



**2002-2003 ANNUAL REPORT
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AT SCARBOROUGH
ACCESSABILITY SERVICES**

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Executive Summary

The intent of this report is to advise the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and the university community on the activities of *AccessAbility* Services at the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC).

AccessAbility Services is a student service, an academic service, and is the University of Toronto equity office on the UTSC campus. It is a separate entity from the St. George and UTM disability offices. The overall purpose of *AccessAbility* Services at UTSC is to ensure that policies, practices, procedures and programs at UTSC are inclusive and ensures equal access to students with a disability. The service does not, and cannot, work in isolation. At UTSC the community has recognized that accommodating students with a disability is a shared responsibility. As such, the service works as a coordinating and advising body to assist with inclusion, rather than acting as the sole accommodation provider.

The service operates within the framework outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). The OHRC has outlined the statutory obligations of the University of Toronto in the document "*Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate (2001)*". The service also strives to uphold the University of Toronto's *Statement of Institutional Purpose* by encouraging and facilitating efforts to foster an inclusive environment at UTSC and by providing accommodations that ensure students with disabilities are able to realize their potential.

To uphold the OHRC guidelines and the University of Toronto's *Statement of Institutional Purpose* *AccessAbility* Services strives to facilitate the highest level of service delivery. This goal was better realized this past year due to the support of the UTSC Administration and the Learning Opportunities Task Force (LOTF). Their support facilitated an increase in the service's staff complement, effectively reducing the Manager's caseload, which led to improved coordination and implementation of services.

In terms of challenges that the service faced over the past year the key issues continue to involve funding and space. The service has been pro-active in identifying the challenges that may arise in the coming year and continues to actively develop a strategic plan to address them.

In order to best realize the vision set forth by the *Statement of Institutional Purpose* and OHRC guidelines continued development of the service is required. *AccessAbility* Services will continue to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for students with a disability, ensuring that they have an equal opportunity while pursuing their post-secondary education at UTSC.

Profile of Clients

The service provides supports to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. A disability may be, but is not limited to, one of the following:

- Mental health disability (schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, depression, anxiety and panic disorder)
- Learning Disability
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Deaf, deafened, hard-of-hearing
- Low vision or blind
- Chronic health condition (cancer, epilepsy, heart disease, etc.)
- Physical (paralysis, amputation, back, repetitive strain injury, etc.)

Not all students with disabilities at the University of Toronto at Scarborough identify themselves to *AccessAbility* Services. Some students do not self-identify because:

- They have concerns regarding confidentiality;
- Not all persons diagnosed with a disability see themselves as having a disabling condition, and;
- Some students have developed strengths to compensate for the disability and as a result do not feel the need to request support.

Proposed Initiatives

The service must continue to identify and establish program goals. *AccessAbility* Services staff assess delivery of services throughout the year. It is essential that the service set realistic program goals that are measurable at year-end to determine whether the service is maintaining the highest level of service to students with disabilities.

WORKFORCE GOAL

A continued review of support staff responsibilities and workload must take place. This has a direct impact on service delivery and ensures the service is also monitoring the legal obligations required of the University of Toronto.

- The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (LS/AT) has demonstrated that the position is essential to ensure that appropriate support services are provided to students with specific learning disabilities. The additional position has also proven essential to ensuring a more appropriate caseload for the Manager. The LS/AT position, funded through the Learning Opportunities Task Force (LOTF), ends April 2004. The service will, however, continue to submit reports to the LOTF and actively pursue funding to continue the position.
- As of May 2003, UTSC will be on a trimester system. The service will review the impact of a trimester system on staff workload, especially over the summer months when the staff complement is decreased.
- Staff caseload will be monitored over the coming year as UTSC continues to increase enrollment.
- Work-Study Program
 - Abilities Awareness Assistant will be recruited to assist with outreach projects and supports for students.
 - Participation Assistants will be recruited to assist with orientation and mobility on campus and transferring material into alternate format.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL

The service is committed to providing on-going professional development for all *AccessAbility* Services staff. As per the Association of Higher Education and Disability's (AHEAD) Code of Ethics (1996) all staff will "continually participate in professional activities and educational opportunities designed to strengthen the personal, educational, and vocational quality of life for students with disabilities. This includes the on-going development of strategies, skills, research, and knowledge pertinent to the highest quality of disability service delivery whenever and wherever it occurs."

With this in mind, the following initiatives will take place over the coming year in order to promote ongoing development:

- The Manager will attend:
 - Inter-University Disability Issues Association (IDIA)

- Annual General Meeting
 - Meetings every three months which include professional development sessions
- Canadian Association of Colleges and Universities Student Services (CACUSS)
- The Accommodations Assistant will:
 - Attend a workshop on Dealing with Difficult Behaviour offered through the University of Toronto's Network for Effective Student Support (NESSIE).
 - Attend Destination Success 2003 – two-day symposium about Universal Instructional Design (UID) offered through Georgian College in cooperation with the Learning Opportunities Task Force.
 - Further develop knowledge of disability and interviewing/counselling techniques through:
 - Enrollment in a Rehabilitation Certificate course Note: Nine courses will be completed in order to receive the Rehabilitation Certificate.
 - Participation in student intakes and re-registrations.
 - Attend People in Motion Trade Show.
 - Access II Computer Course offered by Human Resource Services
- The Examination Officer will:
 - Attend Computer Courses offered by the University of Toronto Human Resource Department (Access and Dreamweaver) to upgrade current skills;
 - Attend Destination Success 2003 – two-day symposium about Universal Instructional Design (UID) offered through Georgian College in cooperation with the Learning Opportunities Task Force.
 - Attend Office Smarts: Ergonomics for VDT Users offered by Human Resource Service
 - Attend a workshop on Dealing with Difficult Behaviour offered through the University of Toronto's Network for Effective Student Support (NESSIE).
 - Continue training on Assistive Technology
 - Continue education in the field of disability
- The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (LS/AT) will:
 - Attend Destination Success Conference
 - Attend Destination Success 2003 – two-day symposium about Universal Instructional Design (UID) offered through Georgian College in cooperation with the Learning Opportunities Task Force
 - Continue to develop technical expertise with a variety of software and hardware, in order to assess the technology that best fits a students needs and to further develop existing skills to educate the students about the use of the technology
- Invigilators and Volunteers:
 - The Learning Strategist will provide training about learning disabilities and technology.

MEMBERSHIPS

Committee Memberships

To ensure the continuing involvement and representation of persons with disabilities at UTSC and the wider University of Toronto community the following committee memberships will be maintained:

- The Manager will continue to play an active role on relevant committees at UTSC and the wider university community.
 - Will continue to participate fully as a member of the Student Affairs Advisory Group in order to promote a developmentally supportive and inclusive student life on campus.
 - Will continue to participate as a member of the Department Heads Group.
 - As a member of the Equity Issues Advisory Group will continue to advise the President & senior members of the University administration on how the university can best realize its commitment to human rights & provide guidance on specific equity issues as they arise.
 - Continue membership on the following UTSC specific Committees
 - Advisory Committee on Accessibility to Persons with a Disability
 - Fire Safety
 - Prudential Awards Committee
 - Branko Vojnovic *AccessAbility* Award
 - Safety and Security
 - Joint Health and Safety
 - Will review involvement on the University of Toronto's Advisory Group for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- The Accommodations Assistant will continue to provide representation on the Branko Vojnovic *AccessAbility* Award Committee.

Association Memberships

- The Manager will maintain membership with:
 - Inter-University Disabilities Issues Association (IDIA)
 - Continue as member of the IDIA Working Groups on Essential Criteria and updating the MTCU Disability Categories for the annual report
 - CACUSS/CADSPPE (Canadian Disability Service Providers)
 - National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
 - Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)

- The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist will maintain personal memberships in:
 - AHEAD
 - NACADA - National Academic Advising Association
 - OACCPP -- Ontario Association of Counsellors, Consultants, Psychometrists and Psychotherapists

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The service will continue to actively seek to identify and remove systemic barriers and will suggest University policy change or development on issues of disability.

Service Delivery

- The Associate Dean will be provided with recommended changes to the Academic Handbook, which will further outline the roles of *AccessAbility* Services, faculty and students with disabilities.

- Further develop service policies and procedures:
 - Alternative format production procedures
 - Volunteer Note Taker Registration Agreement and Procedures
 - Test/Exam Policies i.e. procedures for late test/exam accommodation request forms will be reviewed
 - *AccessAbility* Resource Lab Agreement
 - Hiring interpreters, real-time and computerized note takers

SERVICE PROVISION GOAL

Direct Service Delivery

With the double cohort and changing student demographics (i.e., age) the service will review the transition and supports required for a younger population.

- Client Files: further coordinate client files between all staff, especially the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist; all staff will continue to maintain case notes on contacts with students to enhance the communication within the office and the primary counsellor's ability to monitor and follow-up on students requests and supports.

- Students with a specific learning disability have demonstrated a need for extensive assistance with improvement of metacognitive strategies, organization/time management, and integration of assistive technology into their learning strategies. The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist will actively develop these supports.

Program Evaluation

- The service will continue to collect feedback on service delivery from students.
 - Will review placing the Service Delivery Survey online.
- Review the manner in which the service and faculty are supporting the University of Toronto's Institutional Mission.

Communication with Registered Students

- Continue to hold group orientation sessions for all students designed to review procedures and new service development; meet all staff; discuss student, faculty and service responsibilities, etc. Another goal of the session is to increase awareness of support services and programs at the University by distributing informational materials.

- The Learning Strategist will:
 - Increase students expertise in using e-mail which is the primary means of communicating with students with disabilities.
- The Manager will continue to pursue opportunities for tri-campus meetings with the Services for Students with Disabilities at UTM and St. George.
Issues to be addressed include:
 - Streamlining services for students taking courses at other campuses

Intake/Re-registration Process

- The LS/AT will be the initial point of contact for students with specific learning disabilities who are re-registering and registering for the first time with *AccessAbility* Services. The LS/AT will determine appropriate accommodations for the students learning profile and or screen for learning disability assessments.
 - The goal of this change is to ensure students are not meeting with two staff members (Manager and LS/AT), thereby eliminating the confusion as to which staff member to refer to. It is also important to have one staff member involved in specific service components such as authorizing the OSAP Bursary for Students with a Disability.
- All forms will be updated in order to streamline appointment procedures and service delivery.

First Year Student Support

- The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist will run a Transition Program in the summer for incoming students who have identified themselves as having a specific learning disability.
 - Development of a learning skills workbook specific to the needs of students with learning disabilities will be distributed to those attending the session.

Temporary Students

- The service will review the process for registration and communication with students whose disabilities are temporary in nature.

Test/Exam Services

The service will continue to explore options to streamline processes:

- Revamp current test/exam request forms
- Review efficiency of current database
 - Review stats:
 - The service will review the benefits of maintaining a statistical record of the professor visits to the *AccessAbility* Services test site by department/division.
- Develop a process to communicate individual exam schedules for students writing with *AccessAbility* Services (i.e., time and location noted in a binder in resource space and/or on the service website). The goal of posting the schedules would be to increase options available to students to retrieve their personal exam information while reducing traffic in the office.

- Develop presentations to various constituencies at UTSC in order to inform appropriate staff and faculty about the test/exam process (i.e. Divisional Chairs, Faculty, Divisional Secretaries).

Note taking

The Note Taking Program continues to grow. The following issues will be reviewed during the coming year in order to address the growing needs of students:

- Explore leasing a photocopier for *AccessAbility* Services use only (currently the service shares a photocopier) which will increase the efficiency of office duties and of the note taking program, allowing for timely provision of notes and more volunteer involvement.
 - Create a system to ensure that notes are tracked when a volunteer is copying notes.
 - Hire Work Study students to assist with setting up and maintaining note taking accommodation.
- Review Note Taker recruitment methods, update Note Taker registration agreement and procedures.
- Enhance space and setup for students picking up copies of their notes.
- Expand database to include complete list of all classes in which registered Note Takers are enrolled. This will allow faster connections between potential Note Takers and new students who request note taking accommodations late in the term.
- Continue to develop presentations to various constituencies at UTSC to inform appropriate staff and faculty about the note taking process (i.e. Faculty, Divisional Secretaries).
- Enhance communication with Instructors:
 - The current note taking information package provided to instructors regarding the note taking procedures will be updated.
 - Providing extra information to instructors regarding late requests, etc. (i.e., the student has recently been diagnosed with a disability and it has been documented that note taking is an appropriate accommodation, note taking will need to be implemented even if it's late in the term).
- Forms relating to note taking will be revised, developed, and placed online for student convenience.
- *AccessAbility* Services will continue to facilitate connections between instructors who request further information regarding accessible web design and staff from Computing & Networking Services.

Volunteer Services

The service believes that the key to getting and keeping volunteers is based on providing opportunities for volunteers to do something worthwhile in which they can actively participate; encouraging a sense of volunteer ownership over programs and providing opportunities that result in a tangible accomplishment. The service aims to strengthen marketing and outreach initiatives through greater volunteer participation, thereby meeting marketing and outreach goals while strengthening the volunteer base.

Volunteer Services will focus on the following tasks in the next year:

- Develop a five-year plan for volunteer services. The plan may include the creation of:
 - An orientation information team for *AccessAbility* Services which will be responsible for:
 - Informing orientation staff, dons, etc. about the service

- Information presentations/running events for new students during orientation week and first year programming
- Create an “in-house” volunteer team which will be responsible for:
 - Maintaining resources in the drop-in centre
 - Creation and implementation of educational displays and presentations
 - Creation and implementation of outreach/marketing initiatives
 - Assisting students with assistive technology (i.e., using the scanner to transfer information into electronic format, printing alternate formats, etc.)

Alternative Format Materials (enlarged, electronic, taped, braille)

- Develop program for the production of alternative format materials required for term work (i.e., short-term loan material, course packs, etc.).
- The LS/AT will:
 - Communicate with the University of Toronto bookstore regarding acquiring textbooks in alternative formats directly from the publishers.
 - Explore copyright issues regarding CD-burner for materials produced for voice output.
- The Manager will monitor the CADSPPE and IDIA sub-committees on the production of alternative format material in Ontario and Canada.

Tutoring Services

- Develop a pool of subject tutors in all disciplines.
 - Explore mechanisms to advertise positions
 - Intranet, Career Centre, Website
 - Teaching and Learning Services through the T.A. certificate program
 - Early Teacher Project at UTSC

EQUIPMENT/ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES GOAL

The use of assistive technology for course accommodation is increasingly necessary as technology and training improves and allows for more successful accommodation. Consequently, the technology available to students must be maintained to ensure individual accommodations are met, especially as it relates to access to exam material.

Student Technology

- A review of the budget for updating assistive technology will take place. Software purchases to be reviewed include:
 - Draft: Builder
 - WordBar
 - Kurzweil 3000 B/W
 - OmniPage Pro 12
 - ReadPlease PLUS 2003
- Explore leasing computers with specialized software for use by students in an expanded space.
- Develop a workbook to assist students with assistive technology purchases.
- Develop a network of contacts with the vendors of assistive technology to facilitate student purchases.

- Train students in use of technology.

Staff Technology

- Computers will be leased for the Accommodations Assistant, students and the newly created reception area. The work-study students will utilize the reception area computer.

UTSC Community Technology Education

- The service will encourage universal access by reviewing the need and feasibility of installing specialized software on computer stations throughout UTSC.
- The LS/AT to deliver assistive technology seminars to students and community (i.e., Computer Centre Staff)

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

The service will continue to pursue opportunities to inform the university community about the service and the benefits of having students with disabilities in the university environment. Where possible the service will continue to develop collaborations and partnerships aimed at increasing recognition that the responsibility to assist students with disabilities rests with the university community.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- In partnership with Teaching and Learning Services:
 - Continue to develop the Instructor's Guide to teaching students with disabilities. The guide focuses on the principles of Universal Instructional Design.
 - The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist will develop opportunities to educate:
 - Faculty and T.A.'s on issues related to students with Learning Disabilities.
 - Training for Writing Centre Staff regarding learning disability issues, including the use of assistive technology to support the writing process for students with learning disabilities.
 - Writing Centre to present at Transition Program Day for students with specific learning disabilities.
 - Continue communication with Admissions.
 - Provide presentations to Guidance Counsellors on the services offered at UTSC for students with specific learning disabilities, the importance of transition planning and technology for students with a learning disability.
 - Develop information sharing with Centennial College LS's and AT's (note: UTSC has partnered with Centennial College on various Programs).
- In collaboration with Academic Advising and Career Centre provide:
 - Training to learning skills peer counsellors on learning disability issues.
 - Arrange to provide a seminar on "Career and Disability: From University to Work" in the spring of 2004 in partnership with the non-profit Ability Edge program.
 - Build partnership with Student Housing and Residence Life in order to publicize:
 - Disability awareness events/campaigns.

- Student volunteer and employment opportunities available through *AccessAbility* Services.

Publications

- Review, update, and streamline format of all service brochures.
- Develop General Fact Sheets regarding specific disabilities that will be made available to Instructors along with Student Letter of Introduction.
- Further develop handbooks (i.e. Note Taker, Work Study, Volunteer & Invigilator handbooks).
- Create an information piece to be included in the orientation program for incoming students offered through Academic Advising and Career Centre.

Web Based Activities

- Update website:
 - Review and update the format and navigation of site
 - Add all newly revised handbooks in PDF and html format
 - Continue to ensure all forms and publications are available online
 - Include information regarding enhanced services for students with learning disabilities
 - Review possibility of creating a Login user I.D. for students registered with the service (i.e. *myability*) to access their personal information (i.e., exam schedule, accommodations, note taking information)
- Continue to facilitate connections between instructors who request further information regarding accessible web design and staff from Computing & Networking Services and the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre.

Disability Awareness/Education

- Develop an awareness campaign to educate the UTSC community about the need to be inclusive.
- Provide in-service training for student services and departments (i.e., Residence Advisors, Health and Wellness)

SPACE

- The service will be expanding in their current space, rather than move to the Academic Resource Centre as was originally planned.
 - Establishing office space in S302 for the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist will enhance communication with co-workers, provide further efficiencies in service delivery and streamline processes for students accessing all service components. Note: the LS/AT's office is currently away from the unit.
 - A student computer will be in a public space allowing more ready access to specialized software programs.
- Develop a long-term plan for the test/exam space. The service has outgrown the existing space and requires a larger space which will accommodate technology.

ACCESSIBILITY GOAL

In keeping with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act the service will:

- Recommend changes to the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities at UTSC.
- Monitor construction at UTSC and the impact on access:
 - Meet with Architects for the Management and Arts Classroom Buildings to ensure that up-front-barrier-free design, as required by the OHRC, is communicated.
 - In consideration of the growth at UTSC, the service will continue to ensure that input from the client base is sought on new and renovated projects at UTSC.

Planned Projects:

- In partnership with the Student Administrative Council-Wheelchair Accessibility Committee (SAC-WAC), AFD and UTSC:
 - Install automatic door openers in high traffic areas.
- Complete improvements to the staircase at pick-up/drop-off zone (handrail and contrasting nosing).
- Review:
 - Feasibility for chair lift to be used in the UTSC Pavilion and Meeting Place stage.
 - Access in Athletics
 - Access in the Academic Resource Centre (a space to be opened in the fall which includes a lecture theatre, Academic Advising and Career Centre, Writing Centre, Library, and student study space).
 - Access to orientation programs and lockers with the Scarborough Campus Students' Union.
 - Access in student housing.

Achievements

In its ongoing efforts to ensure a best practices approach to services the following activities were conducted during the past year. These activities promoted empowerment of students and increased self-sufficiency.

WORKFORCE

UTSC administration has demonstrated support for improving service delivery and staff caseload within *AccessAbility Services*. This support upholds the University of Toronto's *Statement of Institutional Purpose* and the Ontario Human Rights Guidelines on Accommodating Persons with Disabilities. This has been demonstrated through the following activities, which provided a noticeable improvement in service delivery:

- The Accommodations Assistant position which commenced the first week of April 2002. This position has been funded by UTSC:
 - The Accommodations Assistant is responsible for:
 - Co-ordinating note taking, volunteer and other support services.
 - Recruiting, hiring and training Work-Study students and monitors performance.
 - Assisting the Manager with outreach activities, including the development of promotional materials.
- The previous Examination Officer resigned to pursue his Masters degree. The recruitment of a new Examination Officer was successful and the new staff commenced work in the beginning of September 2002.
 - UTSC funded the increase of the Examination Officer's complement from 40% to 60% for June and July.
- Due to the growth of the service, UTSC funded an increase in the Manager's complement in February from .73 to .9 (working five days a week from September to June).
- UTSC has provided the service with a Budget Officer (a position shared between departments).
- The approval of funding for a Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist through the Learning Opportunities Task Force significantly improved service delivery for students with specific learning disabilities and staff caseload.
 - UTSC administration committed to:
 - Provision of retrofit and infrastructure dollars for renovations to existing facilities in order to enhance services for students with learning disabilities.
 - Funding to equip the office with a computer for demonstrations and training on assistive technology.
 - Objectives of the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist position are to provide students with specific learning disabilities with:
 - A greater understanding of their disability;

- Better coping skills to tackle the challenges the disability brings to their educational pursuits and daily life activities;
- Tools to assess their capacity to use learning strategies and technology, and;
- Skills to apply such strategies to better actualize their academic pursuits while developing transferable skills for the job market.

Work-Study Program

- With the Accommodations Assistant taking over the responsibility of this program the service was better able develop this service component.
 - New positions were developed and recruited:
 - “Participation Assistants” were recruited to assist students with mobility disabilities around campus (i.e., retrieving materials from lockers, setting students up in class with their materials, assisted with eating in cafeteria, etc.). The Accommodations Assistant worked with the student and Participation Assistant to determine accommodation needs, organized scheduling, and monitored provision of supports.
 - One Work Study student was hired to assist with publications and outreach activities.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Manager:

- Attended Inter-University Disability Issues Association (IDIA):
 - Professional development sessions:
 - Learning Disability Roundtable
 - Universal Instructional Design
 - Annual general meeting
- Attended Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) training hosted by Linda Petty, O.T., Adaptive Technology Resource Centre
- Successfully completed the Learning Opportunities Task Force – Pilot Project Online Courses through Cambrian College:
 - Understanding Learning Disabilities

The Examination Officer:

- Attended an Assistive Technology information day offered through The University of Toronto’s Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC)
- Attended Assistive Technology Training for Kurzweil offered through Micro Computer Science Centre (vendor)

The Accommodations Assistant:

- Successfully completed the Learning Opportunities Task Force – Pilot Project Online Courses through Cambrian College:
 - Understanding Learning Disabilities
 - Learning Disabilities in the Post-Secondary Environment
- Attended Office Smarts: Ergonomics for VDT Users offered through Human Resource Services
- Attended Computer Skills Course (Access I) offered through Human Resource Services

- Attended an Assistive Technology information day offered through The University of Toronto's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC)
- Attended Assistive Technology Training for Kurzweil, specialized software program, offered through Micro Computer Science Centre (vendor)
- Attended Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) training hosted by Linda Petty, O.T., ATRC

Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (LS/AT):

- Attended one-to-one sessions with the AT Specialist – ATRC as needed to discuss current trends, new technology, vendors, etc.
- Attended Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) training hosted by Linda Petty, O.T., Adaptive Technology Resource Centre.
- Attended Assistive Technology Training for Kurzweil, specialized software program, offered through Micro Computer Science Centre (vendor).

MEMBERSHIPS

Committee Memberships

- The Manager continued to provide representation on a number of relevant committees:
 - Advisory Committee on Accessibility to Persons with a Disability
 - Equity Issues Advisory Group (EIAG)
 - Fire Safety
 - Prudential Awards Committee
 - Branko Vojnovic *AccessAbility* Award
 - Safety and Security
 - Site Planning
- The Accommodations Assistant was a member of the Branko Vojnovic *AccessAbility* Award Committee.

Association Memberships

- The Manager maintained memberships with:
 - Inter-University Disability Association (IDIA) (Ontario)
 - Member of Working Group to develop guidelines for Determining Essential Criteria
 - CACUSS/CADSPPE (Canadian Disability Service Providers)
 - National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
 - Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- The LS/AT maintained personal memberships in:
 - AHEAD
 - NACADA - National Academic Advising Association
 - OACCPP -- Ontario Association of Counsellors, Consultants, Psychometrists and Psychotherapists

SERVICE PROVISION

Direct Service Delivery

The service continues to recognize the importance of reviewing and modifying service delivery policies and procedures to keep up with the needs of the client base.

- A Student Satisfaction Survey was conducted with the client base. The responses about the service were very positive. Suggestions for improved service delivery varied but there was an emphasis on improved space for computer use and exam space. On a positive note, students did identify that the service helped them become more independent, eased the transition in first year and, overall, made the university experience more positive.
- The service was pleased with the participation rate of students with a learning disability in the Enhanced Services Program:
 - Fifty students with specific learning disabilities were referred to the LS/AT. Forty of those students met with the LS/AT, thirty-seven on an on-going basis. The LS/AT met with seven students weekly and eleven students bi-weekly.
 - Students who utilized the service received assistance with learning strategies, organizational and time management skills, assistive technology assessment and training.
 - Many students presented with other complex issues involving their understanding of their disability and how it affects them in university.
- The Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist developed a service questionnaire which was distributed to all students referred to the LS/AT for enhanced services. The service received excellent feedback from a core group of students who felt that they benefited from the program.

One student noted:
“The services I have received far exceed my wildest imagination. The holistic approach to providing services makes the entire UTSC experience very pleasant.”
- The Orientation Sessions for returning students continue to be very helpful in communicating with the students and increase the Manager’s availability for appointments.
- The refinement of the services e-mail capabilities and Web site outreach to registered students continued to improve.
- All staff maintained case supervision notes outlining their interactions with students. This process increased communication within the office.
- All forms were updated in order to streamline appointment procedures and service delivery.
- New and returning students met with the Accommodations Assistant in order to complete the general information section of their intake forms, and their file was created/updated prior to meeting with their primary counsellor. This process proved very efficient, maximizing the time spent between student and counsellor.

Tests/Exams

- A system for late submission of exam requests and rescheduling exam forms (when Instructor changes the date or when student needs to write a make-up exam) was further developed.
- The Examination Officer enhanced the database for test/exam data.

Note taking

- The level of communication increased between the office and students who requested note taking via regular follow up e-mails.
- A volunteer was recruited to assist with the note taking process and general office duties. This role had a positive impact upon office efficiency and timely provision of notes to students.
- There was a significant increase in the number of volunteer note takers, and note takers who provided notes for more than one course/student.

Personal Aids

- The service assisted registered students with hiring typists and tutors.

PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGY

The service:

- Up-dated textHelp Read & Write
- Purchased Kurzweil 3000 and Wordsmith
- Purchased a scanner for student computer
- Purchased two new printers for the lab
- Leased computers for the Examination Officer, the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist, and students with specific Learning Disabilities.
- Purchased a new computer at year-end for the Manager whose existing computer was six years old and “crashed.”

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

The service believes that education is key to providing an inclusive environment. *AccessAbility* Services continues to promote equal access to students with disabilities in all aspects of the university’s policies, practices, procedures and programs through a variety of initiatives:

Collaborations and Partnerships

- LS/AT provided training for Teaching Assistants (2 one-hour sessions)
 1. Understanding Learning Styles and Learning Differences
 2. Applying Learning Styles When Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities
- The LS/AT provided consultation with three Masters students writing papers regarding Universal Instructional Design and Learning Disabilities.
- In partnership with the Health and Wellness Centre an Anxiety Disorder Group ran in the fall.
- *AccessAbility* Services referred course instructors who requested information regarding accessible course website design to Computing and Networking Services staff and the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre.
- In cooperation with Student Housing and Residence Life an Access Needs in Residence questionnaire was created and placed online. The goal of the questionnaire was to facilitate the communication between a student with a disability and the residence early to ensure the appropriate supports were in place when the student arrived to Residence.

- In cooperation with the Grounds and Parking Division a Parking Accommodations Request form was created and the application process for students requesting Inner Lot accessible parking permits was streamlined.

Publications

- The Abilities Awareness Assistant (Work-study student) created an outreach e-mail to publicize The International Day for People with Disabilities, obtained educational materials from related organizations, and maintained educational displays and bulletin boards.
- A Transition Brochure was created for students who are new to the university environment.
- A Frequently Asked Questions flyer was created for new students.
- Enhanced Services for Students with Learning Disabilities brochure was created. The brochure outlines services available to students diagnosed with learning disabilities.
- A flyer outlining services was sent in a mail-out for all students living in residence.
- Expanded efforts to provide material in all relevant institutional publications, including revisions to existing brochures, manuals and documents.
- Provided handouts for Staff/Faculty Orientation offered through Teaching and Learning Services.

Web Based

- International Day for People with Disabilities awareness information was placed online.
- All forms were updated and placed online.
- A transition brochure and Frequently Asked Questions publication were added in PDF and word formats and placed on the service website.

Disability Awareness/Education

- The Manager was invited to present at an evening with students, parents, educators and community agencies held in collaboration with the Toronto District School Board Career Awareness Advisory Committee for Students with Special Needs and the Bloorview MacMillan School Authority – Career and Transition Services. The theme was “Students with Physical Disabilities: Preparing for Successful Transitions to Post-Secondary Education.”
- The Accommodations Assistant represented the service at a carousel on “Transition Opportunities for Students with Special Needs” hosted by the Toronto District School Board Career Awareness Advisory Committee for Students with Special Needs.
- The Manager presented at:
 - A UTSC Administration Assistants’ Meeting. The service goals, policies, procedures were reviewed.
 - The U of T Human Resource Departments as a representative of the Equity Issues Advisory Group. The service goals, policies, procedures and supports were reviewed.
- The service was represented at the:
 - Ready, Set, Go Days which were held by Admissions for new and prospective students.

- Principal's Welcome which was held for new students at UTSC.
- The service created a distribution list for members of the UTSC community. Disability-related information, interesting articles and recent updates were mailed to relevant faculty and staff (i.e. Department Heads, Academic Advisors, etc) on a monthly basis.

ACCESSIBILITY

UTSC administration is strongly committed to access. This commitment is clear. UTSC has guaranteed funding for the Accessibility Committee to allocate as required. As well, the Student Housing and Residence Life Office sets aside funding each year to address access in this area.

This commitment was recognized by:

- The Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons. The University of Toronto was the recipient of the Corporate Award for the work and commitment to improving access. Much work was carried out through the funding provided by Students' Administrative Council Wheelchair Access Committee (SAC WAC). At UTSC, the Accessibility Committee, with funding from UTSC and SAC WAC, have significantly improved access over the past six years.

The following initiatives took place over the past year:

- Completed installation of the Auto-openers in the Meeting Place out to the H-Wing Patio (funded by SAC WAC and UTSC).
- Student Housing and Residence Life:
 - Installed automatic door openers on main entrance of the Student Village Centre.
 - Enhanced communication with students with disabilities (i.e. Access Needs in Housing Questionnaire online).
- Consulted with the architects and users of new buildings under construction or in development (Academic Resource Centre, Residence Phase IV, Student Centre).
- Access to recreational services was improved.

Challenges

Funding and space allocation are key challenges to meeting the needs of students with disabilities. While UTSC recognizes that the University of Toronto is required to supplement the funding from MTCU, there has been little increase in the level of support allocated within the Ministry Accessibility funding envelope. At the same time the number of students with disabilities participating in post-secondary education has increased significantly. As a result, the UTSC Administration continued to provide operating funds to run the unit when the service incurred a deficit.

WORKFORCE

- The new Examination Officer and Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist commenced work during the busiest time of year which presented a challenge for training.

SPACE

- The service has outgrown the current office space.
 - The LS/AT's office is not located within the *AccessAbility* Services unit which impacts team building among the staff. As well, sharing files, photocopying materials, and providing a seamless service is impacted, as the LS/AT must come up one level for office supports.
 - The LS/AT's space itself provided a challenge:
 - A larger space is required to allow for a table at which students and the LS/AT can work.
 - Noise from the Meeting Place often made working with students a major challenge.
 - The service would benefit from having a place where students can wait for their appointment. As well, there is no space to place the office resources that could benefit a larger population.
 - The Examination Officer and Accommodations Assistant share an office which is challenging for staff and students, especially if confidential conversations need to occur.
 - The Examination Officer and Accommodations Assistant are constantly interrupted since there is no reception desk. This created challenges when completing tasks or starting new projects.
 - The service has outgrown the *AccessAbility* Resource Lab. A larger space would decrease invigilation costs, ease the strain of finding computers for exam use, and ease the scheduling difficulties as the numbers of students increase. As well, noise from the Meeting Place has made writing exams in this space more difficult.

SERVICE PROVISION

Test/Exam

- It is becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate for students who require assistive technology or specialized software for test/exams considering the number of computers available in the Resource Lab.

- Students continue to report concerns with Instructors who are unable to visit the test site to answer questions.
- Timely delivery of tests/exams by Professors to our office continues to be a concern especially with the increase in volume of test/exams requiring accommodations.
- Timely requests for test/exam accommodations continue to be a concern, despite setting clear deadlines for students.

Note taking Services

- Volunteer Recruitment:
 - Recruitment of volunteer note takers was difficult in some courses, especially those with small enrollment.
 - Timely delivery of notes to the office by note takers was an issue in some instances.
- Volume:
 - Note retrieval files are no longer effective due to an increase in volume of notes being copied. A new system must be addressed.
 - The volume of photocopying continues to increase. This results in a number of hours per day spent photocopying during peak times. This inefficient use of staff time can be remedied by leasing a photocopier and asking volunteers to copy their own notes in conjunction with work study students assisting with maintenance of note taking program.
- Changing Course Format:
 - The current note taking program is set up for traditional lecture format. Courses offered online continue to create obstacles such as volunteer note taker recruitment. The specific challenges need to be addressed and solutions implemented as the trend towards online courses gains momentum.
- Faculty:
 - Some faculty members are resistant to offering note-taking services to students with disabilities. In many cases the faculty have only required clarification regarding why the service is provided (i.e., student cannot process information in time to write, cannot hear or see lecture material, etc.) and the duty to accommodate.

Enhanced Services for Students with a Learning Disability

- It can be challenging to encourage students to spend time following up on the referral to the LS/AT. The students' priority is on their academic work and they do not realize the LS/AT can be helpful to them in their academic pursuits until the student actually starts work with the LS/AT.
- There is a chronic no show rate from some students. The LS/AT will review what supports may need to be provided to assist students with time management (i.e., attending appointments on time or at all).
- Some returning students had difficulty with the transition from the Manager as their Primary Counsellor to the LS/AT. Some of the students have been at UTSC a number of years and established a rapport with the Manager. Change can be stressful and this required a sensitivity regarding how the service would support the student during the transition.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Physical space limitations restricted opportunities for growth in volunteer and outreach initiatives.

PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT/ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Student Equipment

- Students continue to report that assistive technology can be difficult to access, especially in the *AccessAbility* Resource Lab during peak exam periods. The expansion of the office will allow for computers that can be accessed during the peak exam periods.
- A small group of students with a learning disability had been authorized for funding to purchase assistive technology but had not had the opportunity for training. As a result, the students did not maximize the use of that technology. Note: students came to see the LS/AT in December/January when there were more pressing issues of time management, researching and writing papers, preparing for final exams.
- The technology was unreliable at times (some things did not work as they should have) so the LS/AT had to develop contacts for troubleshooting.
- The two printers available in the lab were very old and unreliable. Despite the deficit the service was required to purchase two new printers to ensure they were available during the exam period.

Staff Equipment

- Some staff computers were very old and needed to be replaced. However, with the budget deficit the service attempted to maintain the existing computers. Unfortunately, two staff computers were beyond repair and new computers were leased or purchased.

LS/AT Technology Training

- The LS/AT started at a busy time in the year so there was little time available for learning the technology.
- Student demand made it difficult for the LS/AT to get practice time with the technology.

ACCESSIBILITY

- The Ontario Building Code (OBC) is significantly behind regarding barrier-free standards. The Manager has found that this detail must be emphasized to all Architects. However, a comprehensive Ontario barrier-free standard is not available to supply to the Architects and barrier-free standards are changing. Therefore, the Manager must research the most updated standards at the time of design.

Appendices

Appendix A: Service Statistics

I. Demographics: Students Registered between May 2002 – April 2003

Note: The number of students with disabilities registered is not a reflection of the number of students with disabilities at UTSC since these numbers are based on the number of students who self-identify and request supports.

MTCU Disability Code	UTSC 2002-2003	UTSC 2001-2002	UTSC 2000-2001	UTSC 1999-2000	UTSC 1998-1999	UTSC 1997-1998	UTSC 1996- 1997
1 - Chronic Medical/ Psychological/ Systemic	72	65	65	39	37	36	22
2 - Mobility	25	17	9	11	15	9	13
3 - Blind/Low Vision	6	3	2	1	2	2	3
4 - Deaf/ Deafened/ Hard of Hearing	8	8	6	2	4	2	3
5 – LD/ Acquired Brain Injury which impacts learning	29	26	48	30	26	26	27
6 – Multiple (accommodated for more than one disability)	56	57	28	28	11	10	7
TOTAL	196	175	158	111	95	85	75

Tests and Exams Written with AccessAbility Services

MONTH	UTSC 2002-2003	UTSC 2001-2002	UTSC 2000-2001	UTSC 1999-2000	UTSC 1998-1999	UTSC 1997-1998
May 2002	15	43	23	26	25	44
June	42	23	36	22	23	19
July	31	19	24	9	8	6
August	48	31	41	23	14	14
September	3	7	2	2	-	1
October	141	128	102	82	55	60
November	64	66	76	65	58	22
December	184	182	158	120	91	94
January 2003	17	21	16	23	9	19
February	133	125	116	109	71	64
March	38	77	53	41	34	41
April	250	203	196	161	147	131
May (Until the end of the April Exam Period)	16	32	42	18	26	22
TOTAL	982	962	885	701	561	537

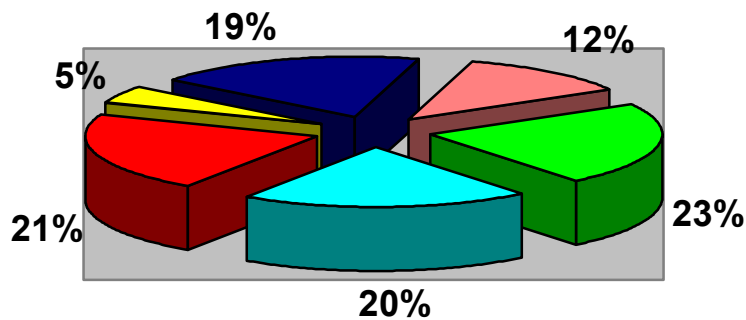
Number of Students who wrote Tests and Exams

MONTH	UTSC 2002-2003	UTSC 2001-2002	UTSC 2000-2001	UTSC 1999-2000	UTSC 1998-1999	UTSC 1997- 1998
May 2002	14	34	21	22	22	26
June	25	14	23	12	13	11
July	24	15	18	8	8	5
August	34	23	22	18	14	11
September	3	7	2	2	-	1
October	63	55	49	38	29	26
November	48	45	48	40	35	15
December	80	70	73	52	43	44
January 2003	14	19	15	22	7	15
February	64	65	66	45	36	32
March	28	46	32	27	24	23
April	93	85	77	64	54	63
May (Until the end of the April Exam Period)	16	26	33	16	22	22
TOTAL	506	509	479	366	307	294

Exams Broken Down by Division

DIVISION	DECEMBER	APRIL	TOTAL
Humanities	38	58	96
Life Science	46	46	92
Management and Economics	43	44	87
Mathematical and Computer Sciences	24	28	52
Physical Science	7	13	20
Social Science	22	60	82

Break Down of Exams by Divisions



- Humanities
- Management
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Social Science
- Mathematical and Computer Science

NOTE TAKING PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER NOTE TAKERS	UTSC 2002- 2003	UTSC 2001- 2002	UTSC 2000- 2001	UTSC 1999 – 2000	UTSC 1998- 1999	UTSC 1997- 1998
# OF STUDENTS WHO REQUESTED NOTE TAKING	88	97	56	52	29	34
# OF ACTUAL REQUESTS FOR NOTETAKING*	265	230	141	97	59	61
# OF ACTUAL REQUESTS MET**	204	-	-	-	-	-
# OF NOTE TAKERS	124	82	102	89	51	43

* Students make individual note taking requests for each course as required. Therefore, if a student is enrolled in 5 courses and requests note taking for all of them, the **actual number of requests for note taking** will be 5.

** All students who followed up with their request for note taking, received note taking accommodations. The difference between actual note taking requests and requests met reflect courses which were dropped, courses which provided online lecture notes, etc.

Note:

- Note Taking services were required for 163 courses at UTSC.
- 12 Note takers took notes for more than one course.
- 36 Note takers took notes in a course for more than one student registered with *AccessAbility* Services.

REAL TIME NOTE TAKING

Real Time Note taking	UTSC 2002-2003
# of Students	1
# of Courses	1

Appendix B: Organizational Chart

