

ANNUAL REPORT 2003 - 2004

ACCESSABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AT MISSISSAUGA

Prepared for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

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October 2004

This document is available in alternate formats (electronic, large print, Braille, audio cassette).

Executive Summary

This report is an annual submission to give the Ministry of Education and Training, Colleges and Universities presenting an overview of the achievements and challenges the AccessAbiility Resource Centre experienced in 2003-04.

The AccessAbility Resource Centre is a student service, academic service and equity office for the University of Toronto. The Centre strives to ensure students with disabilities are provided with reasonable accommodations in accordance with the framework outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Through consultations with departments/services and partnerships within UTM, the University of Toronto and the Mississauga community, the Centre continued to promote inclusive practices in both academic and co-curricular activities.

The most significant challenge to UTM's Centre continued to be a shortfall of government and university funds to support accommodations for students with disabilities. The Centre served 224 students with disabilities, an increase of 36 students from 2002-03 and 83 students (59%) from 2001-02. One example of direct service is the coordination and administration of 1,445 tests and exams, 440 (44%) more than the previous year. This activity takes place with the same funding and staffing as in 2002-03. An increase in government and/or university funding would allow for additional support staff to be hired, reducing overtime and casual staff needs, significantly enhancing services, and allowing for additional training and oversight of volunteers (further multiplying the funding increase's impact).

MISSION

The mission of the Access**Ability** Resource Centre is to ensure that all students with disabilities can freely and actively participate in all facets of university life; to provide and coordinate services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community.

Through partnerships with various administrative and academic departments and student groups on campus, the Centre promotes the inclusion of students with disabilities in academic and co-curricular activities.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

During 2003-04, the Centre provided academic accommodations and services to 224 students (an increase of 36 students from 2002-03).

Disability Management and Advising

The Centre continued to address transition issues students with disabilities encounter during their first year at university.

- The Manager continued to meet with all students registering or re-registering with the Centre and provided ongoing advising/support.
- In partnership with the Academic Skills Centre, the Centre's Learning Strategist participated as an instructor in the Head Start Program held over the summer for incoming first year students. Her presence during the program encouraged students with learning disabilities to approach her and discuss the services she and the Centre provides.
- Students with learning disabilities continued to meet with the Learning Strategist for ongoing instructional sessions throughout the year.

Administrative Processes

- The Access database developed in 2002-03 was used throughout the year to coordinate student records. The other components of the program (test scheduling, volunteer coordination) were also tested at the end of the academic session.
- The Centre continued to streamline its administrative processes including placing more forms and information on the Centre's website.

Outreach

Prosepective and Incoming Students

- The Centre continued to send brochures and information to the high schools in the UTM catchment area. This information package is designed to aid students in their transition to university and also to assist in the recruitment of students as many students with disabilities and their families shop around to find out what services and accommodations are available.
- The Centre participated in UTM Discovery Day and a March Break event held by the Office of the Registrar for prospective students and their families.
- The Centre's website has information to inform prospective and incoming students about the services and accommodations available and documentation requirements.
- The Learning strategist/ Assistive technologist addressed more than 150 students with learning disabilities and secondary school resource teachers at the Peel District School Board's annual "Transitions to Post Secondary School" workshops.

Current Students and the UTM Community

- The Centre communicated with the UTM community through the use of:
 - Website
 - Flyers to residence
 - Participation in campus student events
 - Information in the university publications including UTM's Academic Calendar, "Faculty Guide to Services" and the Equity Issues Advisory Group's brochure

Accommodations and Services to Students

Students who register with the Centre are assessed individually to determine what accommodations and services they are eligible for.

In 2003-04 the Centre provided:

- Disability management and advising
- Test and examination arrangements
- Note taking Services
- Volunteer Services assisting students in the UTM Library and in lectures/events on campus
- Attendant care services (in partnership with the Ontario March of Dimes)
- Mobility Training (in partnership with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind)
- Computerized Note Taking
- Access to the OSAP Bursary for Students with Disabilities
- Access to assistive technology
- Onsite psycho-educational assessments
- Access to the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (Students with Learning Disabilities only)
- Scribes
- Diagnostic screening for learning disabilities
- Access to materials in alternate formats (electronic, large print, Braille)
- Assistance with addressing barriers to participation in university life (e.g. physical, attitudinal, informational, policy/procedure)
- Referrals to on and off campus resources

In 2003-04 the Test Centre, located in the North Building, was fully operational and provided the Centre with an established site that met the accommodation needs of many registered students. Additional rooms on campus were also booked due to students' specific needs and the number of students writing at the same time.

Enhanced Services for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

- The Centre continued to receive funding through Enhanced Services Funding provided by the Learning Opportunities Task Force (LOTF) for the Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (LS/AT) position. The funding was increased and the position was increased from .8FTE to 1.0FTE
- The LS/AT position was originally approved to meet with 15 students however, according to yearend statistics, 45 students utilized the enhanced services in 2003-04. This is an increase from 2002-03.

- The LS/AT continued to meet individually with students and provided a number of services including screening for learning disabilities, instructing in learning strategies, demonstrations and training on assistive technology (e.g. Kurzweil 3000, TextHelp).
- Skills assessments were performed to address reading comprehension, auditory comprehension, written expression, mathematical problem solving and critical thinking. The results assisted in developing an individual learning plan and contract for each student.
- The LS/AT also held two note taking workshops for students with disabilities and volunteer note takers.

Onsite Psycho-educational Assessments

 The Centre continued to provide on campus psycho-educational assessments performed by a Registered Clinical Psychologist. The entire assessment process was usually completed within two weeks from the initial assessment to receipt of the report.

Volunteer Services

- In 2003-04, 271 students registered for volunteer positions with the Centre however, only 141 individuals were matched with volunteer positions.
- The Centre continued to train and supervise a large pool of active volunteers and manage the information and contacts of students waiting for volunteer positions.

Bursary/Financial Assistance

- The Manager continued to oversee and approve students' requests for the OSAP Bursary for Student with Disabilities.
- Students not eligible for the OSAP Bursary for Students with Disabilities applied for funds from the UTM College Bursary to cover disability related expenses. All psycho-educational assessments in 2003-04 were paid for using either the OSAP Bursary, the UTM College Bursary or other university funding.
- Students were referred to the Awards Officer in the Office of the Registrar to address questions regarding scholarships and financial aid.

Assistive Technology

- In 2003-04 the Centre's Adaptive Technology Room located in the UTM Library was closed and the space reclaimed by the Library for offices. This provided the Centre and the Library with an opportunity to create an inclusive environment for students with disabilities by incorporating assistive technology into the main library space.
- In partnership with the UTM Library, nine additional computer workstations in the library were equipped with assistive software including Kurzweil 3000, Inspiration, JAWS and Zoomtext.

Partnerships / Committees

The Centre continued to develop its relationships with:

Academic Skills Centre

- Head Start Program
- Consultations and referrals

UTM Library

- Assisted in determining the placement and type of assistive software products to install on library workstations
- Assisted with accessibility issues in the current library

UTM Residence

 Consulted with the Director of Residence on the access needs of incoming first year students with disabilities and assisted with establishing external support services (Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Ontario March of Dimes)

Psychology Department

Presented "Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities" is PSY422.

Health Services

- Consultations with the medical professionals and personal counsellor in the Health Services at UTM
- Referrals to the medical professionals and personal counsellor

Facility Services

- Consulted on new buildings and renovations
- Consulted on changes to the UTM shuttle service

Office of the Registrar

- Consulted on changes to the UTM College Bursary application process for students with disabilities
- Participated in prospective student events

Student Affairs

- Participated in Academic Orientation 2003
- Contributed to development of the "Parent Website"

The Manager continued as a member on both UTM and university committees:

- Phase 7 Residence Implementation Committee
- Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee (university-wide)
- Erindale College Council
- College Affairs Committee
- Student Centre Management Board (assessor)
- Principal's Advisory Committee on Access for Individuals who have a Disability
- Quality Service to Students (QSS) Committee
- Student Affairs Posse
- Volunteerism Committee
- Joint Health and Safety Committee
- Equity Issues Advisory Group (university-wide)

Workforce

The Centre hired a casual clerical assistant from December 2003 to April 2004. In December 2003, the individual assisted the Manager in coordinating and administering the final examinations during the Test and Examination Officer's leave of absence and in January 2004 continued to update the Centre's database and assist with test and examination services.

Professional Development / Memberships

Professional Development

The Manager attended:

- IDIA Professional Development Sessions Ministry of Training
- Students at Risk University of Toronto
- Student Development 101 UTM
- Transitions from first year all the way through to graduation UTM

The Learning Strategist attended:

- Nexus Conference on Academic Technology University of Toronto
- Dealing with Difficult Students University of Toronto
- Training in evaluation of the Test of Critical Skills University of Toronto
- RCAT workshop on Universal Instructional Design University of Toronto
- Student Development 101 UTM

The Test and Examination Officer attended:

- Student Development 101 UTM
- Introduction to Microsoft Access University of Toronto

Professional Memberships

IDIA	Inter- University Disability Issues Association (ONTARIO)
CADSPPE	Canadian Association of Disability Providers in Post-Secondary Education (CANADA)
AHEAD	Association on Higher Education and Disability (U.S.A)
NEADS	National Educational Association of Disabled Students (CANADA)
CACUSS	Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CANADA)

Listserv Memberships

IDIA	Inter- University Disability Issues Association (ONTARIO)
DSSHE	Disabled Student Services in Higher Education (U.S.A.)
DAWN	Disabled Women's Network (CANADA)
CSNNET	Canadian Special Needs Network
UID	Universal Instructional Design (CANADA)

Accessibility and Inclusion at UTM

- In 2003-04 the Office of Student Affairs at UTM began a review of the Principal's Advisory Committee on Access for Individuals with Disabilities to assess the current membership and terms of reference. It was determined that the membership of the committee consisted of a broad representation of the UTM community including students with disabilities, staff and faculty. It was also determined that the terms of reference required updating so they reflect the initiatives of the University of Toronto's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Plan and address not only physical barriers but also architectural barriers, information or communications barriers, attitudinal barriers, technological barriers, and policies/practices.
- The Manager consulted with departments/services on access issues and how to ensure their environment is usable, welcoming and inclusive to students, staff and faculty with disabilities.
- The Manager consulted on:
 - New spaces and renovations on the UTM campus
 - The design of the Academic Learning Centre to address access and inclusion
 - The design of Athletics and Wellness Centre to address access and inclusion
 - Accessibility in lecture rooms in the Communication, Culture and Information Technology Building

REVIEW OF CHALLENGES

The year 2003-04 has been the busiest period the Centre has experienced.

Over the past year (May 2003 to April 2004) the Centre provided academic accommodations and services to 224 students with disabilities. This is an increase of 36 students from 2002-03 and an increase of 83 students from 2001-02. The Centre also coordinated and administered 1,445 tests and final examinations, an increase of 440 from 2002-03.

This has been taking place with the same funding and staffing as in 2002-03. An increase in government and/or university funding would allow for additional support staff to be hired, reducing overtime and casual staff needs, significantly enhancing services, and allowing for additional training and oversight of volunteers (further multiplying the funding increase's impact).

Funding Issues

- The limited funding the Centre received through the MTCU allocation and central University support continued to restrict the Centre's provision of accommodations.
- The Centre had a deficit of \$90,947 in 2002-03 that was carried forward to 2003-04. As a result of
 this the Centre ended the year with a \$205,060 deficit that will be carried forward to 2004-05. The
 insufficient funding impacted direct services to students, as the growth in students was not
 equalled by a growth in Centre staff.

Increase in AccessAbility Student Registration

- The number of students registered with the Centre increased significantly in 2003-04.
- The Centre managed cases of 224 students in 2003-04, through the Manager, which impacted other direct services to students with disabilities at peak times in the year. Wait times for appointments could be up to two weeks, although the needs of students in crisis (e.g. thoughts of suicide) were addressed immediately.
- The Centre continued to experience an increase in parental involvement. In most cases the Manager addressed parents' concerns prior to the intake meeting with the student however, in some instances, parents did follow up regularly throughout the year with the Manager on accommodation and access issues.
- In 2003-04 the Centre continued to see an increase in students with mental health disabilities who
 required additional supports from staff, and students with visual disabilities who required access
 to assistive technology while on campus.
- To further demonstrate the complexity of the students accommodated by the Centre, the *multiple category* in the Centre's statistics has been expanded (Appendix B). The *multiple category* contains the number of students who are being accommodated for more than one medical condition/disability. In 2003-04 the Centre accommodated 65 students with one or more medical conditions/disabilities with a total of 138 medical conditions/disabilities being accommodated.

Space Issues

- The Centre continued to experience difficulties with its location in the basement of the South Building due to the increasing student population and the limited space. The lobby of the Centre was often congested due to the number of students and volunteers attempting to access the Centre's staff and photocopier.
- The Test Centre in the North Building was fully utilized during the 2003-04 academic year
 providing the Centre with an established space that met the physical and technological needs of
 many students for their test and examination accommodations. Due to the increase in registered
 students and modest capacity of the Test Centre (10 students), the Centre had to rely on other
 rooms on campus, including staff offices when other options were not available.
- The number of students with visual disabilities requiring use of the CCTV for tests and examinations increased. Due to space limitations and students individual accommodation needs, the equipment sometimes had to be relocated to rooms on campus.

Staffing Level Challenges

In 2003-04 the staffing complement of the Centre consisted of:

- Manager 1.0 FTE
- Test and Examination Officer .8 FTE
- Learning Strategist/Assistive Technologist (1.0FTE funded by Learning Opportunities Task Force) provided enhanced services to students with specific learning disabilities.
- Casual assistant (December 2003 to May 2004)
- 25 Invigilators (casual)
- Due to its staff complement, as in previous years, the Centre continued to struggle with an increasing student population with multifaceted needs and increased requests for academic accommodation and services.
- The increase in registered students placed significant strain on tests and examinations services and approval was given to hire a casual assistant to support the tests and examinations service and update the Centre's database.
- Government and/or university funding continued to be sought for a Disability Advisor position to assist with the case management.
- In 2003-04 the Centre also experienced a significant increase in volunteers and requests for volunteer positions. The coordination of both active volunteers and those waiting for volunteer positions had to be balanced with more complex, direct service needs. Additional staffing would allow for better training and use of volunteers, multiplying the impact of the additional staff.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES FOR 2004-2005

Workforce

• As in the previous year, the Centre will continue to request additional staff to assist with case management and administrative duties.

Services and Programs

 The Learning Strategist will continue to participate in the Head Start Program for incoming first year students and will continue to hold note taking workshops for registered students receiving the accommodation and the volunteers.

<u>Space</u>

 Although the Centre's space concerns are anticipated to be resolved in 2007 when the new Student Service Plaza is expected to open, interim space for additional staff, adaptive equipment and support are being reviewed as they become available.

Partnerships

- Library The Centre will continue to work with the library in integrating assistive technology and inclusive practices.
- Office of the Registrar The Centre will work with the Office of the Registrar in developing a
 presence in their recruitment presentation to secondary schools and their communications with
 incoming first year students.
- Residence The Centre will continue to work with Residence staff in establishing support services (e.g. attendant services, mobility training) for students who have disabilities.
- Facility Resources The Centre will continue to work with Facility Resources in creating accessible and inclusive spaces on campus.
- Student Affairs The Centre will continue to collaborate with the Student Affairs Office and Student Services at UTM in providing inclusive programming and services.
- Equity Initiatives The Manager will continue to participate in the equity initiatives and programming at UTM and the university.
- University of Toronto Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Planning Committee The Manager will continue on as a member of the ODA Planning Committee.
- Tri-Campus Managers Meetings The Manager will continue to meet with the Managers at AccessAbility Services (UTSC) and Accessibility Services (St. George) to collaborate on access and inclusion initiatives at the university and discuss maintaining service processes that allow students to receive academic accommodations in a timely manner at UTM, UTSC and St. George.
- The Manager will continue to participate on UTM and university wide committees.

 Academic Skills Centre – The Centre will continue to participate in the Head Start Program held in the summer 2005.

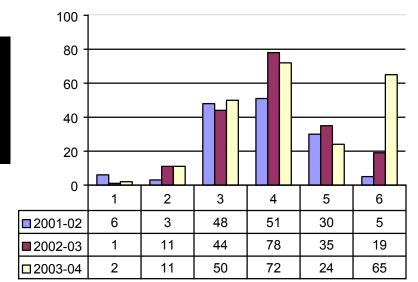
Accessibility

- The Manager will continue to consult with department heads on renovations and new spaces on campus to ensure inclusive environments for students, staff and faculty with disabilities.
- The terms of reference for the Principal's Advisory Committee on Access for Individuals with Disabilities will be updated to reflect the initiatives of the University of Toronto's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Plan and address not only physical barriers but also architectural barriers, information or communications barriers, attitudinal barriers, technological barriers, and policies/ practices.
- Manager will continue to consult on new buildings, new spaces and renovations to ensure they are
 accessible and inclusive for students, staff and faculty with disabilities.

APPENDIX A

SERVICE STATISTICS

Students by Disability Classification Three Year Comparison



Disability Classification

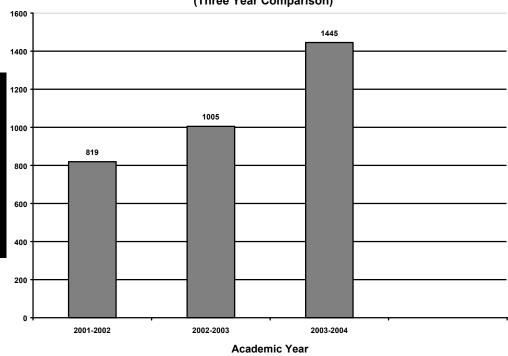
- 1 Deaf/Deafened/Hard of Hearing
- 2 Blind/Low Vision
- 3 Learning Disability
 4 Chronic Medical/ Psychological/ System Disabilities
- 5 Mobility
- 6 Multiple Disabilities

2001 - 2002	2002– 2003	2003 – 2004
141 students	188 students	224 students
		↑ of 36 students from
		previous year

significant increase of registered students in the multiple category (see Appendix B)

Test and Examination Statistics 2003 - 2004

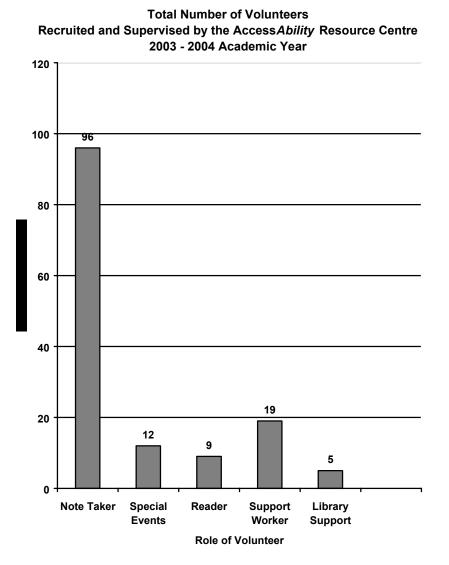
Total Number of Tests/Final Examinations Coordinated and Supervised by the Access *Ability* Resource Centre

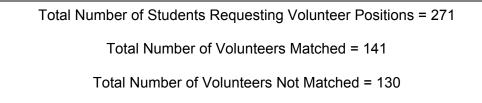


(Three Year Comparison)

2003-2004 – Increase of <u>440</u> tests/examinations coordinated and supervised by the Centre from previous year

Volunteer Statistics 2003-2004





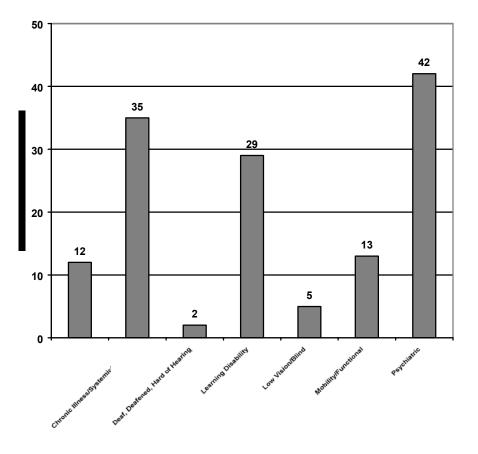
Computerized Notetaking 2003-2004

In 2003-2004, two students received computerized notetaking services. The fee for service was \$34.00 per hour and the total amount paid for services was \$31,116.

APPENDIX B

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES CATEGORY

Multiple Disabilities Category Number of Medical Conditions/Disabilities Accommodated by the AccessAbility Resource Centre in 2003-2004

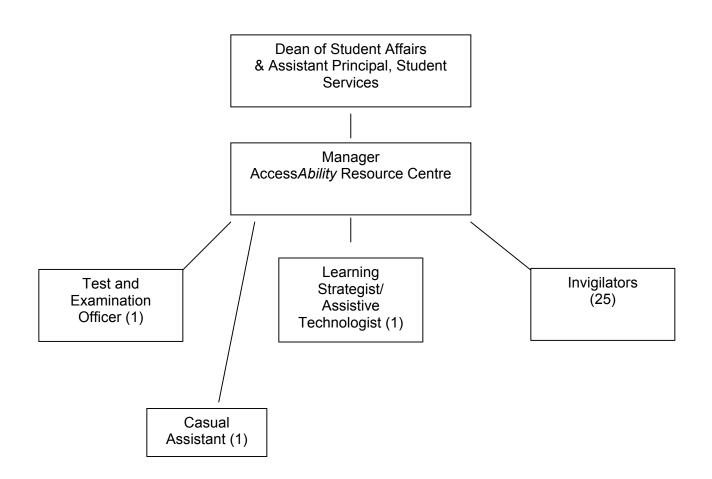


Students in the multiple disabilities category have two or more medical conditions/disabilities. Although 65 students were counted in the Multiple Disabilities category, the Centre accommodated 138 medical conditions/ disabilities.

EXAMPLE: A student may be diagnosed with diabetes which impacts vision and nerve damage. The student is listed in the Low Vision/Blind sub-category and Mobility/Functional sub- category as accommodations are being provided for both conditions.

APPENDIX C

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



- Clinical Specialist (Adaptive Equipment / OT) Services contracted as required
- Registered Clinical Psychologist Services contracted as required

APPENDIX D

TECHNOLOGY / EQUIPMENT REPORT

<u>Software</u>

- Jaws for Windows (Screen Reader)
- Inspiration (Organizational)
- TextHelp
- Naturally Speaking (Voice Recognition)
- Kurzweil 3000 (Scan and Read Colour)
- Zoomtext Xtra

Hardware

- Desk top computers
- Lap top computer
- 21" monitors
- Scanner
- Printer

Ergonomic Equipment

- Adjustable desks (manual and electric)
- Obus Forme chairs
- Footrests
- Task lights

<u>Other</u>

- Smartview CCTV (2 units)
- Alphasmart Pro
- TTY

APPENDIX E

Financial Statement for the Period 2003-2004

		Original	
Revenue	Actual	Budget 03/04	+/-
Revenue Carry Forward from 2002-2003			
Accessibility Fund	141,367		
Interpreter Fund	10,351		
ESF Funding			
LOTF Funding	55,989		
University Funding - Direct			
University Funding - Indirect			
Other Sources of Funding (Please list)			
Total Revenue	207,707	390,106	(182,399)
		Original	
Expenditures	Actual	Budget 03/04	
A. Office for Students with Disabilities			
Staffing - FT	151,996	177,811	25,815
Benefits - FT	29,639	34,673	5,034
Staffing - PT	5,585	-	(5,585)
Benefits - PT	531	-	(531)
Supplies	2,732	4,000	1,268
Office Costs	749		(749)
Subtotal A	191,232	216,484	25,252
B. Equipment & Technology			
Equipment/Computers	30,839	17,048	(13,791)
Computer Programming/Software	1,780		(1,780)
Special Operations/Maintenance (Eg. Specialized Transit, etc)			
Subtotal B	32,619	17,048	(15,571)
C. Support & Contract Services			
Reference Materials	399		(399)
Assessments - Internal Costs			(000)
Assessments - External Costs	1,200		(1,200)
Tutoring	-,		(,,)
Invigilators	52,319	53,000	681
Invigilators - Benefits Cost	4,970	5,035	65
Notetaking - Manual	.,	0,000	
Notetaking - Computerized	31,116		(31,116)
Interpreters/Intervenors/Captioning	01,110		(0.,0)
Attendant Care			
Exams/General			
Subtotal C	90,004	58,035	(31,969)
	30,007	00,000	(01,003)

D. Professional Development

Travel			
Meeting Expense			
Awareness Activities			
Staff/ Training/Development			
Memberships	307		(307)
Publications			
Subtotal D	307	-	(307)
E. Other Costs			
Occupancy Costs	4,235	4,235	0
Overhead Costs	3,423	3,357	(66)
Design Reviews, etc			
Subtotal E	7,658	7,592	(66)
Total Expenditures	321,820	299,159	(22,661)
Revenue - Expenditures =	(114,113)	90,947	(205,060)
Carry Forward (2002-2003)	(90,947)		
Expenditures Above Grant	(205,060)		
	(200,000)		

APPENDIX F

Proposed Financial Statement for the Period 2004-2005

Revenue	
Revenue Carry Forward from 2003-04	
Accessibility Fund	\$ 146,177.00
Interpreter Fund	
ESF Funding	\$ 64,615.00
University Funding - Direct	
University Funding - Indirect	
Other Sources of Funding (Please list)	
Total Revenue	\$ 210,792.00

Expenditures

A. Office for Students with Disabilities	
Staffing - FT	\$ 157,766.00
Staffing - PT	\$ 5,500.00
Benefits - FT	\$ 31,811.00
Benefits - PT	\$ 600.00
Supplies	\$ 3,000.00
Office Costs	\$ 750.00
Subtotal A	\$ 167,616.00
B. Equipment & Technology	
Equipment/Computers	\$ 10,000.00
Computer Programming/Software	\$ 1,000.00
Special Operations/Maintenance (Eg. Specialized Transit, etc)	
Subtotal B	\$ 11,000.00
C. Support & Contract Services	
Reference Materials	\$ 500.00
Assessments - Internal Costs	
Assessments - External Costs	
Tutoring	
Invigilators	\$ 53,000.00
Invigilators - Benefits	\$ 5,000.00
Notetaking - Manual	
Notetaking - Computerized	\$ 60,000.00
Interpreters/Intervenors/Captioning	
Attendant Care	
Exams/General	
Subtotal C	\$ 118,500.00

D. Professional Development		
Travel	\$	2,000.00
Meeting Expense	\$	700.00
Awareness Activities		
Staff/ Training/Development	\$	2,000.00
Memberships	\$	500.00
Publications		
Subtotal D	\$	5,200.00
E. Other Costs		
Occupancy Costs	\$	4,235.00
Overhead Costs	\$	3,500.00
Design Reviews, etc		
Subtotal E	\$	7,735.00
Total Expenditures \$ 310		310,051.00
Revenue - Expenditures =		(99,259.00)
Carry Forward (2003-2004)	(205,060.00)
Anticipated Expenditures Above Grant	(304,319.00)