

Executive Summary

The following report provides an overview of an independent evaluation of the resources, practices, and policies of the Carleton College Disability Services for Students. The report reflects the evaluators' review of the Disability Services documents and group discussions with campus constituents during the campus visit in February 2020. The Disability Services staff and leadership team within Student Life compiled documents for the review team that were able to give a history of disability services at Carleton College. The documents included a comprehensive history and a current snapshot of Disability Services services, as well as useful data on accommodation use, proctoring, and recent annual reports. It is clear from the data presented that the Disability Services office has undergone rapid growth in both the breadth of their work and the number of students being served over the past 4 years.

Observations

The most salient themes that emerged during the course of this review included:

Name, location, space, and staffing of Disability Services: The current name does not reflect the stated mission of the office and the current location is not fully accessible and does not meet the needs of the current staff and functions of the office.

Access to campus programs and services:

Increasing access to services – especially for first-generation, low-income students was a concern raised by students and faculty.

Education and outreach to campus (students, faculty and staff): Multiple campus constituents wish to see Disability Services broaden outreach and communication regarding the accommodation process, and to formalize and track accommodations. Faculty are eager to engage with Disability Services in the interactive process of determining the accommodations that will remove barriers, while not altering the essential components of the courses they teach. They are also interested in engaging with others across the college to determine how to best support students with disabilities participating in Off-Campus Studies (OCS) programs.

Recommendations

- Consider renaming the office to include the concept of accessibility support.
- Provide accessible space for staff offices, student workers (including peer mentors and Carleton Peer Academic Support), test administration, and community building.
- The College should consider increasing the staff within the office, with the focus on increasing access through assistive technology. The addition of one staff member would also help to centralize specific supports for students with disabilities within Disability Services.
- Increase access for testing for First-Generation/Low-Income students to determine potential eligibility for accommodations.
 - coordinate with state vocational rehabilitation services,
 - continue to develop community resources which may be available on a sliding scale, and
 - Increase funding from the institution to support students who would otherwise not have access.

- Create campus access plan (physical and digital) and share with the community.
- Implement a Barrier Report Form so that issues related to access can be reported to the appropriate people and addressed more readily.
- Educate the campus community regarding the breadth of experiences represented under the umbrella of disability and address stigma—particularly as it relates to non-apparent or episodic disabilities.