STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAM REVIEW

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER SELF-STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE SERVICES OFFERED

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides students with a variety of individualized accommodations and resources, including assistive technology, testing accommodations, access to early registration, campus event access, and more. The Director of the DRC co-chairs the Universal Access Committee (UAC), which includes members from stakeholders College-wide to promote a culture of inclusivity and access at SLCC.

DEPARTMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT AND DEPARTMENT-LEVEL GOALS

The purpose of the DRC is to facilitate access and inclusion and to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

DRC DEPARTMENT-LEVEL GOALS

1. Develop additional training for faculty and staff on DRC resources
2. Create an American Sign Language (ASL)/Deaf services page on the DRC webpage
3. Develop DRC resources in Spanish/other languages
4. Create a Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Disability Cultural Center
5. DRC and Center for Health & Counseling (CHC) collaboration to offer learning disability testing and specific trainings about disabilities
6. Re-assess DRC name
7. Use Surveys and Assessments to better inform decisions about our goals and direction

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS SLCC MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

- Supporting SLCC Vision
  - The DRC provides inclusion for students with disabilities in courses, programs, and services at SLCC.
- Supporting SLCC Mission
  - The DRC collaborates with other departments to provide support for students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.
- Supporting SLCC Values
  - DRC staff members are personally invested in their day-to-day work and have a passion for serving students in the following ways:
    - Collaboration: Regular collaboration with several SLCC departments allows the DRC to advocate for DRC students.
    - Community: The DRC has several community partners that provide support for students.

- Inclusivity: The DRC works with students from many backgrounds and cultures to provide access and promote disability as a part of diversity.
- Learning: The DRC encourages staff to participate in professional development. The DRC's annual DiversAbility Week (formerly Disability Awareness Week) event is centered around creating greater understanding of disability in the College and community.
- Innovation: The DRC is continuously working to provide new ways to access technology and strategies to assist students in providing access to courses, services, and programs.
- Integrity: The DRC staff are committed to providing the best service to each individual student while also maintaining proper boundaries and striving to uphold disability law and College policies.
- Trust: A culture of trust guides everything the DRC does in interactions College-wide.

ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS

The DRC strives to promote diversity, inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation. The department endeavors to use these strengths to create an empowering department culture for students and staff. The DRC has about 2,200 active students each year, with an average of 1,533 students requesting accommodations each semester between Spring 2016 and Fall 2020. The DRC issued 13,920 individual Letters of Accommodation (LOA) on a semester-to-semester basis during this time.[1]

The workplace culture of the DRC fosters comradery between staff members that promotes sharing of ideas, collaboration, innovation, problem-solving, and compassion for each other within the department.

Important stakeholders across the College are members of the UAC, which is co-chaired by the DRC Director. These members volunteer to serve on the committee. UAC members and additional faculty and staff members serve on subcommittees. UAC subcommittees work on issues that connect with their roles/interests and find ways SLCC can better promote access and inclusivity for all students.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The DRC would like to improve education and training offerings to faculty and staff. Education about DRC services and focused training about specific disabilities would be an integral part of this process. Better marketing to promote DRC services and events could also help improve the visibility of the DRC to students, staff, faculty, and the community.

The DRC would like to improve internal staff connections and training, especially for Service Providers. Service Providers assist students with various equipment and technology as approved accommodations. The level of knowledge needed to assist with these items is incongruent with the current compensation rate. The current compensation rate of part-time Advisors also creates difficulty in finding and retaining advisors with the needed level of training.

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[1] Based on reports run in Accommodate Database for data between 1/1/2016 and 12/31/2020.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Survey students, faculty, and staff on the effectiveness of DRC communication, access, effectiveness, and resources. Develop training materials and resources for staff and faculty.
- Develop specific training for student workers that assist with College tours.
- Present at department faculty/staff meetings across the College.
- Work with Human Resources (HR) to conduct a market comparability study and/or desk audit for staff compensation.
- Create short videos about various access technologies and resources.
- Work with Center for Health and Counseling (CHC) to discuss any opportunities to add learning disability testing resources to their program.
- Maintain relationships and connections with UAC members to assist in advancing access and inclusivity initiatives.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of learning disability testing within SLCC
- Space for staff workstations and student lab needs to be more efficient to meet current needs.
- Areas for improvement and goals that require collaboration with outside programs.
- Staff compensation

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL OR EXTERNAL CHANGES THAT HAVE IMPACTED SERVICES

- The UAC was established in 2012 to promote accessibility for all students, faculty, and staff across the College.
- Reorganization within Student Affairs shifted the DRC from Student Success to the Dean of Students/Assistant Vice President (AVP).
- Re-assessed documentation guidelines in response to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) law changes.
- SLCC Bell schedule has changed the days students tend to be on campus and seek out DRC supports.
- COVID-19
- Veteran's Center renovation
- Testing Services reorganization – affects accommodated testing differently at each campus.
- Worked with Facilities Services to transfer responsibility of placing and maintaining the inventory of accessible chairs and tables from the DRC to Facilities Services

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT EMERGED FROM PREVIOUS REVIEWS OR ASSESSMENTS

The DRC's Spring 2012 program review provided several recommendations to strengthen the program. These recommendations included:

- Double the number of advisors, double the physical footprint, and increase funding that the department currently receives due to the large number of students served. If that is not feasible, revise the case management model to a consumer response-community support model to serve students more efficiently.
- Improve the process of notifying instructors regarding classroom accommodations.

- Establish a streamlined, shortened process for new student intakes including a structured interview with students regarding their history utilizing accommodations and updated documentation guidelines to align with ADA as amended.
- Explore options for efficient delivery of note-taking services.
- Stricter guidelines for approving the priority registration accommodation.
- Consider having a dedicated advisor for Veterans.
- Consider establishing an accessibility council with representation across the college to create a shared responsibility for universal access environments.
- Move the responsibility of purchasing and placement of accessible furniture in every classroom to the Facilities Services department

SIGNIFICANT DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

The DRC has experienced multiple changes and implemented many of the above recommendations.

Of note, the DRC has experienced several shifts in leadership and staffing since our last review. Some of these changes include:

- 2 Directors and 3 Interim Directors
- Turnover of Assistant Director, Advisor, and service provider positions
- Reclassifying positions to better align with current department needs
- Creation of an Assistive Technology Coordinator position
- Reclassification of two Advisor II positions to Advisor III positions working as Veteran's Accessibility and High School Transition Advisor

Other significant changes within the DRC include:

- Establishing a protocol for approving and arranging for Modifications to Attendance and Assignments accommodations
- Establishing guidelines for math substitutions
- Accommodated tests moved to Testing Services at all but South City campus
- Adjustable furniture is now purchased, stored, and placed by facilities. Most classrooms now have at least one adjustable desk and ergonomic chair. The DRC continues to function as a liaison notifying facilities when specific or additional furniture needs to be placed.
- Significant changes to note taking services, drastically reducing peer note takers by utilizing Smart Pens and the Otter transcription/recording app.
- Accessible software is available online via All Access, eliminating the need to download software onto individual devices.

Additional changes due to COVID-19 are listed below. While implemented due to an emergency, the DRC has found these to be effective options for students and plans to continue offering them post-pandemic.

- Offering remote interpreting and CART services
- Offering virtual advising appointments
- Electronic equipment renewal
- Virtual accessible software training
- Virtual staff meetings

PROGRESS REPORT ON CURRENT DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

In addition to the changes mentioned above, the DRC has completed several of the recommended changes from the 2012 Program Review.

In response to the recommendation for an accessibility council, SLCC established the Universal Access Committee (UAC). Co-chaired by the DRC Director and the Director of Risk Management, this group brings key individuals across the college together to prioritize and implement Universal Design practices to SLCC. This has been a powerful way to drive institution-wide changes addressing accessibility. Some Universal Access Committee accomplishments include but are not limited to:

- Creation of Universal Access Coordinator position
- Training for faculty and staff offering Universal Access designation
- Establishing the ADA Access and Reasonable Accommodations Policy
- Establishing a procedure for procuring accessible technology
- Purchasing a WebCrawler that checks SLCC webpages for accessibility
- Purchasing ALLY to check documents for accessibility within Canvas
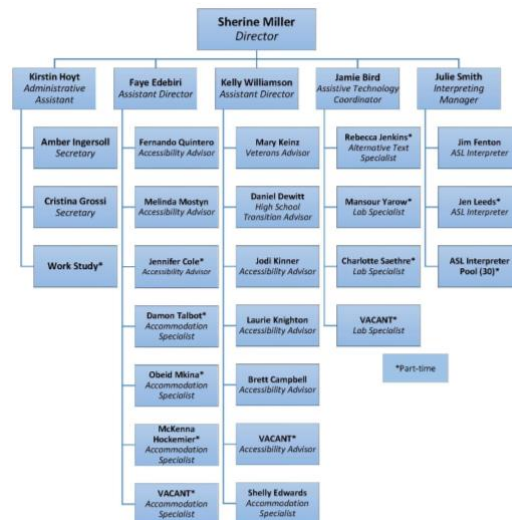- Funding for captioning and other accessibility projects

In 2015 the DRC purchased a new database. Accommodate includes many features that greatly streamlined the DRC intake processes and simplified the steps needed to receive ADA accommodations. Additionally, these changes greatly reduced the burden on students to self-identify to peers and instructors. They also have also reduced the need for face-to-face advising appointments. A few of the major changes include:

- Students electronically request accommodations
- Advisors email Letters of Accommodation (LOA) to faculty and copy students
- Students apply for DRC services online
- Documentation can be uploaded and submitted electronically
- Online scheduling available for accommodated testing
- Shared notes can be uploaded to and retrieved

The goals mentioned at the beginning of this document were created through a survey of DRC staff in Fall 2020 and are largely yet to be implemented. Progress has been made on creating an ASL/Deaf Services section on the DRC webpage, which now includes an electronic Interpreter/CART Provider request form for students and employees.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM AND SERVICES

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (ORG CHART)

Salt Lake Community College

Organizational chart:

- **Sherine Miller** — Director
  - **Kirstin Hoyt** — Administrative Assistant
    - **Amber Ingersoll** — Secretary
    - **Cristina Grossi** — Secretary
    - **Work Study***
  - **Faye Edebiri** — Assistant Director
    - **Fernando Quintero** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Melinda Mostyn** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Jennifer Cole*** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Damon Talbot*** — Accommodation Specialist
    - **Obeid Mkina*** — Accommodation Specialist
    - **McKenna Hockemier*** — Accommodation Specialist
    - **VACANT*** — Accommodation Specialist
  - **Kelly Williamson** — Assistant Director
    - **Mary Keinz** — Veterans Advisor
    - **Daniel Dewitt** — High School Transition Advisor
    - **Jodi Kinner** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Laurie Knighton** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Brett Campbell** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **VACANT*** — Accessibility Advisor
    - **Shelly Edwards** — Accommodation Specialist
  - **Jamie Bird** — Assistive Technology Coordinator
    - **Rebecca Jenkins*** — Alternative Text Specialist
    - **Mansour Yarow*** — Lab Specialist
    - **Charlotte Saethre*** — Lab Specialist
    - **VACANT*** — Lab Specialist
  - **Julie Smith** — Interpreting Manager
    - **Jim Fenton** — ASL Interpreter
    - **Jen Leeds*** — ASL Interpreter
    - **ASL Interpreter Pool (30)***

*Part-time

SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT, AND HOW THAT CONNECTS TO STUDENTS

- Review and process accommodations
  - Accessibility Advisors work directly with students with disabilities who request accommodations to approve and provide accommodations within the classroom.
- Assistive Technology and student support
  - Service Providers support students with equipment and/or technology accommodations by providing training and resources. Students can utilize the DRC Assistive Technology (AT) labs at Redwood, South, and Jordan campuses.
- Training SLCC faculty and staff on disability
  - Accessibility Advisors provide training to faculty and staff about disability and DRC services to better support students with disabilities.
- Transitional and current student outreach
  - Advisors support transition and current students by presenting on DRC services and other support that may be offered at SLCC. Staff assist at tabling events at SLCC and other venues in the community.
- ASL Interpreting and Real-time Captioning
  - All ASL Interpreting and Real-time Captioning services for student, staff, faculty, and event accommodations are coordinated through the DRC.
- Serve on committees to incorporate inclusivity or provide insight to disability
  - Staff at the DRC serve on a variety of committees at the College and within the community to serve as advocates for students with disabilities.
- Provide funding for Alternative Spring Break and Tuition Waivers
  - Eligible students can apply for funding provided by the DRC for Alternative Spring Break. Eligible students can also receive tuition waivers from the DRC.
- Collaborate with the UAC to provide recommendations to key stakeholders across the College to promote greater accessibility and improvement in SLCC's culture of inclusivity.
  - Influences a greater understanding of accessibility concerns and how these impact individual students throughout College departments

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS—ESPECIALLY THE ONES BEING ASSESSED

REVIEWING/PROCESSING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students begin the interactive process by contacting the DRC and completing an online Application for Services. Students are then assigned an Accessibility Advisor who reviews the student's documentation and accommodation requests. The student and the advisor discuss functional limitations and past accommodations. Certain accommodations may require further review through the Assistant Director or Director (i.e. Modification to Attendance and Assignments accommodations and Math Substitutions). Any denial of accommodations is reviewed by the Director of the Disability Resource Center and Utah Division of Risk Management.

All accommodations are reviewed on a class-by-class basis each semester. Students request accommodations each semester by either updating their accommodation request in Accommodate or by contacting their Accessibility Advisor. Approved accommodations are included in a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) and are sent to both the instructor and the student via email. Any concerns about the accommodations are reviewed by the Accessibility Advisor.

- Classroom Accommodations
    - Instructions on how to provide classroom accommodations that require instructor assistance are included in the LOA sent to the instructor and student. If additional instructions are required a separate attachment is sent to the instructor and the student.
- Assistive Technology
    - The DRC can provide access to approved assistive technology required for an accommodation. Students are trained on and issued assistive technology by Service Providers. All loaned assistive technology is either renewed or returned each semester.
- Interpreting/Communication Access
    - Students with approved communication accommodations utilize ASL Interpreters and/or real-time captioning, captioned media, and assistive listening devices. These accommodations extend to all aspects of the student experience, including but not limited to classroom settings, tutoring sessions, group study, club activities, etc.
- Testing Accommodations
    - Students are approved for testing accommodations through the DRC. Testing accommodations are administered by Testing Services, other liaisons, and the DRC depending on campus location.
- Furniture Accommodations
    - The College is working toward placing accessible furniture in every classroom. Any additional furniture accommodations are approved by the DRC. The DRC notifies Facilities Services of the additional need and furniture is placed.

REVIEW OF RESOURCES

FINANCIAL RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET

The DRC runs on an annual budget of $1.73M (Fiscal Year (FY) 20). Funding sources in FY 20 included Education and General, Servicing, Perkins Grant, and USHE Deaf and Hard of Hearing Reimbursement funds.

As of FY 21 the DRC no longer obtains funding from the Perkins Grant. The DRC was granted one-time funds ($139,178) for the percentage of two full-time advisor positions and part-time positions that were previously funded by the Perkins Grant. Informed Budget Process (IBP) funding requests will be required each year until permanent funding is approved.

Previously, the DRC also utilized the Perkins Grant to fund student equipment and $45 Bookstore vouchers for peer note takers. When this funding was discontinued the DRC began utilizing Servicing funding in FY 19 for equipment and note taking vouchers. Currently, the DRC has been approved for Servicing funding only for note taking vouchers. The need for note takers has decreased as other technology options have become available. Additional funding for these resources may be necessary in the future. Servicing funds also fund fifty percent of an Advisor position. Permanent funding will need to be requested and secured.

The DRC requests reimbursement funds from the USHE Deaf and Hard of Hearing fund for student ASL Interpreting and CART costs semi-annually. The DRC has received an average of $158,000 during the last 3 years. This is only 45% of the average total expenditures for ASL Interpreting and CART costs in those years. When possible, the DRC moves any excess funds from the DRC Education and General fund to assist with the shortfall each year. However, a budget shortfall of approximately $150,000 is still incurred due to the high costs of ASL Interpreting and CART services. The College provides the funding for the shortfall at the end of each fiscal year. A continued commitment of funds for the shortfall through the current process or with permanent funding is required for the DRC to continue to provide ASL Interpreting and CART accommodations.

UAC has a budget housed in Student Affairs to assist with college-wide access issues, including purchasing accessible furniture, captioning costs, training on disability and access, and technology.

HUMAN RESOURCES—ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS AND NEEDS

CURRENT POSITIONS:

The DRC is comprised of one Director, two Assistant Directors, six full-time (FT) and two part-time (PT) Accessibility Advisors, one FT Assistive Technology Coordinator, ten Service providers (9 PT, 1 FT), one FT ASL Interpreter Manager, one FT and 25 PT ASL Interpreters, 3 PT CART providers, one FT Administrative Assistant, and two FT Front Desk Secretaries.

RECENT CHANGES

- The responsibility of coordinating assistive technology previously fell to one of the FT DRC Advisor positions. The DRC shifted the responsibility of coordinating assistive technology to its own position, creating 1 FT Advisor and 1 FT Assistive Technology Coordinator position.
- Moved 1 PT Advisor position from South to Redwood/Miller
- Added coverage by appointment at West Valley and WestPointe
- Permanently moved funding for 3 PT Service Providers to Testing Services to begin the transition to a College-wide Testing Center

NEEDS

- DRC Advising caseloads average 250-300+ students per advisor. The average student-to-staff ratio for an institution with greater than 30,000 students is 159:1.[2]

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[2] Scott, Sally. (2019, June) Summary Report, The 2018 Biennial AHEAD Survey: Disability Resource Office Structures and Programs. 48. Retrieved from: Benchmark Data - AHEAD - Association on Higher Education And Disability

- PT Advisor compensation assessment as the department is having difficulty filling and keeping staff in these positions because of pay rate
- PT Service provider compensation assessment to determine competitive market value based on duties
- Difficult to predict staffing needs depending on the number and type of approved accommodation requests each semester
- More coverage at satellite campuses
- Requests for Real-time Captioning (CART) are increasing, and more in-house Caption providers would be more cost-effective

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

The DRC utilizes a variety of technology to stay connected and provide direction for students, staff, and faculty. The DRC utilizes standard office technology that is updated periodically. The DRC also has high speed scanners to assist with providing student accommodations.

DRC DATABASE

The DRC tracks and approves student accommodations using the database Accommodate, providing a secure way to store student documentation. Student information from Banner is uploaded to Accommodate daily. This database allows the DRC to generate and share accommodation requests to faculty and partnering departments as is appropriate. It also provides modules that the DRC uses to coordinate and facilitate accommodations such as: student test scheduling, ASL and CART provider scheduling, equipment checkout and anonymous peer note sharing. Accommodate also facilitates communications to students and provides reporting functions.

ASSISTIVE SOFTWARE

- Virtual Desktop Interface (AllAccess Accessible Desktop)
- Accessible Textbook Resources: AccessText, Bookshare
- Text-to-Speech: Kurzweil, Microsoft Office Immersive Reader
- Voice Dictation: Dragon Naturally Speaking, Microsoft Office Dictation
- Screen Readers & Screen Magnification: JAWS Fusion, NVDA
- Audio Recording & Transcription: Otter.ai

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- LiveScribe Smart Pens
- Digital Recorders
- Video Recorders
- Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) System Video Magnifier
- Hand-held magnifier
- Braille Displays & Embossers
- iPads for CART/reader/scribe services
- FM Systems

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY/CAPACITY OF STAFF, WORK ENVIRONMENT, PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

STAFF

- DRC Advisors have caseloads of 250-300+ students
- The quality of ASL Interpreters employed by the department has improved, with all staff having Utah Professional certification and 80% also having national certification.
- Finding highly qualified PT advisors is difficult because current pay rates are not encouraging hiring and retention.
  - Positions require specific knowledge in legal, medical, and disability-related information.
  - Caseloads of current advisors are high because of the difficulty in hiring and retention of additional part-time advisors.
- High turnover rate of part-time advisors and service providers
- Full-time advisors all currently have or are pursuing Master's degrees and/or professional licensures
- Staff have a broad variety of experience in the field ranging from entry-level to highly experienced, with the majority in the upper ranges.
- The DRC serves students at all SLCC campuses

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Staff connections with departmental colleagues across SLCC campuses can be disjointed at times because of the physical distance and different campus cultures.
  - With the transition to online meetings because of COVID-19, staff connections have improved because it is easier to attend them without having to go to a different campus.
  - Virtual meetings have reduced travel time and expenses.
- Sharing information with other SLCC departments feels one-sided due to the confidentiality requirements of the DRC.
- Recent conversations and collaboration with faculty have shown improvement in DRC support to faculty in implementing accommodations.
  - Universal Access Coordinator position has improved faculty support in captioning and course accessibility needs.
- Moving most accommodated testing to Testing Services has created a more efficient testing process for students and faculty.
  - When all testing can be housed under Testing Services, it will create even more efficient processes.
- The AT Lab at Taylorsville-Redwood is separate from the main DRC office.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- Would need space to be able to meet goals of creating a Disability Cultural Center
- Separate AT lab is being reconfigured to make room for Veteran's Office expansion
- Need additional office space for Taylorsville-Redwood PT advisor position
- Need additional office space for Interpreter Manager
- Space that was used for testing at Redwood could be assessed and reconfigured to meet current office needs
- When testing at South City campus is moved to Testing Services, the space there could be assessed and reconfigured to meet current office needs
- Furniture at older campus offices needs to be updated

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- Added electronic signature feature to student equipment check out contracts
- Electronic accessible textbook requests
- Remote ASL Interpreting available for virtual broadcast courses
- Remote CART/Typewell available for virtual broadcast and in-person courses
- Software with Web-based licenses are working well for student access.
- Software without Web-based licenses are difficult for students to access on All-Access, would like to evaluate alternative software options.
- Received new laptops for each DRC staff member to facilitate telecommuting.
  - Looking to replace staff desktop computer workstations with laptops/docks when these desktops age out.
- Assess the effectiveness of currently available inventory of physical assistive technology and evaluate alternative options.
- Otter.ai transcription services are proving to be a viable alternative (remote and in-person) to peer note takers and smart pens.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN EFFICIENCY OR COST EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES

- Virtual desktop environment is not the best way for students to access dictation and screen reader software.
- Re-assess feasibility of using Accommodate Scheduling Module for scheduling student appointments with advisors
- Evaluate Accommodate Faculty module functionality
  - Can it be used with Single Sign On?
  - How are other institutions using this feature?
- Review Alternative Textbook workflow
- When licenses for assistive software are coming up for renewal, re-assess the student utilization and determine if the current numbers of licenses are cost effective.
- Evaluate Otter.ai cost and effectiveness as an accommodation
- Equipment purchasing costs
- Finding effective peer note takers or viable alternatives to note taking accommodations
  - Explore note taking options for students in lower-level ENGL courses where peers may not have the skills necessary for taking effective notes.
  - Collaborate with instructors to discover if peer note taking accommodations will be necessary for the course (i.e. are notes provided on CANVAS, are lectures recorded?).

ANALYSIS OF RESOURCE NEEDS FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS (NEXT FIVE YEARS)

- How do we continue to fund the staff who were previously funded through Perkins?
- Long-term Otter funding - the need for licenses will only increase over time
- Database was previously partially funded through Perkins
- Equipment was previously partially funded through Perkins
- Funding for any new positions
- Funding for space readjustment
- Overall, Otter app costs are less per student than note taker accommodation costs, but we may need to request additional permanent funding as utilization increases. Smart pen use may also decrease as Otter app utilization increases.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SLCC DEPARTMENTS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

OVERVIEW OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SLCC DEPARTMENTS

The DRC has important relationships with many SLCC departments with the mission of being more inclusive in student participation and achieving equity in student services.

Historically, each member of the DRC has been tasked with being a member of a SLCC committee. This has been an effective way to get to know the greater Student Affairs population and ensuring each department has a liaison at the DRC.

The DRC Director co-chairs the UAC Committee. This assists the DRC in creating and maintaining relationships with stakeholders across the College and provides an avenue for discussion and implementation of projects to promote inclusivity and access.

HOW ARE YOU COLLABORATING WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS TO ADVANCE SLCC STRATEGIC GOALS? PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES.

The DRC partners with the Financial Aid Department in two ways. First, a member of the DRC staff serves on the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. The DRC member of this committee advocates for students who disclose that they have a disability or are currently considered a documented student with a disability enrolled with the DRC. The objective is that every individual's concern regarding the impact of their disability be listened to fairly and impartially. Second, the DRC recognizes that there are students who have great financial difficulties, and the DRC has a limited number of Tuition Waivers to award to students who qualify for this assistance as determined by Financial Aid.

The DRC works with the Thayne Center to award stipends to DRC students for alternative Spring Break experiences. These funds allow student participation that may not be possible without financial assistance.

A DRC staff member serves on the Registration Appeal Committee and assists the Committee in determining if/how the student's disability impacted their academic ability to successfully complete their courses.

The DRC supports the Interpreter Training Program (ITP) at SLCC by providing observations and internship opportunities for ITP students. DRC staff also support the STEM Tutoring Center by providing training and informative interviews to help tutors understand how to tutor students with disabilities.

The Interpreter Manager and Interpreter staff collaborates with multiple college-wide event committees providing guidance on making the event accessible and inclusive for all members of the SLCC community. These events include but are not limited to: Commencement, Convocation, SLCC 360, Employee Recognition, Tanner Forum and MLK Jr. Events.

The DRC case management style aids in student retention, completion, and assisting students in transferring to a university or joining the workforce. The DRC forms a rapport with students through regular interactions with their advisor and service providers. This rapport facilitates a connection with students that fosters trust and enables students to come to the DRC for help with questions or concerns about their college experience The DRC is then able to connect students to other SLCC departments and resources as needed.

In a study of students whose first degree-seeking term at SLCC was in 2014-15, the percentage of DRC students who graduated or transferred was 1.51% higher than the overall rate in the Student Support Services Eligible group (1st Generation/low income/or used DRC). The rate of DRC students who graduated or transferred was also .76% higher than the Student Support Services comparison group (students not in any of the noted eligible demographics).

The DRC provides innovative ways to foster inclusivity and equitable access for students in the SLCC community. When in-person courses moved to online learning formats in March 2020 due to COVID-19, the DRC staff worked to provide a way for Deaf students to have the ability to view the online broadcast courses and the ASL interpreter simultaneously. This complex issue required the DRC to collaborate with IT, eLearning, the Dean of Students, and the affected academic departments. Limitations with the WebEx conferencing software required the DRC to purchase Zoom licenses to accommodate courses using WebEx for lecture broadcasts. These limitations were a contributing factor in SLCC's transition from WebEx to Zoom.

The addition of a DRC Accessibility Advisor located in Veterans Services encourages students with disabilities who are also Veterans to seek out DRC services. Having a DRC advisor within Veterans Services helps these students overcome the stigma of identifying that they have a need for accommodations.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES

- There is a lack of awareness in the College about disability culture and services, and this perpetuates misinformation about the DRC.
- Retaining and hiring skilled staff due to pay rate and responsibility discrepancies
- There is not enough office space to support the amount of staff needed for optimal operation of the department.
- Students without learning disability documentation must be referred to external providers, creating extreme hardship for students without the funds or resources to get tested for this disability.
- Disability is often not considered in the diversity and inclusion initiatives within College departments.

OVERVIEW OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The DRC provides accommodations for students with disabilities taking SLCC classes at the State of Utah Prison.

The DRC co-hosts an annual Partnership Summit with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation—Utah Department of Workforce Services (USOR-UDWS) and disability services at neighboring higher education institutions. Each Rehabilitation office throughout Salt Lake County has a DRC Advisor assigned to meet with them and offer guidance and assistance to students using USOR-UDWS and disability services.

The DRC partners with the Salt Lake City Mayor's office to collaborate with Salt Lake County to promote accessible transportation practices.

The DRC also partners with groups such as Utah Learning Disabilities Association, Utah PTA Special Needs Committee, Utah AIDS Foundation, Department of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Alliance House by serving on committees and boards within those organizations.

The DRC participates in high school tabling events and both student and faculty presentations within the Granite School District, Salt Lake School District, Jordan School District, Canyon School District, Utah Virtual Academy, Real Salt Lake Academy, Spectrum Academy, American Preparatory Academy, Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind, Post High School and the High School Counselors Conference. The DRC also presents on disability services information and gives SLCC campus tours.

The DRC is a part of Utah Association of Higher Education and Disability (UT AHEAD), which is an organization comprised of disability service offices throughout Utah Schools of Higher Education (USHE). DRC staff continue to serve in leadership roles within this organization.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENTAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS

DRC students utilizing their approved accommodations are impacted daily by being able to have equal access in their courses. The DRC is an ally for the students with disabilities and the DRC advisors refer students to the following SLCC resources to further facilitate equal access: STEM Tutoring, Student Writing and Reading Center, ePortfolio labs, Online Success Tutors, the Center for Health and Counseling, Career Services, Academic Advising, and TRiO.

PROVIDE DATA FROM SURVEYS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

Surveys and assessments about DRC services have not been a top priority in the last five years. Survey responses to small department surveys do not get a good sampling for meaningful data. The department would like to work on improving strategies to create and receive current data about services and impact.

Each semester students with ASL interpreting are surveyed about the quality of the service. Typically, students report high satisfaction regarding interpreter services. Survey data is used to determine interpreter provider assignments for future student requests. It also is utilized to help shape interpreter professional development.

DRC Advisors have reported the following from their interactions with students:

- Just wanted to reach out and let you know you have been a huge help with my academic success! With your help and resources that you let me know we're available I have done really well this past semester! I really do appreciate it.
- As always you are amazing! SLCC needs more people like you that are dedicated at finding answers and not passing the buck.
- Thank you for your patience and astute follow up with me, this week has been hectic for me and asking for help is something I'm still battling with since separation. ....Thank you for your time, you're appreciated.
- Thank you for understanding. I don't often use an accommodation request but this was a rough week for me. Thank you for understanding and your kind words.
- Gratitude is not enough to express how much is the emotions that I have after passing my final exam with a 70% grade. This semester taught me so much new habits and may skills. Allow me to say thank you to you and to your staffs for been there for me in this thought journey. Now I am completing my AS science in Political Science and I am so happy now. It took more than usually taken for completion of an Associate Degree. Only me and the Lord's knows how far I came prior reaching to this point. I can only say a deep and sincere thanks notes to you from my soul. I admire your service and I so grateful for all you've helped me with.
- I have no words to explain how your care, help and support is precious, I'll work on my assignments, to finish them. Thank you so much for all you do.

HOW DO YOU INCORPORATE AN EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY LENS TO THE SERVICES YOU PROVIDE TO STUDENTS?

The mission of the DRC is to provide equal access to all classes, programs, and services at SLCC. Each member of the DRC works daily in support of this effort. Weekly All-Staff meetings, monthly Service Provider Meetings, and monthly Advisor meetings focus on how accommodations were provided and include intentional discussions on how to better serve the DRC population.

Collaboration with the UAC assists the DRC in moving the needle on broad accessibility, equity, and inclusivity projects that affect the College as a whole.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARIZE CONCLUSIONS RESULTING FROM THE SELF-STUDY

While the DRC has many strengths, there are many ways for the department to improve.

Hiring and retaining staff continues to be a challenge in creating a stable environment for students. The quality of work could be improved with less staff turnover as less time would be spent training new staff.

Technology changes as a rapid pace, and the DRC will need to continue exploring technology as it becomes available to provide the most effective service and accommodations.

Through effective stewardship of current funds, the DRC makes carefully considered decisions on purchases. Funding for competitive staff compensation and additional staff would optimize DRC student services and allow for more meaningful connections with students to aid in retention.

Continued collaboration with SLCC departments and community partners could provide a greater sense of awareness of the work the DRC does for students and bring more equity, diversity, and inclusion to SLCC.

More deliberate acquisition of feedback from students, faculty, and staff can assist the DRC with assessing and developing best practices in approaching and implementing accommodations and programs.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION ON CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Providing training for SLCC faculty and staff and collaboration with other SLCC departments would assist the DRC in increasing visibility and knowledge of the department. This will also aid in the completion of DRC goals that are dependent on support from other SLCC departments.

Compensation rates for staff in the DRC do not match the skills and abilities required by industry standards, resulting in difficulty in hiring and retaining staff. Advisor positions require advanced degrees and intimate knowledge of the ADA and functional limitations of disabilities as experienced in an educational setting. Service Providers need technical prowess to assess, analyze, and test assistive technology. Service Providers also demonstrate, train, and assist students in utilizing assistive technology used for their accommodations.

DESCRIBE POTENTIAL GOALS AND ACTION STEPS THE DEPARTMENT COULD TAKE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

DRC staff identified the following potential goals, with plans to create committees within the department for each one.

1. Develop additional training for faculty and staff on DRC resources
2. Create an American Sign Language (ASL)/Deaf services page on the DRC webpage
3. Develop DRC resources in Spanish/other languages
4. Create a Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Disability Cultural Center
5. DRC and Center for Health & Counseling (CHC) collaboration to offer learning disability testing and specific trainings about disabilities
6. Re-assess DRC name
7. Use Surveys and Assessments to better inform decisions about our goals and direction

In addition to these goals, the DRC would like to work on closing the gaps identified in the [Assessment of the Quality/Capacity of Staff, Work Environment, Physical and Technology Resources](#) section. The DRC would also like to conduct an analysis of staff compensation with Human Resources to aid in hiring and retaining staff.

WAYS DEPARTMENT CAN ADVANCE SLCC MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

The DRC has created the goals above in response to perceived deficits in services and day-to-day operations. By working toward implementing these goals and regularly assessing the needs of the College, the department, and students, the DRC will continue to work toward advancing the SLCC Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals.