



## Disabled Student Programs & Services

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
*Jack Scott, Chancellor*

Prepared by the Student Services and Special Programs Division  
and the Office of Communications

*January 29, 2010*



*“Empowering Community Colleges through  
Leadership, Advocacy, and Support”*

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
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January 29, 2010

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I am pleased to present to you the Chancellor's Office report on Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS). This report covers July 2007 through September 2009. During this time, DSPS programs throughout the California Community Colleges served 86,651 students in 2007-08 and 94,945 students in 2008-09.

Included in this report are measurable outcomes for students with disabilities as compared with their nondisabled peers, an analysis of staff and student perceptions of program effectiveness and data on the implementation of accessibility requirements of Section 794 of Title 29 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

If you or your staff have questions, please feel free to contact Morgan Lynn, executive vice chancellor for programs, at (916) 445-1774 or [mlynn@cccco.edu](mailto:mlynn@cccco.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jack Scott'.

Jack Scott, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

## **Disabled Student Programs and Services:** **Executive Summary**

The California Community Colleges serve more than 2.9 million students and is the largest system of higher education in the nation. The state's 110 community colleges are charged with providing workforce training, basic skills education and preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions.

Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) provide support services and educational accommodations to students with disabilities so that they can have full and equal access to the community college experience. In addition, many colleges provide specialized instruction as part of their DSPS program.

Examples of these services include: test-proctoring; assessment for learning disabilities; specialized counseling; interpreter or captioning services for hearing-impaired or deaf students; mobility assistance; note-taker services; reader services; speech services; transcription services; on-campus transportation; specialized tutoring; access to adaptive equipment; job development/placement; registration assistance; and special parking and specialized instruction. DSPS served 86,651 students during the 2007-08 academic year and 94,945 students during the 2008-09 academic year, with an allocation of \$115 million provided during each of these years.

This report is written in response to Education Code section 67312(b), which requires the board of governors to report every two years to the Governor, the education policy committees of the Legislature, and the California Postsecondary Education Commission on its system for evaluating "state-funded programs and services for disabled students on each campus at least every five years." Education Code section 67312(a)(4) states, "At a minimum, these systems shall provide for the gathering of outcome data, staff and student perceptions of program effectiveness, and data on the implementation of the program and physical accessibility requirements of Section 794 of Title 29 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973."

The information presented in this report comes from two sources: compiled Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems annual data reports, submitted by all community colleges, and the coordinated student services programmatic site reviews. The latter was developed by the Chancellor's Office, in consultation with the executive board of the Chief Student Services Officers Association. The site visit model included a self evaluation report completed by the college in advance of an onsite visit of the college. The site visit teams conducted their reviews on campus for two days, and the teams were generally composed of: a team leader, who was normally a chief student services officer; a Chancellor's Office representative; and a team of peer experts

each assigned to review one of the student service programs included in this model, including DSPS. The intent of the review was to evaluate program effectiveness, the integration of services of those programs reviewed, and to assist in the preparation for accreditation.

The reviews were conducted in academic years 2007-08 and 2008-09 at a total of 38 of the 110 community colleges. These 38 colleges were chosen as cohorts of colleges who were scheduled for their accreditation review two years following the Chancellor's Office visits. In addition, the report includes a campus-by-campus review of the enrollment, retention, transition and graduation rates of community college students receiving services through DSPS. This data was collected from all 110 colleges and is presented in the report in system wide aggregated summaries.

Additionally, as required by statute, campus by campus outcome data will be found on the website for the California Community College system by going to the link posted at: [www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/Divisions/StudentServices/DSPS/tabid/616/Default.aspx](http://www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/Divisions/StudentServices/DSPS/tabid/616/Default.aspx)

## **Disabled Student Programs and Services:** **Methodology for Data Collection**

Education Code 67312 requires this report to include information on four key areas:

- 1) The system for evaluating state-funded programs and services for disabled students on each campus;
- 2) Outcome data;
- 3) Staff and student perceptions of program effectiveness; and
- 4) Implementation of the program and physical accessibility requirements of Section 794 of Title 29 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The data attained and analyzed to complete the report for the second element listed above (Outcome Data), came from compiled Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Annual Data Reports that were submitted by all 110 Community Colleges. Please note that in the reporting areas of Degree and Certificate Attainment and on Transfer, a five-year cohort study from the Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems data was analyzed.

The information necessary to report on the remaining three elements (evaluating state-funded programs, staff and student perceptions, and program and physical access requirements) came from 38 site visits that were conducted by the Chancellor's Office, as described in the Introduction of this report.

## **Disabled Student Programs and Services:**

### **Key Findings**

The data compiled for this report show that while students with disabilities served by DSPS are underrepresented in the college population in comparison to their nondisabled peers, they:

- Take both credit and noncredit courses at greater rates;
- Show greater persistence and essentially the same retention level, (with the notable exceptions of basic skills and workforce preparation classes); and
- Are successful at both degree and certificate attainment at a substantially higher rate.

However, despite these positive indicators, DSPS students were substantially less likely to be transfer directed (completed transfer level math and English) than their nondisabled peers. And, despite the fact they were more transfer-prepared (completed 60 CSU or CSU transferrable units), they were far less likely to actually transfer to a four-year institution.

Staff and student perceptions of program effectiveness reveal:

- Staff and students share a common perception that DSPS is effective at assisting students in overcoming barriers posed by their disabilities.
- Students shared that specific DSPS tutoring was beneficial.
- Students requested that confidentiality during counseling be improved.
- Students requested that testing facilities have readily available distraction-free testing hours for students with learning disabilities and sufficient proctored testing hours available.
- Students requested that DSPS services be provided at off-site satellite locations.
- Staff perceives appreciation by their administrators and students, and expressed high job satisfaction.
- Staff indicated that their outreach to faculty has resulted in much better collaboration between the academic and student services divisions.

With regard to the Implementation of the Program and Physical Accessibility Requirements of Section 794 of Title 29 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, colleges continue to request information and guidance on making their campuses fully accessible from architectural, communications and programmatic perspectives. Data uncovered during the site reviews indicated continuing access issues related to physical accessibility and architectural access, and the need for additional technical assistance related to the following: the roles and responsibilities of the Section 504/ADA Coordinator; emergency evacuation policies and procedures; alternative service access for students who choose not to use DSPS; Title IX compliance; faculty

awareness; academic accommodations and course substitution policies and procedures; test accommodations; timely access to services; policies and procedures related to suspension of services; sign language interpreters and real time captioners; alternate media including captioning; general assistive technology; campus-wide access to computers; accessible distance education; and Section 508 policies and procedures.

**Outcome Data including: Enrollment, Retention, Transition and Graduation**

	<b>Total Enrollment</b>			
	FY 2008-09		FY 2007-08	
	# of Students	% of Population	# of Students	% of Population
DSPS Students	94,945	3.41%	86,651	3.58%
Non-DSPS Students	2,691,973	96.59%	2,334,470	96.42%
All Students	2,786,918	100.00%	2,421,121	100.00%

Students with disabilities decreased from 3.6 to 3.4 percent from 2007-08 to 2008-09. They remain underrepresented in the California Community Colleges student population when compared to U.S. Census data taken from the 2004 Disability Status Reports by Cornell University, U.S. Census Bureau’s population estimates program, which shows California’s disability rate (ages 16 to 64) at approximately 10 percent. While some students with disabilities enrolled in California Community Colleges may not request services from DSPS, and thus not be reflected in this enrollment data, this alone is not likely to account for the significant degree of under-representation. DSPS staff at the colleges reports that funding constraints affecting staff resources negatively impact both their ability to conduct outreach efforts and to serve the current population of DSPS students. Nevertheless, DSPS programs do maintain a number of collaborative relationships within existing staffing and service constraints, which support ongoing referrals of new students.

### Enrollment in Credit Classes

	FY 2008-09		FY 2007-08	
	# of Students	% of Population	# of Students	% of Population
DSPS Students	80,878	3.84%	75,112	3.80%
Non-DSPS Students	2,023,509	96.16%	1,901,399	96.20%
All Students	2,104,387	100.00%	1,976,511	100.00%

Students served by DSPS are represented at slightly higher rates in credit enrollment compared to their representation in the entire student population. While these students comprised 3.6 percent in 2007-08 and 3.4 percent in 2008-09 of the total student population in the California Community Colleges, DSPS students made up 3.8 percent of students enrolled in credit classes during these school years.

### Credit Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES)

	FY 2008-09		FY 2007-08	
	# of Students	% of Population	# of Students	% of Population
DSPS Students	55,227	4.95%	49,377	4.88%
Non-DSPS Students	1,059,354	95.05%	961,848	95.12%
All Students	1,114,581	100.00%	1,011,225	100.00%

In addition, students served by DSPS represented a substantially higher proportion of credit full-time equivalent students than their representation in the student population. While they represented 3.5 percent of the California Community Colleges student population from 2007-2009, they represented 4.9 percent of the credit full-time equivalent students. This may be accounted for by the reception of benefits, which support part or all of the living expenses, enabling them to enroll in additional college units. Additionally, some are Department of Rehabilitation consumers and, as such, are required to take a full course load unless they cannot do so because of a disability-related reason.

### Enrollment in Noncredit Classes

	FY 2008-09		FY 2007-08	
	# of Students	% of Population	# of Students	% of Population
DSPS Students	35,981	6.57%	37,057	4.87%
Non-DSPS Students	511,648	93.43%	723,733	95.13%
All Students	547,629	100.00%	760,790	100.00%

DSPS students were also over-represented in noncredit classes compared to their overall representation in the California Community Colleges, and this trend increased between 2007-08 to 2008-09. DSPS noncredit enrollment decreased only slightly while non-DSPS students' enrollment in noncredit classes decreased markedly. This may be because some students with developmental disabilities or acquired brain injuries, as well as senior citizens, may find that noncredit courses better meet their educational needs. In response, colleges offer noncredit classes and a wide range of courses for them. Other DSPS students, including veterans and those returning to college after acquiring a disability, may need to review basic skills material and use noncredit education as a way to enter the higher educational system.

### Noncredit FTES

	FY 2008-09		FY 2007-08	
	# of Students	% of Population	# of Students	% of Population
DSPS Students	7,356	12.81%	7,701	9.22%
Non-DSPS Students	50,059	87.19%	75,839	90.78%
All Students	57,415	100.00%	83,540	100.00%

In accordance with their increased enrollment in noncredit classes, DSPS students represented a significantly higher percentage of the noncredit full-time equivalent students for 2007-2009. While they represented 3.5 percent of the student population, they increased from 9.2 to 12.8 percent of the noncredit full-time equivalent students. The significant amount of noncredit full-time equivalent students for DSPS students may be accounted for by colleges offering multiple classes per week, designed to meet the needs of designated groups of DSPS students.

**Retention and Persistence**  
Enrolled in Fall 2007/2008 to Spring 2008/2009

	FY 2008-09		
	# Persisted (Spring)	# Enrolled (Fall)	%Persisted
DSPS Students	62,659	77,187	81.18%
Non-DSPS Students	1,140,561	1,742,149	65.47%
All Students	1,203,220	1,819,336	66.14%

  

	FY 2007-08		
	# Persisted (Spring)	# Enrolled (Fall)	%Persisted
DSPS Students	58,689	72,777	80.64%
Non-DSPS Students	1,070,358	1,652,323	64.78%
All Students	1,129,047	1,725,100	65.45%

Students served by DSPS showed significantly greater persistence from fall to spring than other students. This data shows that, given appropriate support services and specialized counseling, students with disabilities can do well and, in fact, excel in staying in school at the community college level.

### Retention Completed vs. Attempted Enrollments

	FY 2008-09		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	355,286	419,013	84.79%
Non-DSPS Students	7,596,908	8,746,319	86.86%
All Students	7,952,194	9,165,332	86.76%

	FY 2007-08		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	322,010	383,618	83.94%
Non-DSPS Students	6,898,499	8,044,513	85.75%
All Students	7,220,509	8,428,131	85.67%

Students with disabilities were slightly less successful in their retention level as their peers without disabilities. Students with disabilities completed units attempted about two percent less often as students without disabilities.

### Retention for Degree Applicable Courses Completed vs. Attempted Degree Applicable Enrollments

	FY 2008-09		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	355,286	419,013	84.79%
Non-DSPS Students	7,596,908	8,746,319	86.86%
All Students	7,952,194	9,165,332	86.76%

	FY 2007-08		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	322,010	383,618	83.94%
Non-DSPS Students	6898,499	8,746,319	85.75%
All Students	7,220,509	8,428,131	85.67%

DSPS students completed the degree applicable courses they enrolled in at somewhat lower frequency than did their non-disabled peers. This data may reflect increased challenges, such as finding and utilizing instructional strategies in math and English courses. It may also reflect the need to seek additional instructional strategies to address these barriers to course and degree completion.

**Retention for Basic Skills Courses  
Completed vs. Attempted Basic Skills Class Enrollments**

	FY 2008-09		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	18,167	49,797	36.48%
Non-DSPS Students	217,967	459,020	47.49%
All Students	236,134	508,817	46.41%

  

	FY 2007-08		
	# Completed	# Attempted	% Completed
DSPS Students	15,923	45,258	35.18%
Non-DSPS Students	190,124	413,335	46.00%
All Students	206,047	458,593	44.93%

DSPS students completed approximately 11 percent less of the basic skills classes they attempted compared to non-DSPS students. Combinations of special classes (i.e. those designed for students with disabilities) and basic skills classes are increasing, perhaps to address this need. Universal Learning Design, a method of teaching that uses techniques originally designed to address the needs of learning disabled, as well as non-disabled, is being used in basic skills classes to increase the success rate.

### Retention in Workforce Development Courses

	FY 2008-09		
	# Completed	# Attempted	%Completed
DSPS Students	49,133	73,699	66.67%
Non-DSPS Students	1,141,079	1,574,727	72.46%
All Students	1,190,212	1,648,426	72.20%

  

	FY 2007-08		
	# Completed	# Attempted	%Completed
DSPS Students	44,598	67,541	66.03%
Non-DSPS Students	1,046,715	1,453,063	72.04%
All Students	1,091,313	1,520,604	71.77%

Students served by DSPS had approximately six percent less retention in workforce development courses than their peers without disabilities. Given the availability of career technical education, this needs to be further examined so strategies can be recommended to improve their retention.

### Degree and Certificate Attainment

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	1,755	15,846	11.08%	1,859	17,921	10.37%
Non-DSPS Students	30,672	374,276	8.20%	33,971	474,831	7.15%
All Students	32,427	390,122	8.31%	35,830	492,752	7.27%

### Degree Attainment

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	653	15,846	4.13%	668	17,921	3.72%
Non-DSPS Students	18,304	374,276	4.9%	20,315	474,831	4.27%
All Students	18,957	390,122	4.86%	20,983	492,752	4.26%

### Certificate Attainment

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	1,102	15,846	6.95%	1,191	17,921	6.65%
Non-DSPS Students	12,368	374,276	3.30%	13,656	474,831	2.88%
All Students	13,470	390,122	3.45%	14,847	492,752	3.01%

The five-year cohort of students showed that DSPS students were far more successful at both degree and certificate attainment than their nondisabled peers. This encouraging outcome speaks to the effectiveness of DSPS programs and services in assisting students with disabilities to attain a California Community Colleges degree, and demonstrates that they possess the motivation and ability to be successful in the college environment with appropriate supports and accommodations.

**Transfer Directed  
(Completed both transfer level math and English)**

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	1,604	15,846	10.12%	1,733	17,921	9.67%
Non-DSPS Students	47,081	374,276	12.58%	52,665	474,831	11.09%
All Students	48,685	390,122	12.48%	54,398	492,752	11.04%

**Transfer Prepared  
(Completed 60 CSU or UC transferable units)**

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	2,269	15,846	14.32%	2,368	17,921	13.21%
Non-DSPS Students	44,959	374,276	12.01%	48,652	474,831	10.25%
All Students	47,228	390,122	12.11%	51,020	492,752	10.35%

### Transfers to Four-Year Colleges

	FY 2008-09			FY 2007-08		
	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed	# of Students	Total Cohort	% Completed
DSPS Students	1,882	15,846	11.88%	2,413	17,921	13.46%
Non-DSPS Students	75,891	374,276	20.28%	109,001	474,831	22.96%
All Students	77,773	390,122	19.94%	111,414	492,752	22.61%

DSPS students were less likely to be transfer directed than their nondisabled peers (9.67 to 11.09 percent in 2007-08 and 10.12 to 12.58 percent in 2008-09). Despite being less transfer directed, a higher percentage were transfer prepared (13.21 to 10.25 percent in 2007-08 and 14.32 to 12.01 percent in 2008-09). However, they were approximately nine percent less likely to actually transfer to a four-year institution than their peers without disabilities. This discovery presents significant questions. Since many high-demand, high-skill occupations require a baccalaureate degree and beyond, and given the significant unemployment and underemployment of persons with disabilities, the reasons for fewer transfer directed students and fewer actual transfers need further study. Discussions need to occur within the California Community College system and with the California State University and University of California systems to improve the transfer rates of students with disabilities.

## **Findings of State-Funded Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities**

Eighteen colleges were reviewed during the 2007/08 academic year: Allan Hancock, American River, Chabot, Chaffey, Citrus, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake, Glendale, Las Positas, Mira Costa, Monterey Peninsula, Napa Valley, Sacramento City, Santa Barbara City, Santa Monica, College of the Siskiyous, Southwestern, and Taft.

Twenty colleges were reviewed during the 2008/09 academic year: Antelope Valley, Cypress, College of the Desert, Evergreen Valley, Fullerton, Irvine Valley, College of Marin, Merced, Moorpark, Mount San Antonio, Oxnard, Saddleback, San Diego City, San Diego Mesa, San Diego Miramar, San Jose City, Ventura, Victor Valley, West Hills Coalinga, and West Hills Lemoore.

The colleges reviewed struggle with how to develop and describe measurable student learning outcomes, address the high demand for learning disability assessment, preserve adapted physical education's role in assisting academic achievement, appropriately serve developmentally delayed learners, maintain student documentation and records in compliance with all applicable regulations and statute, sufficiently staff the DSPS coordinator position, contribute college effort, and accurately and efficiently utilize management information system tracking and data management services.

Common themes that emerged from these reviews pertained to the following issues:

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

College staff, in general, and DSPS, in particular, are struggling with how to develop and describe measurable Student Learning Outcomes that meet the intent of the 2004 revised guidelines published by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The Chancellor's Office site review teams helped all the colleges learn more about how to develop meaningful and relevant student learning outcomes. DSPS staff has a unique opportunity to see their students grow due to regular contact over a period of years, as opposed to an instructor who may only see a student for a semester or two. As a result, the colleges were encouraged to develop ways to define and measure this growth.

## Learning Disabilities Assessment and Testing

Colleges reported several issues related to serving students with learning disabilities, and the site review teams provided technical assistance and possible solutions:

- Issue: How best to improve a learning disability program's collaboration with the main DSPS program, in situations where the two programs are operated separately on campus.
- Conclusion: The site review teams recommended that a plan be developed to combine these programs. The consolidation would eliminate the ambiguity and duplication of effort that currently exists in such separate models.
- Issue: Colleges sought assistance with how best to provide learning disability assessment and services while coping with staff retirements, hiring freezes, and other limited resource issues.
- Conclusion: The site review teams recommended a more timely and efficient eligibility process for learning disability students by using qualified, part-time and/or retired staff.
- Issue: Colleges were utilizing all current versions of the appropriate assessment tests and adhering to the Chancellor's Office Learning Disability Eligibility and Services Model, but some were not using the computerized scoring and eligibility software and system that is maintained by the Chancellor's Office that most other colleges use.
- Conclusion: As a result of the site visit, the appropriate software was installed and configured and staff was trained in proper procedures for its use.

At some colleges, staff utilized software programs that could be used in a writing class, as well as techniques for developing students' reading comprehension and their ability to organize and develop compositions across academic disciplines.

## Adapted Physical Education

Colleges reported several issues related to successfully serving students with disabilities in adapted physical education programs and the site review teams provided technical assistance and possible solutions:

- Issue: One college reviewed wished to start an adapted physical education program, but found that little information was available on starting new programs.
- Conclusion: The benefits versus the disadvantages of starting a program at the college were discussed. The discussion included the possible availability of community resources to address the need for ongoing exercise, with the college possibly developing an adapted health/disability management class to introduce the concept of health and exercise to students with disabilities.
- Issue: Two colleges were looking for ways to improve their adapted physical education programs.
- Conclusion: The site review team recommended some creative options, including instituting a curriculum that directly supports the academic environment by incorporating stress management. Another recommendation was to augment the curriculum with perceptual motor classes and classes that would supplement learning disability efforts, such as left-right discrimination, mid-line issues and numbers sequencing.

## Developmentally Delayed Learners

Colleges reported issues related to successfully serving students with developmental or intellectual disabilities (referred to as *developmentally delayed learners* in title 5) and the site review teams provided technical assistance and possible solutions:

- Issue: Identifying the role of higher education in serving developmentally delayed learners and to define and articulate the minimum accommodations required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and state law.
- Conclusion: Samples of policies and procedures for serving developmentally delayed learners, examples of “readiness criteria”, and Taft College’s integration program were shared for use. The site review teams addressed the role of the colleges in outreach to high schools and in transition classes. Ideas for working with local agencies to find alternative avenues and funds to support developmentally delayed learners were explored. College staff were also provided with information on a federal grant focused on leadership and curriculum development.

## **Student Documentation and Records**

Questions covered during the visits addressed third-party medical verification of disability; length of time student records should be kept; purging files and what critical information should be retained; intake forms in Spanish and other languages; recording of contacts for students receiving DSPS services, including special instruction and those who drop classes before census; reconciling Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems data before the end of the fiscal year, and developing and utilizing a secure electronic record-keeping system at multiple campuses/satellites.

## **Staffing**

Although the Chancellor's Office does not have definitive data on this issue, it appears that of the 110 colleges, up to two-thirds have full-time administrative positions; the other third are faculty positions with the coordinator taking on the role of counselor, learning disabilities specialist or instructor. Team members described their own experiences and provided names of DSPS coordinators who are successfully working across faculty/student service lines. Job descriptions for both faculty and administrative DSPS coordinator positions were also provided by the site review teams.

## **College Effort**

Colleges providing a portion of general funds to assist in supporting the DSPS program is defined as *college effort* in the DSPS allocation formula. The provision of college effort is not required in the education code but additional dollars may be required if the DSPS allocation is not sufficient. While DSPS programs can also generate additional income through special class revenue, colleges that do not offer such courses also report that they lack the faculty and staff resources to add special classes that will bring additional income to their programs.

## **Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Tracking and Data Management**

Many colleges requested recommendations pertaining to their management information systems tracking and data management. Site review team members at both colleges recommended staff visit colleges using different methods of record-keeping and data monitoring.

## **Staff and Student Perceptions of Program Effectiveness**

### **Shared Perceptions**

- Staff and students share a common perception that DSPS is effective at assisting students in overcoming barriers posed by their disabilities. This satisfaction is especially high at colleges where staff and students felt that staffing was adequate.
- Students and staff also expressed their belief in a close relationship between students, staff, college and community, as demonstrated by a quote from one site visit report in which they spoke of the “interwoven relationships and the team/family culture.”

### **Student Commendations**

- Students reported that staff are experienced and empathetic, and provide vital assistance.
- Students felt that tutoring, when available, is particularly helpful. In spite of this, many colleges reviewed provide no specific DSPS tutoring apart from the general academic tutoring available to all students.

### **Student Recommendations**

- Students recommended sufficient confidentiality in areas where they participate in DSPS counseling, due to crowded cubicles with partial walls.
- Students recommended that testing facilities have readily available testing hours with distraction-free testing areas, for students with learning disabilities who require that accommodation.
- Students recommended colleges have sufficient hours available for test proctoring services for students with learning disabilities who may require that accommodation.
- Students recommended that sufficient services be provided at off-site satellite locations so they would not be required to go to the main campus to receive assessment and counseling.

### **Staff Commendations**

- Staff felt appreciated by their administrators and students, expressed a great deal of job satisfaction, and feel that DSPS works well in serving students.
- Staff outreach to faculty has resulted in much better collaboration between the academic and student services divisions.

## **Staff Recommendations**

- Staff recommended more training in mental health issues and in using new management information systems such as Banner.
- DSPS administrators recommended training in specific budget issues, such as how special class full-time equivalent students and in how *Access to Print* funds are used.
- Staff recommended more training or direction in the process of combining student services service areas. Concerns were expressed over student confidentiality in newly combined student services service areas that are becoming more common, as colleges struggle to combine staff functions and facilitate coordination between student services programs that serve many of the same students.

## **Implementation of the Program and Physical Accessibility Requirements of Section 794 of Title 29 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

While colleges have made great strides in meeting the program and physical accessibility requirements of Section 794 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, known as Section 504, as well as the subsequent passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, work remains to be done on campuses. Section 504 is known as the first comprehensive civil rights legislation providing equal access to programs and services for persons with disabilities. It requires all recipients of federal financial assistance, which includes colleges and universities, to undertake a variety of actions to ensure that its policies, programs, and services are accessible to and usable by eligible persons with disabilities.

Areas of need include:

### **Physical Accessibility and Architectural Access**

Students with disabilities continue to face architectural barriers on campus. In most cases, this is due to the age of the campuses, some of which were built before barrier removal legislation was in place or when the legal requirements were less stringent. Colleges visited were in the process of erecting new buildings, causing issues related to temporary barriers, additional campus vehicles and re-routed walkways. Districts have been making progress establishing ADA Barrier Removal Plans since the 1990's. However, there still remain challenges in some areas to access. As part of the local assistance facilities related program called *Physical Plant and Instructional Support*, Architectural Barrier Removal is an approved state allocation of funds including a 50/50 match with district funds. Unfortunately, due to budgetary cuts in funding, the full program went unfunded in 2009-10.

In order to address remaining architectural barriers on campus, the site review teams suggested the use of a small advisory group, consisting of facilities personnel, DSPS staff, students with disabilities and other interested personnel. The group would survey all campus buildings, access routes and parking lots, noting where barriers exist. Once a list has been generated, it should be prioritized in connection with the Business Office, including plans and completion dates for all identified barriers. It was also recommended that this process be repeated on an annual/bi-annual basis, and whenever remodeling or new building is initiated.

Several colleges had received or were about to receive bond funds for capital improvements. With over \$22 billion in local bond funds and \$1.5 billion in state funds from Proposition 1D, there are many ongoing construction projects on campuses, some of which will cause temporary challenges. All major construction projects require the Division of the State Architect's review of accessibility during and after construction. So, all of the buildings renovated or replaced with new buildings will be compliant with ADA requirements upon completion.

### **Clarity on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Section 504/ADA Coordinator**

The site review teams provided technical assistance with the implementation of their ADA/504 policy and clarification of the job duties of the ADA/504 Coordinator. They also requested clarification on the issue of whose responsibility it is to pay for needed accommodations for employees with disabilities, students who choose not to use the DSPS program, and special events requiring public accommodations. The site review teams provided guidance in each of those areas.

### **Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures**

The site review teams referred colleges to the National Incidence Training Initiative, provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to ensure DSPS is represented on relevant committees and all evacuation procedures encompass the needs of students with disabilities.

## **Faculty Awareness**

A common issue on virtually every campus is trying to find creative ways to educate faculty, particularly adjunct faculty, about students with disabilities. Their willingness to implement accommodations is key to removing educational barriers to students with disabilities. Specifically, faculty required help to understand:

- Educational limitations and the various accommodations/auxiliary aids and devices that may be used in the classroom.
- The need to ensure that materials used in class are accessible.
- Testing accommodations - how to build a level of trust that testing will be proctored appropriately.
- Ways they might identify students with possible disabilities.
- Ways to make appropriate referrals to DSPS.
- The need to make their websites and all distance education courses accessible.

Faculty handbooks, faculty training workshops, disability awareness events, and on-line communiqués were all recommended as ways to address these issues.

## **Academic Accommodations/Course Substitution Policies & Procedures**

Colleges are required to have policies and procedures in place to respond in a timely manner to accommodation requests involving academic adjustments and disputes as stipulated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and as further specified in DSPS' title 5 Implementing Guidelines, Section 56027. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, allows for accommodations in academic programs for the purpose of avoiding discrimination based on disability. Among the accommodations that are allowed is “. . . the substitution of specific courses required.”

Given the inevitability of requests on course requirements, grades, and individual accommodations, colleges were urged by the site review teams to adopt such a policy as soon as possible to avoid the potential legal action that could follow in the absence of such a policy.

## **Test Accommodations**

The site review teams informed the colleges that their policy on cheating covered students with disabilities, and that when DSPS is providing test proctoring services for students who require such an accommodation, they should utilize the college-wide procedures for dealing with students who have been found cheating.

## **Timely Access to Services**

The teams encouraged the implementation of recent decisions to accept students on a conditional basis by serving them under the “Other Disability” category, if documentation that is less than five years old could be provided, and followed up by updated learning disabilities assessments as time permits. The site review teams also discussed strategies for the provision of cost-effective ways to provide services for evening, weekend, and summer classes.

## **Policies and Procedures – Suspension of Services**

The site review teams recommended to colleges that clear policy statements and procedures be followed regarding grounds for termination, and that the approved process be followed, including student rights for due process and appeal. The policy and procedures should be implemented in a manner that allows students to become aware of them prior to their enrollment date.

## **Sign Language Interpreters and Real Time Captioners**

The cost and availability of qualified sign language interpreters for deaf and hearing impaired students continues to be an issue for many colleges. Finding and keeping interpreters is a shared concern of many colleges in rural or remote areas. The site review teams offered recommendations regarding pay scales, hourly minimums, prep time pay, no-show policies, provision of parking and mileage reimbursement, training new interpreters through a mentoring program, effective use of real-time captioning and evaluation of interpreter skills.

## **Alternate Media**

Colleges expressed some concerns related to alternate media production, such as Braille and Electronic Text (E-text). Colleges reported increasing sophistication of students about technology options that are available and various alternate formats of print and non-print forms of instruction. The site review teams provided various sample alternate media policies to the colleges seeking assistance with this issue.

## **General Assistive Technology and Campus-Wide Access to Computers**

The site review teams suggested that a technology plan be implemented that provides an adequate number of accessible workstations available for use by students with disabilities. The teams also suggested identifying the best ways to ensure universal computer access. One suggestion was to place all adaptive software on a server.

As all lab computers are networked, they would therefore be available for use by any student with a disability. Certainly, networking provides a more universal approach to accessibility, however it may also present issues related to licensing and compatibility. Technical assistance from the High Tech Center Training Unit was also useful in developing strategies to ensure campus-wide technology access.

## **Distance Education**

The site reviews included an overview of legal requirements for accessibility, advantages created by improving accessibility, and the importance of content preparation outside of the framework of online learning management systems, such as WebCT. Barriers identified included: how to achieve accessibility for students using various assistive technologies; and strategies for improving the capability for offering extended time for on-line quizzes. Utilizing its Program and Accountability and Development Services funds, the Chancellor's Office hired the Galvin Group to work collaboratively with the HTCTU at De Anza College to offer faculty WebCT training at two colleges.

The site review teams provided guidance to the colleges regarding on-line course content, emphasizing that screen readers function most effectively in a web environment, so course material saved as HTML will be most accessible. Computer software features that allow accessible course structure were demonstrated and more complex style sheets were described.

## **Section 508 Policies and Procedures**

Twelve colleges requested assistance with the development of comprehensive Section 508 policy and procedures. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act was enacted by Congress in 1998 to require federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. The law applies to all federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508, agencies must give employees with disabilities and members of the public with disabilities, access to information that is comparable to the access available to others. In 2002, California amended Government Code Section 11135 et. seq. to make the requirements of Section 508 applicable to public entities in California.

The main challenge for each DSPS program was getting the campus at large involved in the initiation, development, and ongoing monitoring of compliance with the accessibility requirements of Section 508. Site review team members described the initiation and ongoing activities of the interdisciplinary task forces on their own campuses.

## **Disabled Student Programs and Services:**

### **Conclusion**

2004 U.S. Census data indicates that approximately 10 percent of adults in California have a disability. However, only 3.5 percent of those students who enroll in California community colleges have a disability. A comparison of 2007/08 to 2008/09 data of DSPS students highlights these facts:

- Non-credit class enrollment showed gains, 4.87 percent to 6.57 percent.
- Full-time equivalent students increased, 9.22 percent to 12.81 percent, perhaps due to increased class offerings.

Comparing data of DSPS students and non-disabled peers, we learn that:

- DSPS students showed an 81.18 percent persistence rate compared to 65.47 percent, and were only 2 percent less successful in completing units attempted.
- DSPS students were more likely to complete degree and certificate goals, 10.37 percent to 7.15 percent.

The report also sheds light on what warrants further research:

- DSPS students have difficulty compared with their nondisabled peers in completing both workforce development programs, 66.67 percent vs. 72.46 percent, and basic skills classes, 36 percent vs. 47.49 percent.
- Most troubling, although they are better transfer prepared (13.21 percent vs. 10.25 percent), is that they actually transfer at a nine percent lower rate to four-year postsecondary institutions.

Students with disabilities served by DSPS programs remain underrepresented in the California Community College population when compared to their incidence in the general population. A significant increase in students to be served by DSPS will require additional resources for the program. That it is worth the effort is evidenced by the fact that DSPS helps students earn certificates and degrees at higher rates than their non-disabled peers, as outlined in the data presented in this report. In most other outcome measures students with disabilities that are served by DSPS are performing as well and sometimes better than their peers without disabilities.

This report provides a timely review of the many program, policy, and fiscal challenges facing DSPS programs. Through site reviews, college peer support, Chancellor’s Office technical assistance and training, and specialized consultation and support through targeted grants, we shall continue to assist colleges in making progress with meeting the needs of their students with disabilities.

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