons both with and without disabilities has become pervasive, the use of certain types of technologies, known as assistive technology, has enabled individuals with disabilities to expand their functional repertoires and access environments and activities that, historically, have been inaccessible to them.

### **Assistive Technology at the University of Nevada, Reno**

At the Disability Resource Center, qualified students with disabilities are provided assistive technology devices that enable equitable practices in education. Each student is individually assessed during intake to identify if devices or software would allow for an equitable educational experience. Training is a crucial element of this process, which we take very seriously. Our assistive technology team emphasizes the importance of not only what the device can do, but the importance of how to use it.

Assistive Technology Devices and Software:

* LiveScribe Smartpen
* Sonocent Audio Notetaker
* Sonocent Recorder
* Anoto Live PDF
* Read & Write GOLD software
* Dragon
* TextAloud
* ImmerseRead
* ZoomText
* JAWS
* MAGnify
* Scientific Notebook
* Ruby
* Sapphire
* VisioBook
* VisioDesk
* Digital Audio Recorder
* Tobii Eye X
* Microsoft Office

Assistive technology devices are technological devices that enable individuals to maintain or improve their functional capabilities. An example of an assistive technology device that is common in institutions of higher learning is a desktop computer with text-to-speech software. This assistive technology enables individuals with physical disabilities that prevent them from writing using pens or keyboards to produce legible texts by talking to their computers. Assistive technology services enable individuals with disabilities to select appropriate devices to use, be taught how to use them, and to maintain the equipment in good working order. Hence the term assistive technology refers both to the devices and services that comprise the technological solutions that enable individuals with disabilities to maintain or improve on their functional capabilities.

## **Auxiliary Aids**

Auxiliary Aid Services provides eligible students who need alternative or additional support with “real-time” communication access and notes; including but not limited to, Typewell, Interpreters, CART, Remote CART and Assistive Listening Devices. It is essential that students meet with a DRC counselor and complete the online Auxiliary Aid Request form well in advance of the first day of classes (4-6 weeks) to ensure timely and appropriate placement of services.

### **Types of Auxiliary Aid Services**

#### Typewell

Typewell is a speech to text transcription system that provides real-time communication access to students who need alternative or additional support. Typewell differs from traditional captioning services as it is meaning for meaning, not word for word. The transcriber conveys the speaker's intended meaning in fewer words so the reader can quickly assimilate the content and participate in the discussion as it happens.

#### Interpreters

An interpreter's role is to facilitate communication and convey all auditory and signed information so that both hearing and deaf individuals may fully interact. The interpreter may also "voice" for the student who is deaf and does not use his or her own voice. The interpreter will vocally express in English what is signed, mouthed, or cued by the student. A common type of service provided by interpreters is American Sign Language (ASL), a visual-gestural language with its own linguistic features.

#### CART

Communication Access Real-time Translation - is the instant translation of the spoken word into English text performed by a CART reporter using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software. The text is then displayed on a computer monitor or other display device for the student who is deaf or hard of hearing to read.

#### Assistive Listening Device

Frequency Modulated (FM) Systems:An FM system is a wireless, portable battery-operated device that uses radio transmission to send auditory signals, i.e. speech, from a transmitter to a receiver. With most FM systems, the instructor wears a lavelier microphone connected to a body-worn transmitter. The student wears the FM receiver unit clipped to his/her clothing. The FM receiver can also be connected to the student’s hearing aid via an induction neckloop system or direct audio input cables.

The Disability Resource Center furnishes appropriate auxiliary aids and services as mandated by law to afford a student with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the university.

The DRC strives to provide auxiliary aids and services in a timely manner, and to provide the aids and/or services that are most effective in providing equal access to students with disabilities education program or activity. These services are provided at no cost to the student, and do not include personal aids or services.

In an effort to provide these accommodations in the most affordable method possible to the University, the DRC trains and hires students and staff members that are capable under the guidelines of TypeWell transcription. Outsourcing vendors for such services can be prohibitive in terms of cost and in ensuring that students are receiving the best level of service possible. Hiring our own providers allows for more control over accessibility and scheduling.

## **Note Taking Services**

Assistance with note taking is a very important and useful service for many of our students. Your notes will be a valuable study aid for the students. You may also find that by taking careful notes and using the following guidelines your notes will be better, clearer, and more useful to you personally!

With your cooperation in sharing your notes, the student has a chance to concentrate on the content of the information presented in class instead of on the mechanics of getting everything down on paper. This will ensure they have access to the same information as other students. This shifts the emphasis back to what is being learned instead of how to learn it. If you cannot attend class for whatever reason, you are still responsible for providing notes to the DRC student. It is vitally important they receive notes every class period. If the student does not show up for class for more than 3 consecutive class periods, it is your responsibility to contact the DRC. Note taking does not take the place of the student attending class.

### **Confidentiality Statement for Note Takers**

*As a note taker we require students to adhere to all ethical standards which respect the confidentiality of the students served and comply with all policies and procedures of the Disability Resource Center. A few of the basic rules are:*

*Never disclose to anyone the name or confidential information which could lead to the identification of any student receiving services through the DRC. ·*

*Do not discuss students with anyone other than the appropriate DRC staff member.*

*Students that provide note taker services are required to sign a contract with the DRC acknowledging the confidentiality agreement.*

### **Note Taker Stipend**

Students that provide note-taking services are awarded a stipend toward their tuition for the following semester. The stipend is prorated, depending on the duration of services within the 16-week semester. Contributing a stipend toward the note takers tuition enhances retention potential for the student.

The award amount for the stipend is as follows:

13-16 weeks $100.00

9-12weeks $ 75.00

5-8 weeks $ 50.00

1-4 weeks $ 25.00

Students with an array of disabilities may require assistance in processing or recording the content of lectures. Providing a note taker and/or allowing an audio recording in the classroom gives access to the course information, which would otherwise be unavailable to the student. The University is obligated to assist these students in locating a volunteer note taker or otherwise make the lecture information available. Students that receive this accommodation have been approved by the DRC, and are supported in every effort to identify a note taker for a particular course.

The DRC works collaboratively with instructors to identify a student willing and capable to taking notes for a student that requires this accommodation. Also, the DRC works with the student with a disability on an individual basis to ensure that the student is provided the most effective method for equal accessibility. Often, providing a student with a disability an accommodation such as a LiveScribe smart pen, Audio Note Taker, or a Typewell transcriber allows the student more autonomy in the learning process.

## **Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal Policy**

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to making all students feel welcome and comfortable and able to fully enjoy the use of their residence hall accommodations. Provided below is information concerning disabilities, service animals and emotional support animals, but we encourage you to contact us right away if there is any way we can make your experience more enjoyable, regardless of whether you have a disability or not. We evaluate every request on a case-by-case basis and have a team of professionals dedicated to making reasonable accommodations.

### **Students with Disabilities**

We have a proud tradition of granting reasonable accommodations to our rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodations are necessary to afford people with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their dwellings. A reasonable accommodation may include a change or exception to a rule or policy that is needed because of a person’s disability, or it may be a physical change to a unit or common area. Our policy is to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities whenever an individual has a disability and there is a disability related need for an accommodation. A disability-related need for accommodation exists when there is an identifiable relationship between the requested accommodation and the individual’s disability.

If you have a disability that may require a reasonable accommodation, please indicate your disability on the housing application. Since assignment is made on a space available basis, early application is essential. We also encourage you to register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.unr.edu/drc).

To ensure timely review and approval of your accommodation(s) please complete these steps as soon as possible and respond immediately to any follow-up inquiries from the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.unr.edu/drc) or Housing Office.

### **Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal**

A service animal, defined as any animal individually trained or being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, is permitted.  An emotional support animal, defined as an animal that is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to enjoy a dwelling unit, may be permitted for students living in a residence hall.  Students wishing to bring a service animal or emotional support animal to campus may apply to the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.unr.edu/drc) for approval.

# **DRC Mentor Program**

The DRC Peer Mentor Project matches incoming students with disabilities (mentees) and upperclassmen and graduate students with disabilities (mentors). Mentors use their knowledge of campus life and resources, as well as their personal experiences to provide invaluable advice and guidance to mentees.

The goal of the DRC Peer Mentor Project is to build connections between new and more experienced students with disabilities to promote academic success and personal growth.

## **Mentors:**

* Develop leadership and communication skills
* Gain patience, insight and understanding
* Gain experience for future careers
* Form new and rewarding interpersonal relationships
* Foster academic success

## **Mentees:**

* Develop self-advocacy and autonomy
* Learn academic skills such as time management and organization
* Learn how to make the most of campus resources
* Gain new self-awareness of how their disability impacts their learning
* Learn how to navigate the college environment

Mentors are offered a series of professional trainings aimed at increasing their preparedness for the mentoring role. More specifically, the training sessions are designed to develop mentors’ communication and listening skills, their leadership and advocacy skills, as well as to help them cope with stressors in their own lives. The five trainings are led by established professionals in the fields of counseling and education, and were favorably evaluated by the participants.

In addition to the five mandatory mentor trainings, the program facilitated several training sessions led by peer mentors themselves. These allowed some of the mentors to share their disability-related knowledge and skills (for example, about service animals) with fellow mentors, and to prepare them for interactions with people who have such disabilities.

The Peer Mentor Program is being utilized as an enhancement for inclusion and engagement on our campus for students with disabilities. Depending on the disability, confinement to a student’s environment can be a catalyst that perpetuates a negative experience and isolation. Encouraging our students to engage in relationships and activities that they might not otherwise participate helps to facilitate their educational experience, while also promoting positive role modeling and student retention.

To augment the services offered to incoming students with disabilities, the Disability Resource Center encourages such students to connect with upperclassmen and graduate students with disabilities via the Peer Mentor Program. Peer mentoring has been proven to be an effective way of providing support among people who share similar experiences (such as being a student with a disability), and participation in the DRC Peer Mentor Program has benefitted not only the mentees, but also their mentors.

Students who volunteer to serve as mentors receive regular professional trainings that help them prepare for that role, and they frequently count this opportunity to expand their skillset as a significant advantage of participating in the program, in addition to the satisfaction derived from helping others. For the rapidly growing number of mentees who decide to join the program each semester, the manifold benefits relate to both academic and personal struggles. Virtually all of the mentees have expressed a desire to continue working with their assigned mentors, and their high retention rates reflect a remarkable level of attachment to campus life that is aided by their ongoing connections with supportive mentors.

# **2023 End-of-Year Peer Mentor Program Evaluation Report**

At the end of spring 2023 semester, all active participants in the Peer Mentor Program were asked to complete a brief survey about their experience in the program. A total of 36 students, 19 mentees and 17 mentors, completed the survey. Respondents were encouraged to reflect upon their performance as mentors and experience as mentees, as well as to provide feedback and suggestions about the program itself.

## **Self-Assessment and Rating: Mentors**

Mentors are asked to evaluate their performance according to four metrics: responding to the mentee’s individual needs, whether or not the mentee was receptive to support, how much the mentor enjoyed the interactions, and how prepared they felt for their mentoring role. Most mentors responded that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with a positive assessment.

Figure 1: Bar chart with 14 of 17 respondents stating "Strongly Agree" to efficient response, receptive interactions, enjoyed working with, and felt prepared for interactions with mentees

Mentors also responded to the statement: “The DRC Peer Mentor Program has met my expectations as a mentor.” All 17 mentors responded to this statement, with 15 out of the 17 responding that they “strongly agree” that the DRC Peer Mentor Program met their expectations.

Figure 2: Bar chart with 15 or 17 respondents choosing strongly agree

**What is the most important thing you learned or gained as a result of the mentoring relationship?**

“I learned that patience is the best virtue. There was a point in time where my mentee stopped replying to me but started talking to me again. Turns out he needed time to himself to figure something out. I also learned that small things can really affect people. They said that I was the best support they ever got.”

“I learned a lot about neurodiversity through my mentee and others in the program.”

“I felt I improved my ability to relate to others quickly (e.g. the first mentor/mentee meeting) and tackle difficult subjects/give advice in a conversation.”

“Understanding some of the different difficulties one must manage with a physical disability. Also how to correctly address or reach out for help relating to issues out of my realm.”

“I learned that it is very important to build relationships with new people! At first it was a little scary and nerve-wracking, but once we both got more comfortable, it became really fun and exciting.”

“I realized that I had an incredibly large impact on my mentee’s life and how they cope with their disability and that completely changed my perspective on not only how important the program is, but how important the mentor-mentee relationship is.”

**How do you feel you best helped your mentee this semester?**

“I think I helped my mentee with relationships. She did not feel like she fit in here and that people didn’t like her.”

“I think I helped my mentee by having someone to talk to. We helped each other, we both are very similar so I knew what she needed and she knew what I needed. It’s hard to just start opening up to someone about personal issues or insecurities but we clicked right off the bat. I think I was able to help with my mentee’s confidence in her personal relationships as well.”

“I helped with confidence just by listening and helping them develop their communication abilities.”

**Five trainings programs were offered to participants this semester:**

1. Imposter Syndrome Training
2. Neurodiversity Panel
3. Navigating Relationships Training
4. Process Groups for Mentors
5. Fall Graduation

**Did the training support you in your role as a mentor?**

“Mentor training did help. I really enjoyed the process groups.”

“Yes, especially when it came to addressing issues and when it is appropriate to ask for help.”

“Yes, I felt the trainings were interesting and insightful.”

“I believe the trainings helped me in certain situations by helping me realize a lot of mentors were going through the same thing and that everyone started off clueless.”

**What are the strengths of the mentoring program?**

“I think the DRC does good with matching everyone with their mentees. They know the strengths of the mentor and what the mentee is looking for.”

“The mentorship program is very personable and brings in people from all different perspectives toward the common goal of making this campus supportive for all who come here. The experts provided me timely support.”

“Staff genuinely caring for the students’ well-being and their home/school life outcomes.

“I think it’s a great way to meet people while being productive and beneficial to the campus community.”

 Mentors also responded with training sessions and programs they would like to see in the future. Some topics mentors would like to see include relationships (romantic and social), boundaries, and mental health (stress, burnout, self-care). Students would also enjoy more process groups as they felt they were useful. One student noted that they would like more social, fun activities for mentees and mentors.

**Self-Assessment and Rating: Mentees**

Mentees were asked to rate their agreement with five statements about their experience working with a mentor: level of trust in the mentor, mentor’s authenticity and genuine concern, ability to discuss academics with the mentor, mentor’s level of preparedness, and willingness to continue working with this current mentor. Every respondent felt they could trust their mentor and 17 out of 19 mentees would consider continuing with their mentor.

Figure 3:Bar chart with 17 of 19 respondents stating "Strongly Agree" to feelings of trust, mentor concern, ability to talk to, mentor preparedness, and continuing to work with the mentor.

**What was the most important thing you learned or gained as a mentee this semester?**

“A new friend who I could get out and spend time with outside of school and get new experiences!”

“The most important thing I gained this semester was an environment in which I could network with others in the Peer Mentor Program. Such an environment was either nonexistent or not as robust in my earlier semesters here.”

“About some of the workings of the school (e.g. where to study, how to use the library’s resources).”

“Knowing that I have someone to talk to if I have a problem makes me feel like going to school is more manageable.”

Mentees were also asked questions regarding program impact on their relationships with others, social life, and personal growth. Seven mentees answered with most saying, “yes” the program positively impacted these three areas. Only 1 mentee responded “no” to having their social life being impacted.

Figure 4: Bar chart with mentees responses identifying "yes" to the program impacting positive relationships with others, social life, and personal growth

Mentees were asked to respond to a statement about program expectations: “Overall, the DRC Peer Mentor Program has met my expectations as a mentee”. Only 16 mentees responded to this question with 8 stating, “strongly agree” and 8 stating, “agree”.

Figure 5: Bar chart with mentees identifying "strongly agree" and "agree" in equal expectations of the program meeting expectations

Mentees also responded with training sessions and programs they would like to see in the future. Topics presented include building relationships, mental health and coping with stress, and conflict resolution. One mentee noted that they would like to see more social activities offered with their mentors.

## **Semester Training Evaluations**

### **Team Building**

At the beginning of the semester, mentors and mentees were invited to attend a presentation on team building held by Callie Whitsit, MS; Maria Young, LCSM; and Tyler Smith, M.A.T. Mentors and mentees participated in a wide array of activities that promoted team building and explored one’s core values. We had 15 students attend the training. Eleven students responded that they “strongly agree” to having felt engaged during the training session. When asked if students felt confident in their ability to use the skills acquired in this training, 9 responded “strongly agree”, 4 responded “agree”, and 2 responded “neutral”.

 “I found the presentation to be very insightful, eye-opening, and interactive.”

 “I learned about myself from the values activity.”

“Genuinely getting to know my innermost core values helped me to be very real with myself and learn what I want in this life. Honestly, I learned a lot about me.”

### **Imposter Syndrome**

In the middle of the semester, mentors and mentees were invited to another presentation regarding imposter syndrome held by Maria E. Young, LCSW. We had 25 students in attendance. Overall, both the mentors and mentees found the presentation to be useful, especially to address feelings related to imposter syndrome.

“It was helpful to learn about imposter syndrome. I did not know there was a name for the things I have been feeling.”

“Recognizing that I have felt this before, as I look put together on the outside, but inside I’m holding a lot in and am really a mess.”

“Imposter phenomenon affects everyone. Everyone doubts themselves and their accomplishments. People sharing their own stories was very nice.”

### **Navigating Relationships**

Another training mentors and mentees participated in was navigating relationships held by Jodi Thomas, Psy D. We had 26 students in attendance.

 “I liked the steps for confrontation and hearing other people's relationship struggles.”

One mentee that found the training to be helpful noted,

 “I learned how to open myself up to others and approach social situations.”

Another mentee stated,

“I learned that people have been in similar situations to me and they feel similar emotions towards it all.”

### **Mentor Only Training**

Throughout the semester, the DRC Peer Mentor Program provided 4 trainings for mentors only. These trainings included a Mentor Orientation at the beginning of the semester along with three Process Group sessions for mentors to gather with each other along with staff to discuss thoughts, feelings, and experiences. These Mentor only trainings provided a space for mentors to talk and discuss the relationship and issues they’ve experienced with their mentees among other mentors. It was a time for mentors to disclose their feelings safely to staff and other mentors in order to gain advice and insight based on other mentors’ personal experiences. Mentors in these training sessions felt understood when speaking to other mentors.

“I loved that the space was very open for our vulnerability and we were able to ask about our questions/concerns.”

“I learned how to approach a situation with a different perspective.”

“I liked how people were able to bring up problems that I have also come across as of late.”

“The grounding technique was helpful in understanding how to calm down quietly”.

“About how to talk to your mentor and the signs to look at for”.

“To be more engaged & find a common ground”.

“Absolutely, I learned that everyone else is having the same struggles as me.”

# **Workforce Recruitment**

The Workforce Recruitment Program is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. The Disability Resource Center works in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Diversity Management & Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) to identify potential candidates for the program. Candidates are vetted through a structured process that ensures good academic standing, interest in an identified area of placement, and a high aptitude for commitment to the program. Once a candidate successfully meets the predetermined criteria for the WRP, phone interviews are conducted, followed by on-campus interviews.

## **Collaboration with the Career Studio**

The DRC works in collaboration with the Career Studio at the University of Nevada, Reno to ensure that candidates are prepared for all aspects of the recruitment process. The Career Studio supports students with disabilities to better prepare for the workforce by assisting with resumes, cover letters, and professional reference pages. In addition to ensuring students have a solid foundation for candidacy; the Career Studio also assists with mock interviews, appropriate interview dress attire, professional social media presentation, and an array of internship programs and other hiring opportunities specifically for students and recent graduates with disabilities.

## **Partnership with Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation**

The DRC encourages all students with disabilities to utilize every available resource, both on campus and in the community. Through collaborative efforts with the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation, eligible students are provided services that further their potential for workforce readiness and recruitment. A two-way referral process enables students with disabilities to acquire educational information and training opportunities and that they may not otherwise have access.

Providing students with disabilities equitable access to employment resources takes a collaborative effort. Both departments cooperation is a key component of success in improving career and placements services for this population. Students that referred to DETR are provided assessments to determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation service. Vocational rehabilitation counselors assist students with disabilities in developing individualized plans for employment, which often includes setting and achieving educational goals and outcomes. This process includes providing individual tuition support and assistance to students (when appropriate per DETR policy and the applicable law) with such items as adaptive devices, technology and other materials that become the property of the student, under individualized plans for employment and in accordance with appropriate financial protocols of DETR.

# **Neurodiversity Alliance**

Originally conceived in 2018, the University of Nevada, Reno’s Neurodiversity Alliance was founded by a team of seven academic and administrative faculty members. The Neurodiversity Alliance was working to grow awareness of neurodiversity at the University and support and build community for neurodivergent members of the Wolf Pack family. It represented the latest step forward for the burgeoning movement on campus and the newest presidential diversity initiative, focused on equitable identification and understanding that all scholars learn differently. The Alliance defines neurodiversity as “the idea that people with neurological and/or psychological conditions deserve respect, should not be pathologized and are entitled to live full and satisfying lives.”

The following spring, the same, now growing group of motivated students and their mentors brought the concept of neurodiversity to the University, forming the Neurodiversity Student Working Group. The students who identify as neurodivergent put together a presentation promoting the idea and Universal Design Learning across the University. Thanks to the student-working group, faculty awareness and support grew, eventually blossoming into the Neurodiversity Alliance.

Beginning in 2019, the initiative expanded further to incorporate neurodivergent learners into summer bridge program prior to NevadaFit. The three-day program incorporates both incoming scholars and their parents into an immersive orientation that offers multiple events, trainings, and breakout sessions to support greater comfort with campus and our community. This program has been very successful, allowing our neurodivergent learners an opportunity for equitable participation in all campus programs and serves from day one of enrollment.

As the Neurodiversity Alliance has grown, so has our campus awareness of the need to recognize that neurodivergent learners are the same as any other scholar on campus. The alliance has three primary activities:

* Advocate Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an approach to learning that recognizes variation in human cognition and neurological conditions as natural, to afford every student an equal opportunity to succeed.
* Identify unintentional institutional barriers that disadvantage neurodivergent people, and we develop alternative practices that do not discriminate.
* Coordinate faculty and student efforts to form an alliance that pools resources to meet the different needs of every neurodivergent person at the University.

Today, students from across campus participate in the Lilac Graduation, recognizing their identity as a neurodivergent learning and proudly wear their cords and tassels as they receive their diplomas.

# **Serving Populations through Remote Access**

Beginning July 1, 2022, the University of Nevada, Reno at Lake Tahoe campus came to fruition as part of an acquisition of the Sierra Nevada University campus in Incline Village, Nevada. The two campuses began a year-long transition that included a teach-out of all students at the Incline campus to ensure they had the opportunity to complete their degrees.

The DRC began providing accommodations and addressing disability related matters at the Incline campus on day one of the acquisition. This included providing services for:

|  |
| --- |
| **UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO AT LAKE TAHOE** |
|  | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **DRC Students** | **19** | **23** |
|  |  |  |
| **Courses**  | **43** | **57** |
| **Course Sections**  | **74** | **92** |
|  |  |  |
| **Instructors w/ DRC students in class** | **29** | **31** |

In August, 2022, the DRC began providing support to a third Nevada System of Higher Education institution. As part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Great Basin College (GBC) in Elko, Nevada, and the University of Nevada, Reno, the DRC at UNR provided oversight of business practices and protocols to ensure compliance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. GBC’s main campus is located in Elko, with four satellite campuses in Battle Mountain, Ely, Tonopah, and Winnemucca. Coordination of accommodations and services at each campus was a unique experience. This included providing services for:

|  |
| --- |
| **GREAT BASIN COLLEGE** |
|  | **Fall ‘22** | **Spring ‘23** |
| **DRC Students** | **117** | **129** |
|  |  |  |
| **Courses**  | **175** | **197** |
| **Course Sections**  | **212** | **242** |
|  |  |  |
| **Instructors w/ DRC students in class** | **67** | **81** |

# **Universal Design for Learning**

In 2021, the DRC created a course in Canvas to teach the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Today, this course is a mandatory training for all faculty and staff, further supporting the institutions mission of access and inclusion for all of our campus community.

UDL is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. The UDL training is a tool used in the implementation of user facing interfaces across campus and all electronic documents and websites. Based on the Center for Applied Special Technology’s guidelines, this training offers a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.

Through support of the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Faculty Senate, Office of Information Technologies, Division of Student Services, and the Office of Digital Learning, this training is well received throughout campus. It is a catalyst for institutional change on our campus, and led to many conversations about the pedagogy of teaching and learning from both a historical perspective and how we will continue into the future.

# **References**

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix A**

## **Disability Resource Center**

## **DEI Related Trainings Offered to Campus**

The DRC offers a variety of training sessions on disability issues, all sessions can be adapted to time and space constraints.

* **Orientation for the Disability Resource Center** – our model for service and support (this talk can be tailored to staff or students)
* **Respectful language in Disability Communities & Ableism** – 2021 Newest trends in language and “What is ableism, and how to avoid it”
* **Disability & Identity** – 2021, a talk about how disability can become an identity and what that means to human self-regard.
* **Intersectionality and Microagressions in Disability** – 2021, a talk about intersectionality as it relates to the disabled population and the implicit biases that lead to microagressions.
* **ASL Bootcamp Level 1** – this intensive workshop covers some basic ASL and Deaf cultural norms. It can be offered in 1 or 2 hour segments, and adapted for any setting.
* **ASL Bootcamp Level 2** – this intensive workshop is a follow up to part one, expanding on previous instruction. Available in 1 or 2 hour segments.
* **Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals in Medical Settings** – an in depth 1 hour session approved for CEUs by the Renown Group. This includes a look at Deaf culture, assistive technology, applicable laws and a short lesson in signs to help communicate with patients in need
* **The Neurodiversity Movement and Disability Identity** – 2021 – what is it and how is it shaping a new non-pathological paradigm for people on the spectrum?
* **Deaf** – a primer for working with culturally Deaf individuals in any setting
* **Down Syndrome** – a primer on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
* **Autism Spectrum Disorder** – a primer for working with people on the spectrum
* **Schizophrenia** – a primer for working with people with schizophrenia and associated disorders
* **Blind** – a primer for working with people who are blind or have limited vision (still in development)
* **A History of Disability Rights in the U.S.** – 2019, a generic lecture for any group on the legislative evolution of rights for those with disability
* **Obesity and Weight Centered Health Paradigms –** 2019, a talk about body size, health and fat-shaming
* **Universal Design** – 2020, this talk explains the seven principles of UBI, building healthy, accessible environments for all types of humans
* **International & Multicultural Perspectives on Disability** – 2019, an investigation of disability rights on the international level, as well as some closer looks at strategies in both developing and industrial nations. (this talk is geared to social workers and other helping professionals)

## **Appendix B**

## **2023 Disability Resource Center**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves over 3500 students annually with a broad range of disabilities including, but not limited to, hearing impaired, visually impaired, neuro-diverse, specific learning disabilities, as well as those with mental health concerns. The DRC is dedicated to providing a collaborative and coordinated program of support services not provided by other University offices or outside organizations. The DRC assists students in negotiating disability related barriers and strives to improve access and opportunity. This enables all levels of students with disabilities to become integrated into campus life, and become more successful undergraduate or graduate students while maximizing their independence. Services are free of charge.

A description of services is available in the university catalog including but not limited to: alternative testing, note taking services, auxiliary aids, research assistance, the DRC Mentor program and transition resources.

About the DRC & Confidentiality Agreement**:** [www.unr.edu/drc](http://www.unr.edu/drc)

Student Application: <https://shasta.accessiblelearning.com/unr>

Note Taker Application: <https://shasta.accessiblelearning.com/s-UNR/Default.aspx>

Student Information**:** <https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information>

DRC Alternative Testing Policy: <https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information/alternative-testing-services>

DRC Peer Mentor Program: <https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information/peer-mentor-program>

Transition resource links –

* Nevada Career Information

<https://portal.nvcis.intocareers.org/>

* College Preparation Resources

<https://www.washington.edu/doit/programs/accesscollege/student-lounge/college>

* Office of Civil Rights Guidelines for Post-Secondary Education: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>
* Post-Secondary Transition Preparation for Parents:

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=208>

### **Documentation Guidelines:**

The DRC requires an intake interview and supporting documentation in order to evaluate individual needs for services and support.

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information/documentation-guidelines>

Auxiliary Aid Policy & Services:

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information/auxiliary-aid-services>

Post-Secondary Transition Resources:

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/student-information/transition-resources>

### **University Accessibility Policy and resources:**

The university makes available support for faculty and staff as they plan their syllabi, course materials and other communications. University policy requires that all electronic content meets accessibility standards.

<https://www.unr.edu/drc>

<https://www.unr.edu/accessibility>

University Accessible Software Downloads:

<https://unr.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2684/Portal/Home/?ID=1b0026da-96f3-403f-a061-0067397646aa>

University Commitment to Accessibility: <https://www.unr.edu/accessibility/policy-and-procedures/commitment>

### **Equal Access and ADA**

The purpose of the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all university programs.

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/equal-access-policies>

Listed drop-down categories –

* Policy Statement
* The Position of the University of Nevada Regarding the ADA
* Responsibilities
* Referral Identification
* Eligibility Requirements
* If a Barrier Occurs
* Determination and Provision of Reasonable Accommodations
* Following Procedures

The DRC complies with all policies as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

<https://www.unr.edu/equal-opportunity-title-ix/accommodations/ada>

### **Affirmative Action Policy:**

The university is committed to equal employment and educational opportunity.

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/equal-access-policies/affirmative-action-policy>

Equal employment opportunity drop-down categories –

* Compliance
* Responsibility
* Vice president(s)/Dean(s)
* Affirmative Action Officer

Additional equal employment opportunity drop-down categories –

* Career Development
* Equal Benefits
* Dissemination Statement
* Compliance with Laws
* Affirmative Recruitment

University sanctioned organizations drop-down categories –

* Treatment of Students
* Multicultural Education
* Non-discrimination in Off-campus Programs

Grievance procedures drop-down categories –

* Consulting with the EEOC/Title IX Office
* Request for Intervention
* Filing Complaints of Discrimination
* Notification of the Respondent
* Mediation or Investigation

Other page categories –

* Provisions for Veterans
* Standard Discrimination Statement
* Consideration of Qualifications
* Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications
* Accommodation Statement
* Sexual Harassment Policy

A reduced course load is sometime required for those students who are unable to carry the normal 12 credit full time load. The reduced course load allows students to remain eligible for Nevada’s Millennium Scholarship and other forms of institutional aid.

### **Reduced Course Load Policy:**

A reduced course load is sometime required for those students who are unable to carry the normal 12 credit full time load. The reduced course load allows students to remain eligible for Nevada’s Millennium Scholarship and other forms of institutional aid.

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/equal-access-policies/reduced-course-load-policy>

### **Service Animal Policy**

Service animals are recognized with the following guidelines

<https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/5000-5999-general-university-services/5470-animals-on-university-property>

### **DRC Staff Contact Information:**

The DRC staff contacts are made available of the DRC website:

<https://www.unr.edu/drc/contact>

### **University Administrative Manual**

The University Administrative manual covers a broad spectrum of policy codification for all individuals with disabilities on campus.

University Administrative Manual**:** <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/search?q=disability>

* 1,925: Definitions and Guidelines to Address the Needs of Employees with Disabilities:

<https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/500-1999-fiscal-and-business-affairs/1925-definitions-and-guidelines-to-address-the-needs-of-employees-with-disabilities>

* 3,001: Freedom of Access to Higher Education: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3001-freedom-of-access-to-higher-education>
* 3,052: Reasonable Accommodations for the Academic Needs of Students with Disabilities: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3052-reasonable-accommodations-for-the-academic-needs-of-students-with-disabilities>
* 3,053: Disability Resource Center: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3053-disability-resource-center>
* 5,304: Event Accessibility and Accommodation Policy: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/5000-5999-general-university-services/5304-event-accessibility-and-accommodation-policy>
* 5,470: Animals on University Property: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/5000-5999-general-university-services/5470-animals-on-university-property>
* 6,500: Classroom Instruction and Regulations Concerning Disabled Students: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/6000-6999-courses-curricula-and-organizational-change-process/6500-classroom-instruction-and-regulations-concerning-disabled-students>
* 6,501: Syllabus Policy: <https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/6000-6999-courses-curricula-and-organizational-change-process/6501-syllabus-policy>