

Report from the Joint Administration-Senate Working Group on Instructors and Accommodations

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Recommendations</i>	
Campus Culture	2
Proctored Test Taking Center	2
Centralized Online Portal for Resources	3
Appointment of DSP Faculty Liaisons in every College and School	4
Accessible Course Development	4
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	5

Introduction

During the Fall Semester of 2023, a survey of 3852 instructors about accommodations for students (including students with disabilities and student athletes) was conducted. A [report](#) summarizing the survey's 473 responses was composed and a [summary](#) of instructors' helpful suggestions was compiled. A joint Senate-Administration working group was then assembled to review the report and make recommendations to the EVCP and Senate Chair.

The working group's five recommendations encompass:

1. Campus Culture;
2. Proctored Test Taking Center;
3. Centralized Online Portal for Resources;
4. Appointment of DSP Faculty Liaisons in every College and School; and
5. Accessible Course Development.

The recommendations are presented below. They were informed by the report mentioned previously, the members' experiences as administrators, instructors, and staff, and engagements with the ASUC Student Advocate's Office.¹

Recommendations

Campus Culture

The campus should cultivate a culture that distinguishes academic misconduct from supporting students and accommodating their needs. In other words, it needs to be understood by members of the campus community that accommodations are not a way for a student to gain an unfair advantage. Rather, they are a way for the university to provide equitable access to education for all.

Proctored Test Taking Center

The working group recommends the creation of a campus proctoring center with the capacity to administer paper-based and computer-based tests for students with accommodations, students who need to make up a test, and other students who must take a test outside of the time and space constraints of the classroom. We believe a cost-benefit analysis for such a facility will easily justify our recommendation, particularly if the costs of instructor time, benefits to student well-being, compliance with university policies, and campus climate are considered. With that in

¹ The Student Advocates Office produces reports every semester documenting their caseload. The reports are informative and provide a student perspective on accommodations. The Spring 2023 report can be found [here](#).

mind, an analysis should be performed by the campus of the staffing needs and operational costs for an adequately sized proctoring center. The campus should also reach out to proctoring centers at other state universities, for example the [Triton Testing Center](#) at UCSD and [UIUC's Testing Center](#), to ensure that best practices and operating procedures are followed.

While there are substantial proctoring needs, priority should be given to expanding the proctoring facility that is run by the Disabled Students' Program for students with disability accommodations. Our recommendation here is based on the instructor survey. The primary request from instructors who completed the Fall 2023 survey was for additional assistance proctoring exams. The current Disabled Students' Program Proctoring facility, which is being rented at a significant cost, has the capacity to proctor midterm and final exams providing for 200%, 250%, and 300% extended time as well as other accommodations that can require additional resources to implement (such as a room alone, use of screen-reading technology, and use of a scribe) for 89 students at a time, and the Disabled Students' Program works with the Registrar's Office to secure spaces and seating to allow for the administration of over 300 additional exams each day during finals week. During the Fall 2023 semester, the Disabled Students' program proctored over 5,000 exams, and 1,989 of those exams were administered during finals week. Instructors are primarily responsible for making arrangements for students with 150% extended time accommodations, many of whom are also entitled to a reduced-distraction environment. These arrangements include tracking individualized letters of accommodation for over 4,500-students with exam accommodations each semester, finding and scheduling rooms for exams, and arranging proctoring for the exams. The demands placed on instructors have also increased. The challenge of preserving the academic integrity of exams in an era in which generative AI tools are widespread has led many instructors to return to in-person proctored exams.

Centralized Online Portal for Resources

The campus has done a remarkable job creating online resources on accommodations and guidelines over the past five years. In particular, the following resources have been created and revised:

- Academic Accommodations Hub (Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost) [[Link](#)]
- DSP Faculty Liaisons (Disability Access & Compliance) [[Link](#)]
- "Addressing DSP Accommodations in Your Syllabus" (DSP Faculty Liaisons, Disability Access & Compliance, Disabled Students' Program) [[Link](#)]
- "Faculty Frequently Asked Questions" (Disabled Students' Program) [[Link](#)]
- "Instructor Guide to DSP Accommodations" (DSP Faculty Liaisons, Disability Access & Compliance, Disabled Students' Program) [[Link](#)]
- Guidance on Compliance with Academic Accommodations (UCOP) [[Link](#)]

- "Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements" (Academic Senate) [\[Link\]](#)
- Accommodations of Religious Creed (Office of the Registrar) [\[Link\]](#)

The survey revealed that, unfortunately, most instructors are unaware of these resources. To address this issue, we believe that a single campus page should be created to consolidate all online instructor guidance on accommodations. The easiest approach would be to revise the EVCP's Academic Accommodations Hub to include additional resources on Disabled Students' Program accommodations and the DSP Faculty Liaisons. This centralized resource would be promoted and linked in multiple relevant locations.

Appointment of DSP Faculty Liaisons in every College and School

It is vital that the campus supports positive collaborations between the Disabled Students' Program and instructors. Since their appointment two years ago, the DSP Faculty Liaisons have been helpful both in providing guidance to instructors and in mediating conversations between the Disabled Students' Program and instructors. At present, though, there are only two liaisons for the entire campus. We propose to extend the practice by requiring each college and school to have at least one DSP Faculty Liaison. Some of the schools would be allowed to share liaisons. The liaisons would be trained by the Disabled Students' Program and Disability Access & Compliance. We envisage the liaisons playing a key role in educating instructors about the Disabled Students' Program and informing them about the dramatic positive changes that have occurred in this program over the past five years.

Accessible Course Development

Making course content accessible to as many students as possible is consistent with the campus's mission as a public university. Perspectives on accessibility have broadened dramatically in recent years, and it has been challenging for instructors to keep pace. To help instructors, the campus should promote partnerships between the [Disabled Students' Program](#), the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#), the [GSI Teaching and Resource Center](#), and the Academic Senate's [Committee on Courses and Instruction](#) to encourage instructor training. In particular, instructors should have access to resources on the development of accessible course materials as well as on course design using principles of Universal Design for Learning and inclusive instructional practices. Support should also be provided to instructors on technologies that can be used to improve accessibility.

While it is challenging to retroactively render course materials accessible by adding alt-captions, captioning videos, etc, instructors should be encouraged to employ and collaborate with students to retrofit course materials for increased accessibility.

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