**2022-2023 Strategic Plan**

**Disability Resource Center**

**University of Nevada**

# **Introduction**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is authorized by the University’s President to determine and coordinate reasonable accommodations to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities. Per university policy, our institutional charge is to ensure that our campus community remains in compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 (as amended) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973, by promoting, supporting, and securing the University of Nevada’s core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This DEI Strategic Plan is a summation of the department’s action throughout the 2022-2023 academic year to address systematic bias and discrimination as it pertains to our policies and procedures. Additionally, this plan addresses the interactions we have on a daily basis with the population we serve and our overall scope of knowledge regarding the challenges and barriers that students with disabilities face across campus. Additionally, this report provides a detailed description of the department’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals and action plan as they relate to the intersectionality of disability with race, ethnicity, sex, gender, socioeconomic status, and identity. This is especially important to recognize and continue to build on our general knowledge as a department given our understanding that disability has no barrier related to the intersectionality of identity.

Lastly, this report identifies the DEI-related training and professional development opportunities that the DRC staff participated in over the last year, as well as summary data, themes, and recommendations for future progress in this area. The staff of the DRC has engaged multiple conversations about our own personal level of competency regarding social justice and inclusion, as well as assessed where we are on the ACPA/NASPA Social Justice and Inclusion competencies.

# **Department Foundation**

## **Vision**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is dedicated to providing a coordinated campus wide program of support services for students with disabilities both in-and-out of the classroom. The DRC assists students in negotiating disability related barriers and strives to improve access and opportunity in all areas of campus participation and engagement. Our vision is to support all students with disabilities as they integrate into campus life, reach their full potential, and become contributing members of our community.

## **Mission**

The DRC was created to meet the unique educational needs of undergraduate and graduate level students with disabilities. The purpose of the DRC is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all university programs. The DRC staff is dedicated to providing personalized support through accommodations that are focused on compassion and empathy as the foundation in all that we do.

Our goal is to act as a catalyst for the elimination of both attitudinal and architectural barriers as they present throughout the university community. The DRC directly supports students with disabilities in achieving their goals-strengthening the climate of diversity and inclusion across campus.

## **Values**

Access-Opportunity-Success

## **Commitment to Equity**

The DRC is determined to support students with disabilities through relationship building, personalized support, and advocating for all levels of education. We believe the success of our students drives the success of our department. This is reflected in our ongoing commitment to creating an environment focused on diversity, equality, inclusion, empowerment and respect. When our students feel supported and inspired, they turn their creativity into action and utilize their education to impact the world around them.

# **Overall Department Goals**

The DRC’s objective is to ensure that students with disabilities are provided an accessible, equitable, and inclusive opportunity to participate in all services, programs, and activities across campus. To be the most effective in our mission, we identified the following overall goals, as they relate to DEI:

* Improve our knowledge and understanding of the intersectionality of diversity categories.
* Identify how we can improve our support for students with disabilities by recognizing the impact of this intersectionality.
* Implement evidence-based practices that prioritize difference and individuality in all that we do.

## **Goals related to Strategic Plan in 2022-2023**

### **Review of Systematic Bias and Discrimination Report**

The staff of the Disability Resource Center had many conversations regarding our current policies and practices to discern procedures that may adversely affect diverse populations. As a staff, we identified areas needing attention and derived a plan for the action we took to address them.

Report Summary:

Create greater transparency for our students by recognizing the impact that culture, race, and ethnicity might have on the stigma surrounding disabilities which may prevent students from receiving the necessary assistance they need to be successful in school.

The DRC now has a confidentiality statement on our website to encourage students that may be hesitant to utilize our services.

K-12 students from marginalized, non-represented populations tend to get overlooked without having been identified as having a disability. This is most impactful for students of historically marginalized groups of race and ethnicity who are not provided the resources and interventions at the K-12 level that other students might receive.

The DRC referred 45 students to counseling services for ADD & LD assessments.

40% identified as a person of color, 30% were Pell eligible and 90% received some form of accommodation while waiting for verification.

Prior to this, students were deemed ineligible to receive accommodations until they were diagnosed. The DRC will follow up with Counseling Services to see how many of their referrals followed through.

Accessibility of electronic documents (i.e. forms, course articles, books, etc.) is one of the most impactful ways that students with disabilities can be discriminated against. The Disability Resource Center utilizes the DRC Student Portal for facilitating accommodation requests, scheduling appointments, and signing all student agreements.

All documents/forms requiring signature are now completely accessible, located in one place, and available electronically.

Students with disabilities from underrepresented or marginalized groups of race and ethnicity who may not otherwise be able to afford technological resources that eliminate barriers to learning. This issue is exacerbated once a student enrolls in college since access to technology is fundamental need for student success in the digital age.

The DRC was approved for funding to acquire technology (i.e. laptops, tablets, LiveScribe pens, screen reading software, note taking software) that will support the individual needs of students with disabilities as they begin college.

Students from underrepresented groups receive priority in the DRC’s disbursement of these technological tools to help combat the social injustice that led to the lack of access to these resources being readily available.

# **Department Strategic Plan Summary**

The DRC was heavily engaged with DEI initiatives throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. As a staff, we have participated in multiple trainings and presentations to elevate our professional competency of DEI, how it impacts our students, and how we can do better to support DEI campus wide. Disability, and those it may impact, knows no barrier. Therefore, the DRC has spent the last engaged in initiatives that recognize the intersectionality of disability with race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, age, and identity to further our DEI mission and continue to make our campus a more welcoming environment for all students.

The following initiatives have been implemented or have a running action plan as part of the DRC’s DEI Strategic Plan (Appendices A):

## Goal Area 1 - Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

* Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training modules
* Training modules to address intersectionality of disability with other sociologically identities

## Goal Area 2 - Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention

* Collaboration with Counseling Services to address LD/ADHD assessment needs
* Action plan to address systematic barriers for students who identify as neurodivergent
* Peer Mentor Program initiatives that close the opportunity gap for underrepresented students with disabilities

## Goal Area 3 – Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

* Recruiting/promoting staff with intentionality to address DEI related issues
* Utilization of ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas of Social Justice and Inclusion for professional development including participating in sponsored Division wide DEI trainings and/or certifications.
* Participation in Division wide working group to improve access and work culture

# Department DEI Training Log Summary

The DRC attended multiple trainings over the last year to further our professional knowledge of issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Our staff feels very strongly about the mission to support the campus wide DEI initiative and to ensure that our campus is accessible to all students, whether they identify as having a disability or not.

 Below is a summary of the trainings attended by the DRC with a full list provided at the end of this report (appendices C):

## DEI Related Trainings

Topics Trainings Attended

Cultural Competencies or Cultural Humility 6

Implicit Bias 2

Social Justice and Inclusion 6

Culturally Sensitive Assessment Practices 1

Mental health support or trauma informed care 3

Other related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2

## UDL Related Trainings

Topics Trainings Attended

Universal Design for Inclusive Learning 3

Document accessibility of pdf remediation 3

Creating accessible multimedia 1

Webcampus or Canvas specific design 1

Website or web applications accessibility 1

Email accessibility 1

Other related training specific accessibility 1

The DRC staff is committed to continuing our professional development in these areas. Additionally, the DRC is offering an array of trainings that address the intersectionality of disability with race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, age, and identity (Appendices B). These trainings are offered by Andrea Juillerat-Olvera, Specialist and Lead Sign Language Interpreter. She presented these trainings to many different committees, departments, and groups across campus over the last year.

# **Appendix A**

# **Disability Resource Center**

# **Strategic Plan ’22-23**

## Goal Area 1 - Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### Objective 1: The department will develop Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Training Modules that will be utilized to train faculty and staff about the concept of UDL and how to apply it as a campus wide initiative.

Action Steps:

* Beginning May 2022, the Disability Resources Center (DRC) developed a Universal Design for Learning Practices Series.
* Beginning July 2022, 40% of the Division participated in the Universal Design Learning Series.
* Beginning December 2022, 75% of the Division participated in the Universal Design Learning Series.
* By July 2023, 100% of the Division will have participated in the Universal Design Learning Series.

### Objective 2: The department will develop training modules relevant to disability and various sociological intersections (i.e. race, ethnicity, sex, gender, socioeconomic status, identify, etc).

Action Steps:

* Beginning fall 2022, the department will begin to present on various topics of disability and the intersectionality to various identities, as requested by various departments.
* Beginning summer 2023, the department will have a working list of trainings and have conducted multiple presentations across campus.

## Goal Area 2 - Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention

### Objective 1: Develop a plan to support students with disabilities by collaborating with Counseling Services to support the assessment of learning disabilities and ADHD, especially as more students request and are eligible for assessment.

Action Steps:

* Beginning spring 2023, the department will ensure that all students who are being referred for formalized assessment are receiving academic accommodations that support their scholastic success.
* By fall 2023, the department will have a plan for supporting Counseling Services in this joint endeavor, as many students with disabilities from underrepresented populations are entering the university without formalized assessment or receiving the support they need academically.
* By spring 2023, have an established system in place to meet the insurmountable frequency of students who are requesting formalized assessment.

### Objective 2: Develop action plan to address systemic barriers to the access, engagement and retention of prospective and/or current students who identify as neurodivergent.

Action Steps:

* By spring 2022, the department will continue its collaboration with the Neurodiversity Alliance, effectively advocating for faculty and staff who identify as neurodivergent. Additionally, by end of spring 2022, the Neurodiversity Alliance will be listed as a University Initiate in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
* By end of fall 2022, the Neurodiversity Alliance will identify unintentional institutional barriers that disadvantage neurodivergent people on campus, and develop an action plan to address alternative practices that do not discriminate.

### Objective 3: Assess the impact DRC Peer Mentor Program is having on engagement and retention initiatives that close the opportunity gap for minoritized, non-represented, and underrepresented students with disabilities.

Action Steps:

* By end of summer 2022, the department will conduct an analysis of the number and types of programs and initiatives dedicated to supporting the engagement and retention of minoritized, non-represented, and underrepresented student populations who participate in the program.
* By end of fall 2022, the department will develop engagement opportunities and spaces for groups that have low retention rates in order to increase sense of belonging and provide additional resources and support to these students.
* By summer 2023, the department will assess DRC Peer Mentor Program initiatives and disseminate the results of action steps taken to close the opportunity gap for minoritized, non-represented, and underrepresented students with disabilities.

## Goal Area 3 – Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

### Objective 1: Develop a plan to better support students with disabilities, recognizing that the population of students registering with the DRC and the complexity of identity intersectionality continues to grow each semester.

Action Steps:

* By fall 2023, the department will have a plan for hiring an additional Coordinator to support the growing population, paying particular attention to multicultural needs within the department as a representation of the population being served.
* By end of summer 2023, progress toward this hiring goal, as it is essential to ensuring the institution remains in compliance begin the fall 2023 semester.

### Objective 2: The DRC will utilize the ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas of Social Justice and Inclusion to help staff develop competencies in these two areas and will include a section documenting professional development including participating in sponsored Division wide DEI trainings and/or certifications.

Action Steps:

* By summer 2022, the department will use baseline indicators of the Social Justice and Inclusion competencies to help staff member’s asses their level of knowledge, awareness, and skills.
* By spring 2023, the department will establish yearly Social Justice and Inclusion goals for each staff member.
* By spring 2023, departments/units will develop competency markers for individual staff that will be incorporated into the annual evaluation process.

### Objective 3: Develop a system to assess faculty and staff experiences and determine changes needed to improve access and work culture.

Action Steps:

* By end of summer 2023, the department will participate in a working group to review existing Divisional efforts for assessing work culture/climate.
* By mid-Fall 2023, the department will use the survey tool recommended by this working group for individual assessment.
* By summer 2023, the department will have an action plan for continued evaluation of cultural competency and utilize it as the foundation for promoting Social Justice and Inclusion across campus.

# **Appendices B**

# **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)