Mission

The Center for Disability Services is dedicated to students with disabilities by providing the opportunity for success and equal access at the University of Utah. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations as outlined by Federal and State law. We also strive to create an inclusive, safe and respectful environment. By promoting awareness, knowledge and equity, we aspire to impact positive change within individuals and the campus community.

Values

Access
Equity
Inclusion
Diversity
Respect
Knowledge
Independence
Self-Advocacy
Leading Edge Technology

Strategic Objectives

1. Provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations to eligible students.

Goals and Actions:

a. Update and revise student handbook, website, and printed materials on a regular basis to provide accurate and effective information.
b. Conduct regular case management meetings to review and discuss student cases, policies, and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations.
c. Keep current regarding changes to laws and utilize best practices.
d. Develop effective working relationships with students, faculty, staff, and departments to facilitate implementation of accommodations.
e. Determine eligibility and deliver accommodations to students in a consistent, yet individualized, manner.
f. Work collaboratively with students and faculty to identify essential elements and technical standards in the academic environment.
2. **Develop students as a whole by providing services and resources that encourage self-advocacy, independence, wellness, knowledge, and balance.**

**Goals and Actions:**

- a. Research and identify campus and community resources that are available to our students and encourage their use.
- b. Guide students in developing independence and self-advocacy skills.
- c. Offer programs that encourage social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual health and wellness.
- d. Work collaboratively with other campus offices (i.e. University Counseling Center, Women’s Resource Center, Career Services, etc.) in offering support services to our students.
- e. Encourage students to establish a short and long term vision related both to their education and their future.

3. **Promote a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for students with disabilities through outreach, education, and increasing awareness.**

**Goals and Actions:**

- a. Provide a safe, welcoming and accessible environment within our office.
- b. Educate and train CDS staff members about working with diverse, underserved, and/or underrepresented populations (i.e. Veterans, LGBT, different ethnic backgrounds, etc.).
- c. Create effective marketing tools for our office that would be informative, sensitive, respectful, and inclusive.
- d. Collaborate with Human Resources to provide ongoing training and resources to department, faculty, and staff on working with students with disabilities.
- e. Partner with other offices (e.g. Student Recruitment, Orientation, etc.) in designing and adapting programs that foster and communicate an open and accessible campus community.
- f. Educate the campus community through panels and presentations promoting disability awareness.
4. Engage in activities that further our knowledge and skills in the use of best practices in the areas of disability and higher education.

Goals and Actions:

a. Maintain memberships in local, regional, and national organizations to remain current with best practices in higher education and disability.
b. Attend local, regional, and national conferences to develop and further our skills and knowledge.
c. Network and develop relationships within the University of Utah as well as other agencies, organizations, and institutions.
d. Engage in continuing education opportunities at the University (e.g. the Disabilities Studies Graduate Certificate, Human Resources trainings, Student Affairs trainings).

5. Actively implement and utilize technology that improves our ability to assist students with disabilities.

Goals and Actions:

a. Support and promote a campus wide technology policy that takes into consideration the needs of students with disabilities.
b. Work collaboratively with computers labs on campus to maintain and update accessible equipment and software.
c. Continue to expand and enhance the electronic database in order to improve efficiency and sustainability.
d. Assist students with emerging technologies and improve student awareness and use of the technology.
e. Dedicate resources to maintaining up-to-date software and equipment.

6. Enhance the diversity of the university by recruiting and retaining students with disabilities.

Goals and Actions:

a. Partner with campus offices that reach out to primary and secondary educations to support and promote recruiting students with disabilities from a diverse background.
b. Develop working relationships with community organizations (e.g. Salt Lake Community College, State Office of Rehabilitation) to advertise and educate staff and prospective students regarding our services.
c. Develop programs and services to educate the University community about the experiences and challenges faced by students with disabilities.
7. **Assess and evaluate our services to increase our effectiveness.**

    **Goals and Actions:**

    a. Review annually as a staff our goals, strategic plan, and services.
    b. Work with the Assessment, Evaluation, & Research office to conduct at least one assessment per academic year (e.g. satisfaction survey, technology survey, needs assessment).
    c. Implement a system for tracking retention, performance, graduation, and employment data on students registered with our office.
    d. Maintain accurate records of services utilized by students, including demographic information of registered students.
    e. Improve tracking of staff activity (e.g. appointment statistics, caseload, outreach).