

Annual Report 2003 - 2004

University of Toronto
St. George Campus

Accessibility Services (AS) Programs & Services for Students With A Disability

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Executive Summary

May 03 to April 04

Accessibility Services (AS), St. George Campus, facilitates success for students with a disability in the University setting by providing advice, support and academic accommodations in partnership with the students and faculty. AS also provides advice and information to applicants, makes referrals, and advises faculty and staff on issues pertaining to barrier-free access and disability related issues. Reporting to the Office of Student Affairs, and as a member of the E.I.A.G., the Service advocates for the basic rights and responsibilities set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the University's Statement of Institutional Purpose and the University's Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities (2004). The Service receives its primary funding from the Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and supplementary funding from University of Toronto.

Students provide medical documentation for a wide variety of disabilities including chronic health, mobility/functional, hearing impairment, vision impairment, communication impairment, mental health, learning disabilities, head injuries, environmental sensitivities, as well as temporary disabilities. Chronic health covers a wide range of disabilities such as arthritis, cancer, epilepsy, inflammatory bowel disease, and repetitive strain injury. Some of the services offered are: academic accommodation advice; assessments (for learning disabilities, adaptive technology, etc.); alternate test/exam accommodations; adaptive technology and assistive devices; funding assistance, volunteer and computerized note taking; sign-language interpreting; accessible transportation on campus; and advice on barrier-free accessibility.

The Service experienced unprecedented growth in the past few years. Last year we reported that registered students with the Service increased 27% helping over 1000 students. In '03-'04 we experienced a 10% increase bringing the number of students registered to over 1100. To prepare for the double cohort we hired additional staff in both the Learning Disability and Health Units and the Test/Exam Centre. The Service staff consists of approximately 12 full and part-time appointed and 40+ contract/casual part-time staff, such as invigilators, couriers, sign language interpreters, computerized note takers, and attendant care givers who provide individualized service tailored to suit each student's disability requirements. The Service registered students throughout the year, with an average of ten new students a week in the winter term, beginning 2004. Many students take summer courses and many write deferred exams in August.

Due to the scope and nature of the Service, a Position Paper was prepared to outline the need for additional staff and space. Staff is currently housed in various areas on the first as well as the tenth floors of the Robarts Library, OISE/UT and Student Affairs.

Unfortunately, this does not support our effort to provide a seamless supportive student centered service. Communication suffers in a Service such as ours when staff and services are situated in different buildings and on different floors. Further we require

more staff to handle the excessive caseloads. Last year requests for test/exam accommodations increased by 22%, bringing the number of tests and exams to approximately 4,800 for an additional 120 students compared to the previous year. The procedure to request tests from individual Professors and for our couriers to collect and return tests to individual Professors' offices across campus, and to administer tests and exams in up to four different locations is labour intensive and inefficient and we are addressing this with the assistance of senior management. To address the complexity of the Service, we developed a fully integrated database that facilitates test and exam scheduling, matching a student's individual set of accommodations to a specific room equipped with the necessary accommodations in one of four locations across campus.

As an Executive Committee member of the Inter-university Disability Issues Association, a Provincial Association of the Offices for Students with a Disability, the Manager successfully negotiated a 25% increase in funding for all Ontario University Disability Service offices. Further, partnerships were forged with Provincial Organizations such as the Community College Disability Issues (CCDI) and the Learning Opportunities Task Force (LOTF) to negotiate as a united front with the Ontario Human Rights Commission staff regarding required disability documentation at post-secondary institutions.

AS staff continue to strengthen partnerships with faculties, colleges and services across campus and in the community. The office played a key role on the UofT Ontarians with Disability Act Planning Committee, suggesting best practices to promote a more inclusive and barrier-free environment across the UofT community.

With the unprecedented growth in the number of students registering with the Service over the past few years, Accessibility Services is committed to improving academic accommodations in partnership with students and the University community. Further, we continue to offer advice and act as a resource for campus wide barrier-free access. The demands on our service will continue to grow in the coming years necessitating more resources and support. Our vision is to create a Disability Centre that will serve as a role model for post secondary institutions across Canada and develop partnerships in the broader community that will have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

University of Toronto St. George Campus

Accessibility Services (AS)

Annual Report

2003-2004 Highlights

Service Delivery:

- **10% increase in student registrations increase Advisor/Counsellor caseloads (27% increase in 2002-2003)**
- **additional staff hired to cope with additional students anticipated for the double cohort**

The 2003-2004 year supported over 1100 students registered with the Service, which is a 10% increase from the previous year. It is important to note that this statistic does not reflect the students who met with Advisor/Counsellors and were referred to other services. Further, it does not reflect the many graduates from UofT who request supporting letters and documentation for applications to other universities, nor reflect the inquiries from prospective students and parents who were considering attending the University of Toronto.

The Department is categorized into the following areas:

The Health Unit (advises students with mobility/functional, chronic health, mental health, hearing impairment, vision impairment, communication impairment, head injuries and temporary disabilities)

The Learning Disability Unit (advises students with LD and ADHD)

The Test/Exam Centre Office

The Volunteer Note Taking Program

The Administration Unit

AS employs approximately 12 appointed staff and 40+ contract/casual staff who work full and part time. The appointed staff include:

3.40 FTE staff in the Administration Unit (Manager, Receptionist, Financial Administrator)

3 FTE Advisors/Counsellors in the Health Unit (mobility/functional, chronic health, mental health, sensory, temporary, head injuries)

1.5 FTE Advisor/Counsellors in the Learning Disability Unit (LD and ADHD)

2 FTE LD Strategist and Adaptive Technologists

2 FTE staff in the Test/Exam Service

1 FTE Mobility Van Driver (sessional September to May)

In addition, the Service hires the services of a host of 40+ part-time contract/casual staff:

- 1) Psychometrists to assess students with Learning Disabilities/ADHD
- 2) Occupational Therapist to assess Adaptive Equipment/Technology requirements
- 3) Scribes to write tests/exams for students
- 4) Invigilators to oversee test/exams
- 5) Couriers to pick up and return tests from faculty across the campus
- 6) Sign language interpreters for students who are deaf
- 7) Computerized note takers for students who are hard of hearing
- 8) Student assistants: test/exam registration office; note taking service; reception desk

Further, the Advisors/Counsellors facilitate funding for students who are eligible for the Bursary for Students with a Disability (BSWD), the UofT Alternate Bursary, or funding from Colleges, for services such as:

- 1) Orientation and mobility assistants and readers for students who are low vision
- 2) Assistant care givers for students who have chronic pain
- 3) Tutors for students
- 4) Adaptive technology and assistive devices
- 5) Assessments and coaching from health care professionals
- 6) Books on tape

To address the increase in student numbers, an additional staff member was hired in the Health Unit, the part-time LD staff increased by 1.5 days per week, and an additional staff member was hired in the test/exam office.

The Health Unit:

- **Unit registered 585 students; an increase of 5.4%**
- **Students with multiple disabilities**
- **Staff presented on many occasions to University colleagues**

The three Advisors/Counsellors in the Health Unit experienced an increase in registration of students with mobility/functional, sensory, environmental, chronic health, mental health, head injury and temporary disabilities. A total of 585 students registered with the Unit which reflects an increase of 5.4% over the previous year. The Disability Specialist, who meets primarily with students with mental health disabilities, has a caseload of over 250 students. Further, the number of students with multiple disabilities continues to rise dramatically.

The Learning Disability (LD) Unit:

- **LD Unit registered 556 students; an increase of 18%**
- **201 students receive enhanced services from Learning Strategists**
- **126 Learning Disability assessments completed**
- **LD students offered summer ‘Headstart’ - a week long workshop**
- **LD presentation to the Faculty of Medicine Heads of Residency with hospitals associated with UofT**
- **Increased funding from LOTF for additional .5 FTE Learning Strategist**

The LD Unit provided a full service delivery model for 556 students with: 1) LD intake appointments with LD Specialists; 2) LD psycho educational assessments for students who suspect they have a learning disability or require an updated LD report; 3) referrals to the Learning Strategists to work on deficit areas while utilizing areas of strength; 4) referrals to the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre for an AT assessment and recommendations; 5) referral to the Adaptive Technologist for LD technology and software training; and 6) on-going advice and follow-up with LD Specialists. This full circle in-house delivery model provides students with an integrated and seamless service. Eighteen of these students were also seen by the Health Unit.

Four part-time staff, including a Registered Psychologist, provided 126 LD assessments. The assessments are conducted over a 7 to 9 hour testing time period resulting in a written report with findings and accommodation recommendations applicable to post-secondary education.

Three part-time Advisor/Counsellors (equivalent to 1.3 FTE) provided advice, accommodations, funding support, etc. for 556 students. The Advisor/Counsellors worked closely with the Learning Strategist, the Adaptive Technologist and the Psychometrists to ensure that students were receiving the necessary support they require for success at university. Further, the Learning Strategists and Adaptive Technologist met with 201 students over the academic year to provide enhanced services as well as a week long workshop for learning strategies and study skills during the summer.

Test and Exam Centre:

- **4,814 tests/exams administered for 645 students – an increase of 22% or 900 test/exams for an additional 122 students over last year**
- **partnership with OISE/UT provides library space to write tests/exams**
- **automated test and exam scheduling developed**

The 2003-04 fiscal year witnessed yet another marked increase in test/exam service, particularly in regards to the number of students. There were 645 students who used the Service, approximately 100 more compared to the previous year reflecting a 23% increase.

There were 3143 tests (30% increase) and 1670 exams (10% increase) for a total of 4813 test/exams (22% increase) written in the test/exam centre which is an overall increase of 22%.

The partnership with OISE/UT involves the provision of a location with 50 spaces for student overflow during test and exam time which occurs in peak periods, including mid-term tests in October, February and March; the last week of classes in December and April; and formal exam periods in December, April-May, June and August. Tests and exams are administered Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 11pm.

Volunteer Note-taking Services:

- **Professors and instructors provide e-mail notes for students**
- **Additional 150 courses require note taking service**

The volunteer note-taking service continues to be a challenge. There are 2 summer sessions as well as fall and winter sessions, all of which have a variety of half year and full year courses. When students register, they are given a copy of policies and procedures that state the service is dependent on volunteers. If volunteers are not forthcoming and notes do not materialize, students are asked to book an appointment with their Advisor/Counsellor to discuss options.

We are pleased to report that professors and instructors have begun to respond to the request to provide notes and information on web sites or e-mail notes to the Service. Given that we receive relatively few complaints about the service, we believe that some students recruit their own volunteer note-takers in class; some lecturers hand out information to students in class.

Volunteer Note-taking Statistics:

- 191 students requested note taking in 373 F, Y, and S courses
- 288 note takers registered to take notes; many courses have more than one note-taker
- 212 courses had note takers; 161 did not have note- takers
- approximately 55% to 65% of courses were filled with volunteer note-takers

Van Service:

- **1,210 van rides for 20 students**

Our wheelchair accessible van on St. George Campus provided 1,210 rides for 20 students with mobility or chronic health conditions from September to May.

UofT Library's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC):

- **110 new students assessed for adaptive technology**
- **30 students returned from previous years for follow-up**

Accessibility Services contracts the services of the ATRC to provide adaptive technology assessments by their Occupational Therapist. In the past year, 110 new students were assessed to determine what technology would best suit their needs. An additional 30 students returned with questions regarding advances in technologies that could assist with their studies, or for further training on technology acquired in previous years. Students make inquiries and try out adaptive technologies during daily drop-in hours.

Over 30 workshops were offered to students to train on adaptive technology to assist with their studies. These included Basic Ergonomics, Voice Recognition, Organizational, Screen Reading and Screen Magnification software programs. As well, the Centre offered consultations to Colleges and Faculties regarding installation of adaptive technology in computer labs. Further, the ATRC provided drop-in sessions to answer students' questions.

The library's Transcription Services, which provides texts in an alternate format such as braille, large print, disc, and books on audio tape, continues to be a challenge to get the information in a timely fashion for students. This is largely due to the limited services provided by the Provincial government. Our office is currently working with the library staff to investigate the idea of bringing some of these services in-house.

Transitional Year Programme (TYP):

- **60% of TYP students (34/55 graduates) registered with AS**
- **Information session held with TYP faculty and staff**
- **Two year option for students with disabilities a success**

Accessibility Services and the TYP continue to partner to assist eligible students with their accommodations in order to facilitate a successful TYP experience and entrance into University.

Outreach to Students:

- **Partnership with Registrar offices**
- **7000 brochures distributed to new and returning students**
- **Information Workshops offered to new and returning students**
- **Web-site offers update to programs and services**

The web site continues to be a major source of information for students and staff. Information includes: required documentation; a menu of accommodations by disability; test and exam policy and procedures; barrier-free educational initiatives and map of the

campus; resources for students and staff, financial aid, related services and resources throughout the campus and community. In addition, we post our annual report and position papers on disability issues such as the response to the Provost's Green Paper and the University's Housing Task Force.

The Service distributed 7,000 brochures to new and returning students via the College Registrars to encourage eligible students to register with the department in a timely fashion. An Information Workshop was held for incoming students in late summer. The workshop gave new students and their families an opportunity to learn about Accessibility Services and the University resources and supports.

Outreach to the University Community:

- **Presentations and partnerships with campus Faculties, Departments Colleges and Services**
- **Service organized the first 12 week Sign Language Class on campus**

Service staff gave presentations and collaborated with UofT faculties, departments, and services. Further, staff provided information on disability issues to encourage partnerships across campus and organized sign language classes which were offered on campus.

Partnerships included: Psychiatric Services, Health Services, Counselling and Learning Skills, Housing Services, Family Care Office, Human Resources, Don Training, Registrar Offices; Faculty Engineering, Faculty of Physical Education and Health, Faculty of Social Work; Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, OISE/UT; Transitional Year Program, Status of Women Office; Admissions and Awards Office, and the Office of Teaching Advancement.

Outreach Beyond the University Community

Accessibility Services Manager:

- elected Provincial Chair of the Inter-university Disability Issues Association
- Member of the City of Toronto Council Disability Advisory Committee
- Board member of the Terry Fox Hall of Fame
- Board member of the CFPDP Wheelchair Road Race
- Board member, V.P. Finance & Administration, Ontario Sports for the Disabled
- Professional Association Memberships: CACUSS, AHEAD, IDIA

Staff Professional Development:

- Professional staff attended various disability related conferences (e.g. AHEAD; Traumatic Brain Injury, Students at Risk, International Dyslexia, ADHD) and Professional Development Seminars (e.g. Confidentiality and Coaching Students, Panic Disorder and OCD).
- Support staff attended UofT Human Resource workshops and seminars related to their roles in the Department (e.g. Sign Language Interpreting, Dealing with Difficult Behaviour, Making Referrals within the University, Business Administration, etc.).

Barrier-Free Accessibility Initiatives on Campus:

Staff played a key role on the UofT Ontarians with Disability Act Planning Committee, suggesting best practices to promote a more inclusive and barrier-free environment across the UofT community. Some 18 references were made to the accomplishments spearheaded by Accessibility Services in the 2003-04 ODA Plan. The Service advocated and partnered with services across campus to identify ‘champions’ who furthered barrier free access initiatives in their domain. As well, a staff member is a member of the Students’ Administrative Council Wheelchair Access Committee (SACWAC) to advise on the delegation of funds for barrier free initiatives and acted as a resource, advisor and facilitator on barrier-free access issues on campus.

Summary:

With the unprecedented growth in the number of students registering with the Service over the past few years, Accessibility Services is committed to improving academic accommodations in partnership with students and the University community. Further, we continue to offer advice and act as a resource for campus wide barrier-free accessibility in regards to physical/architecture, attitudes, information and communication, policy and procedures and technology. In order to accomplish our goals, we require the identified resources in order to build our volunteer base to better help students. Our vision is to create a Disability Centre that will serve as a role model for post secondary institutions across Canada and develop partnerships in the broader community that will have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

**Accessibility Services
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Student Statistics – 2001-2004

Disability	2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004	
	No. of Students	% of Students	No. of Students	% of Students	No. of Students	% of Students
Systemic/Chronic Medical	215	27%	228	22%	193	17%
Mobility/Functional	79	10%	135	13%	126	11%
Blind/Low Vision	26	3%	29	3%	35	3%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	13	2%	17	2%	24	2%
Learning Disability/ ADD/ ADHD	377	46%	471	46%	556	49%
Multiple	75	9%	146	14%	207	18%
Other	21	3%	0		0	
TOTAL:	806	100%	1026	100%	1123	100%

2003-2004 Student Statistics:

- student registration increase by 10% compared to 27% increase in 2002-2003
- 18 students seen by both the LD and Health Unit

TEST AND EXAM STATISTICS 2001 – 2004

2001-2002			2002-2003		2003-2004	
MONTH	# OF TESTS	# OF EXAMS	#OF TESTS	#OF EXAMS	#OF TESTS	#OF EXAMS
JUNE	127	41	134	91	135	112
JULY	73		88		151	
AUGUST	81	107	52	124	56	178
SEPTEMBER	6		14		38	
OCTOBER	410		390		492	
NOVEMBER	295		280		323	
DECEMBER	320	216	341	427	391	539
JANUARY	93		111		105	
FEBRUARY	312		442		563	
MARCH	211		264		336	
APRIL	61	524	293	480	431	685
MAY	2	440	3	401	122	156
TOTAL	1991	1328	2412	1523	3143	1670
TOTAL T/E		3319	TOTAL T/E	3935	TOTAL T/E	4813
STUDENTS		389	STUDENTS	523	STUDENTS	645

Test and Exam Centre 2003-2004:

- 4,814 tests/exams administered for 645 students – an increase of 22% or 900 test/exams for an additional 122 students over last year
- partnership with OISE/UT provides library space to write tests/exams
- automated test and exam scheduling developed

**ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES
Organizational Chart**

2003-2004

MANAGER

LD/ADHD UNIT

**SENSORY/MOBILITY/
CHRONIC/ MENTAL HEALTH UNIT**

INTAKE/ASSESSMENT/
FEEDBACK/
ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

INTAKE/ACCOMMODATION
ADVICE

**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER**

**TEST AND EXAM
COORDINATOR**

INFORMATION
OFFICER

SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETERS
&
COMPUTERIZED
NOTETAKING

STUDENT
ASSISTANTS

MOBILITY VAN
DRIVER

COURIERS

INVIGILATORS

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