

## **University of Toronto St. George Campus**

### **Accessibility Services: Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities**

#### **Annual Report**

In an effort to be more student centred and responsive to student needs, the past year was marked by a period of transition. The Service faced some exciting challenges that have paved the way towards effective organizational change and a higher profile on campus.

The department embarked on a number of projects while carrying out the daily activity of providing accommodations for students with disabilities. The capsule comments below address many of the areas in which the Service was engaged.

#### **Disability Endowment Fund:**

- the Provost recently approved an endowment fund which will assist students who are not eligible for the Bursary for Students with a Disability (BSWD) or a University bursary

#### **Video Productions:**

- students with a wide variety of disabilities tell their stories in a short video about overcoming their fears and anxiety with the help of accommodations and support from Accessibility Services; the video will be an excellent PR promo for students with disabilities who are considering attending the University of Toronto
- a second video is targeted at professors and lecturers; a professor at the Cancer Research Institute shares her story about some of her colleagues' reservations and her decision to accept a student with a visual impairment, only to discover that the world of science is better served with this student in her PhD program

#### **Database Development:**

- interfaced with ROSI, the development of the database will soon allow staff an opportunity to track case management functions, accommodations, funding sources, and a host of other information in the multi-layered service; the automation of the scheduling for tests and exams will be a great step forward

#### **Web-site Development:**

- a plethora of information now exists on the St. George Accessibility Services web-site, including an opportunity for students to register with the Service on line

**Public Relations:**

- there were three publicity pieces, namely: Toronto Star article fall 2000; Abilities Magazine, spring 2001, circ. 5000 disability organizations across Canada; the Varsity centre spread on SACWAC initiatives, June 2001

**New Offices and Name Change:**

- the Service moved to an accessible, professional location on the ground floor of the Robarts Library, in the hub of student activity, ideally located next to the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre; with the Centre next door, students are offered an integrated seamless service, responsive to adaptive technology needs
- the move brought the opportunity for a new name change from the negative and outdated connotation, Disability Services, to a more positive association, namely, Accessibility Services

**Barrier-Free Access Committee Report:**

- the report to Governing Council was accepted; recommendation for a committee to develop a plan to prioritize buildings for barrier-free access initiatives and assure up to date access design standards incorporated into all new building plans
- Student Administrative Council Wheelchair Access Fund (SACWAC) continues to support accessibility requests on the three campuses

**TYP For Students who are Deaf:**

- In-depth report and budget prepared for a one year program; on-going consultation with Deaf Community to secure funding from government sources

**Outreach:**

- in-service presentations on “Who We Are and What We Do” developed for faculty and staff to forge partnerships across the campus
- fliers regarding changes in Service to Colleges and Faculties for distribution to new and returning students

**Bursary for Students with a Disability (BSWD) Policy Change:**

- the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities recently changed the payment policy requiring students to pay for a learning disability assessment prior to the testing, feedback and reporting; the Ministry has been asked to re-visit this policy since it appears to be in violation the Ontario Human Rights Code

**Staffing:**

- a new coordinator was brought on board to implement program review recommendations; the resignation of two staff brought the opportunity to realign the staff complement

**Learning Disability/ Attention Deficit Disorder Unit:**

- 1.25 FTE staff equivalent provide intake and accommodation counselling for approximately 400 students
- 126 LD assessments conducted by part-time psychologist and psychometrists

**Mobility, Sensory, Mental Health and Chronic Health Unit:**

- 1.3 FTE staff equivalent provide intake and accommodation counselling for approximately 400 students
- increased number of students with mental health and systemic/chronic health problems create a greater demand on the service

**Adaptive Technology Resource Centre:**

- 71 assessments completed to assess and recommend adaptive technology needs;
- workshops on various technologies and software scheduled to help students with disabilities develop their skills and competencies

**Test and Exam Centre:**

- 3,157 tests and exams administered for approximately 400 students; this is an increase of 650 compared with last year's statistics; test/exam coordinator assisted by part-time student help

**Volunteer Note-taking Service:**

- 88 student volunteers signed up for weekly note-taking services to assist students with disabilities; the demand far out number the supply; service coordinated by receptionist with part-time student help

**Learning Skills Drop-In Service (funded in partnership with CALSS):**

- 377 students helped with writing and organizing skills, time management and learning strategies

**Van Service:**

- rides scheduled for 20 students with mobility disabilities

**Funding:**

- operating grant from the Ministry of Trades, Colleges and Universities (funding envelope not changed in over 5 years) supplemented with operating grant from Student Affairs

**Accessibility Service Long Term Goals:**

- develop partnerships with a contact person in every College, Faculty and Service across campus to liaise with Accessibility Services;
- develop a roster of volunteer help from untapped student pool

**Student Profiles****Student Profile #1:**

- A. is a doctoral student in medical biophysics working in the area of head and neck cancer at the Ontario Cancer Institute; A. is legally blind.

**Accommodations provided by Accessibility Services:**

- Advocacy to create partnerships with Accessibility Services, Admissions and Awards, and the Cancer Research Institute to provide funding to hire an assistant to be A.'s eyes and hands in the laboratory
- Assessment at the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre to determine special software and technological needs e.g. computer with adaptive software such as zoom text to enlarge print, JAWS screen reader, and scanner; on-going training to use adaptive technology
- Negotiation with funding sources to purchase all adaptive technology and a high quality microscope
- Note-taking services
- exams written in the Service's Test/Exam Centre on computers with adaptive technology; extra time allowed to complete the exam

**Student Profile #2:**

- B. is in Teacher's College at OISE-UT; B. has a complex psychiatric condition; B. experiences further difficulties due to the side effects of medication.

**Accommodations provided by Accessibility Services:**

- Working with OISE-UT staff to ensure support and appropriate accommodations
- Private room in test/exam centre to concentrate as well as extra time to complete test/exams
- Note-taking services
- Negotiations for extensions for assignment due dates
- Informal counselling and guidance to help with disclosure of the disability
- Help with BSWD funding to purchase services for tutoring, counselling, etc.

**Student Profile #3:**

- C. is a student enrolled in the Transitional Year Program; C. is a student with a learning disability who has difficulty processing information; C. requires help with reading and writing

**Accommodations provided by Accessibility Services:**

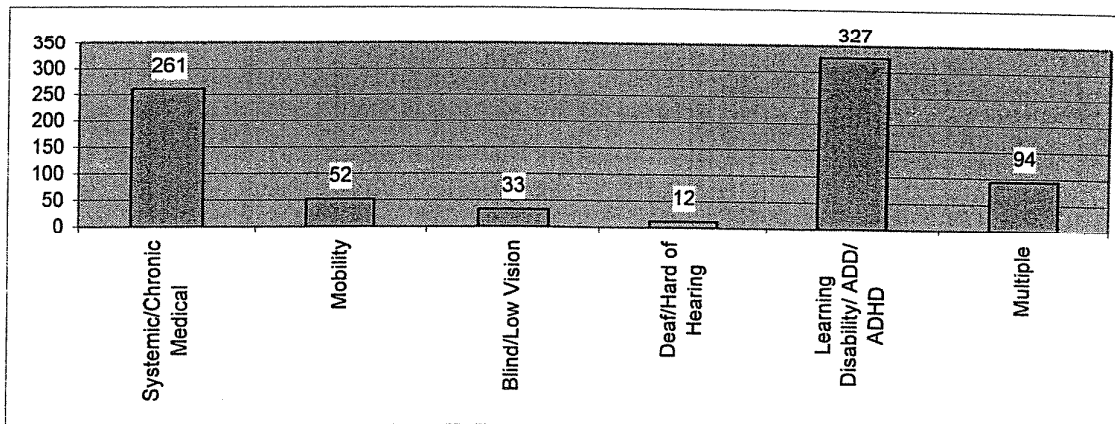
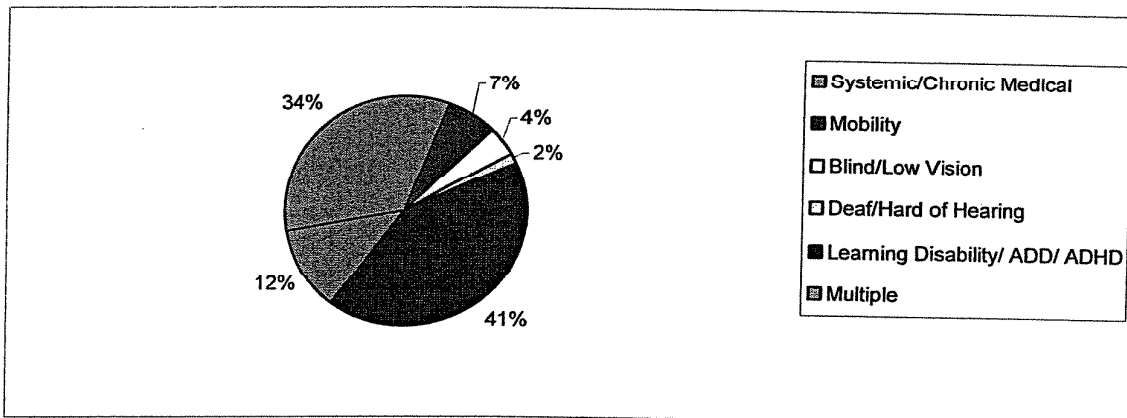
- Learning disability intake/screening by an LD Specialist
- Learning Disability testing – one full day; testing feedback, accommodations, counselling
- Transcription Services – books to tape
- Adaptive Technology (AT) Assessment – computer with special software packages to help student to organize thoughts and assignments
- Tutoring assistance
- Extra time for tests and exams
- BSWD funding - purchase of computer with AT software and tutoring services

# DisAbility Services for Students

University of Toronto

Statistics – 2000-2001

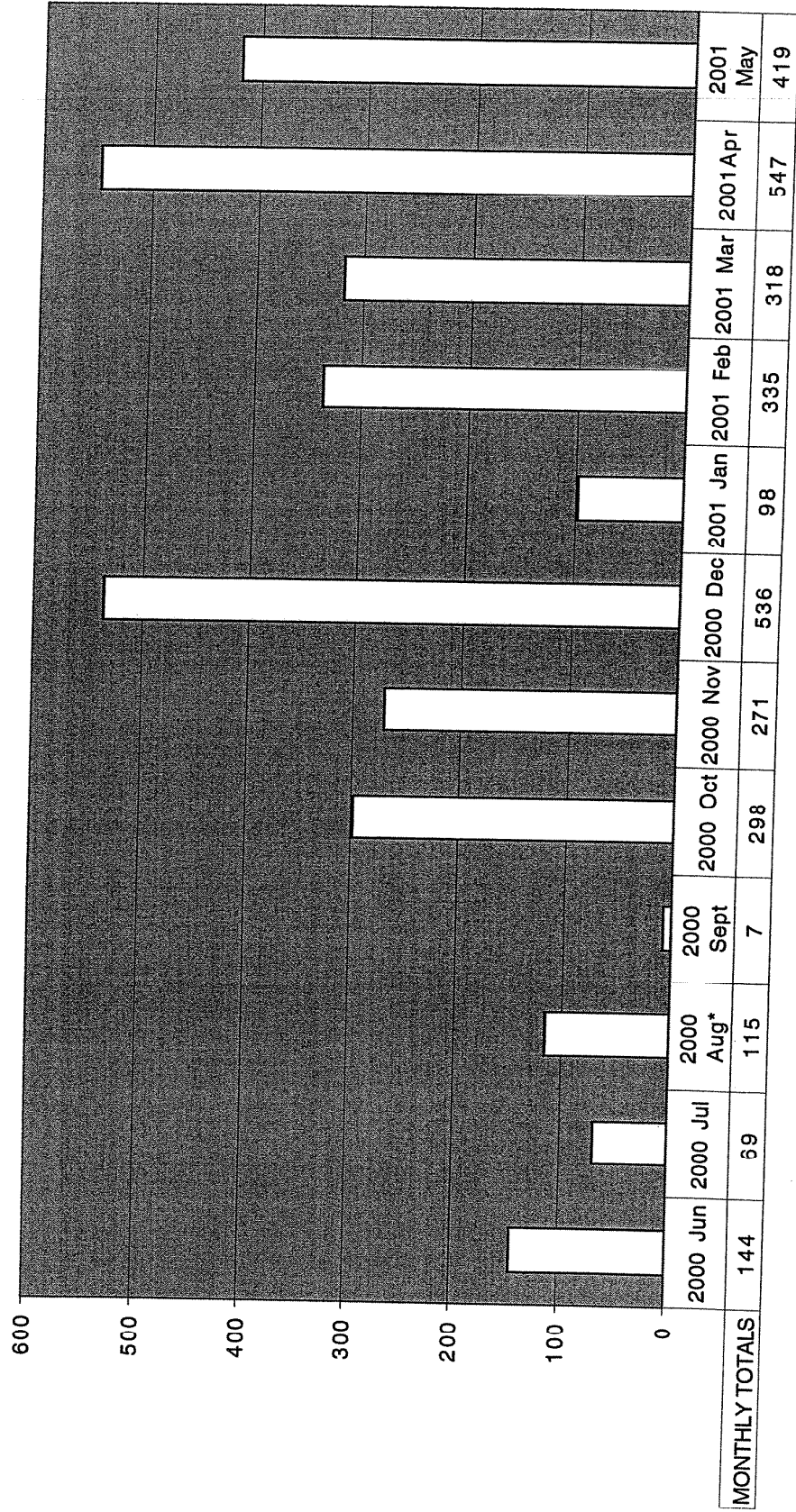
Disability	1999-2000		2000-2001	
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Systemic/Chronic Medical	207	29%	261	41%
Mobility	75	10%	52	7%
Blind/Low Vision	33	5%	33	4%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	19	3%	12	2%
Learning Disability/ ADD/ ADHD	336	47%	327	41%
Multiple	46	6%	94	12%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>100%</b>



# DISABILITY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Test and Exam Facilities Use 2000-2001

**TOTAL NUMBER OF TESTS/EXAMS: 3157**



\* 1999 statistic