Disability Support & Services (2022)

Summary

The disability portion of the ASUW Fall Issues Survey opened on Wednesday, September 7th and received feedback from over 1,136 students. We acknowledge this feedback is limited, but are confident it is a representation of student concerns across campus.

There were multiple questions throughout the survey that acknowledged disability on the University of Wyoming's campus. In question 35 students were asked "Do you manage a diagnosis or disability that impacts your experience as a student?". Results showed that 20.50% (260) students have a disability that impact their experience on campus. On the other hand, 79.50% (1286) said they do not have a disability or diagnosis that impacts their experience on campus. Although these numbers are very different in numbers it is very important to acknowledge that there are still gaps on campus for those who have a certain diagnosis or disability. Results are also shown in section 1 below.

On question 36 students were asked to fill out an open-ended question asking how they feel supported by faculty and staff. These answers are provided below and give a good example of how students in general feel about support on campus. Answers to this question are provided in section 2 below.

Another portion of this survey asked students how accepting they find the campus climate in regards to disability. The survey was split into five different categories. One being very non-accepting and five being very accepting. In this portion of the survey, we received 238 responses. Of these responses 1.68% (4) said that campus was very non-accepting, 10.08% (24) said that campus was non-accepting, 33.19% (79) said they were unsure, 39.92% (95) said that campus was accepting, and finally 15.13% (36) of students said campus was very accepting. All though these data points are limited it gives a good example of how students feel their disabilities are accepted on campus. Results are also shown in section 3 below.

Finally, the last question asked in this survey in regards to disability was an open-ended question on what students feel the campus needs to do to increase disability awareness. These answers are provided below in section 4.

Survey Results Section 1

Do you manage a diagnosis or disability that impacts your experience as a student?			
#	Field	Choice Count	
1	Yes	20.50%	260
2	No	79.50%	1008

How well do you feel supported by faculty and staff?

Survey Results Section 2: Select Open Comments (specific comments about campus staff and Disability Support Services are pulled, all others available upon request)

"I feel like faculty and staff have always made me feel comfortable and accommodated. I've never run into any problems with my disability"

"Depends on the staff. I feel my staff for my college and major are very supportive but outside of that I don't get much support or even interaction with any other staff."

"By the DSS I feel supported, the dining hall is making it difficult for students with dietary restrictions to access food"

"Not well, Res Life Is very unhelpful and often just rude to deal with."

"I feel very supported by most of the faculty and staff"

"I feel supported by the multicultural affairs staff"

"Highly depend on the faculty in question. Staff are great and undervalued."

"Fairly well. I haven't disclosed mine to DSS."

"Most faculty are supportive but some have not been"

"I feel very accepted by staff. I believe that what you put in you get out"

"The staff and faculty members have help me out extremely well with my DSS accommodation"

"So incredibly well, DSS could not be more easy and amendable to work with, absolutely outstanding"

"Depends on the staff member"

"Faculty/Staff are either wonderful or terrible there's no in-between"

"Well by faculty, not well by staff"

"I feel very supported by everyone but my professors"

"Administration has actively made my experience more difficult and less fulfilling to go to school"

"I don't talk about with most faculty or staff, but in general I feel supported"

"I feel very supported by my professors"

"I think I am thankful for the faculty and staff that I have around me and their commitment to my success"

"Most staff and faculty have been supportive, but I've had issues with professors changing test formats and time last minute not realizing that doing so makes it difficult and sometimes even impossible for me and other students to test with accommodation when they do this"

"This year's teachers are better. But I have had some teachers that don't take students' lives into account when teaching and are not understanding at all when issues in life comes up that impact school"

"My disability is very minor, but so far staff has been very open and kind"

"Somewhat supported, the staff that I have interacted with a lot and am out to are great. The multicultural affairs office has been a vital portion of my support system on campus with their facilitation of the LGBTQ+ circle as well as inclusive events."

"Pretty good. Every teacher is accepting of my accommodations"

"I feel supported by some faculty, but typically it's outreach faculty teaching from other states. Even the staff working with WIND or the Disabilities Studies dept. have a difficult time being flexible and making accommodations for struggling students. In general, professors have been truly lacking this aspect, for disabled and nondisabled students."

"It depends on the specific faculty or staff member"

"Most professor are really great with working with students if they need it"

"Extremely. When I've approached faculty and staff they've been massively supportive"

Survey Results Section 3:

How accepting do you find the campus climate regarding disability?			
#	Field	Choice Count	
1	Very non-accepting	1.68%	4
2	Non-accepting	10.08%	24
3	Unsure	33.19%	79
4	Accepting	39.92%	95
5	Very Accepting	15.13%	36

Survey Results Section 4: Select Open Comments

"We definitely need to review policies to ensure they accommodate our entire student/staff body. EDI training for every department. Awareness/education on what qualifies as a disability, because many are not taken seriously."

"Better parking for disabled people"

"Host more events"

"They should start by making campus overall more accessible. It's as simple as many of the accessible doors not working consistently"

"Equip professors how to better handle it, I've seen some students who clearly have a mental disability not be treated or accommodated properly I think unseeable disabilities are often discredited or not viewed as valid and others. And just advocating for the fact that all are okay"

"Talk about mental health in a way that is actually relatable"

"Make disability services more known and more presentations"

"I'm afraid to tell people because I they'll look down on me and take credit from achievements. "Oh, she only did good in my class because I helped her" despite me having almost a perfect GPA"

"Honestly, I think just continuing to have conversations about disabilities, as long as those with disability are comfortable talking about their experiences. I personally love talking about my disability, and I like to teach others about it, but I don't usually bring my disability up with people unless they ask. I don't want to make other uncomfortable. Continuing to talk about disabilities, and have open discussions is helpful for increasing awareness in my opinion"

"Making sure that wheel chair access is known. And that not everyone with a disability is in a wheel chair."

"Mental health isn't taken seriously"

"Make buildings more accessible. Provide more info on counseling."

"Make it easier to get help from UDSS, talk about accessibility more"

"Think if people want to talk about their disability, they can, but the only reason the campus should address it is if there is misinformation being spread"

"Hold staff more universally accountable when they don't accommodate disabilities"

"Allow for more advocacy"

"Possibly on non-visible disabilities. they get skimmed over most of the time."

"Mental disability awareness needs to be focused on more."

"Talk more about the DSS"

"Sometimes teachers are not accommodating"

"Training on at least the ASL alphabet"

" I feel like more buildings need to be accessible."

"As well as classes being more accessible for disabled students. I don't have a super impactful disability as I know many do but I think making things accessible is the best first step in awareness"

"Make efforts to improve in all directions"

"Better sidewalks and cross walks for wheelchair users, the 15th street cross walk in particular."

"Allow more grace and understanding when discussing mental disabilities and potential absences"

"My issue is having to have a handicap placard to obtain Brown Parking Permit. I cannot walk more than 200 feet at a time but because I can walk, my doctor does not feel she should sign the form needed. I struggle getting to my classes every day. I feel that if there is documented proof of a disability(s) then we should be able to obtain Brown level permits."

"I feel the campus could increase outreach to students with "invisible" disabilities. There are requirements for accessibility for visible disabilities, but not as much support (outside of DSS academic accommodations) for the intellectual or social disabilities"

"Give out more information for resources regarding mental health"

"More awareness of invisible disabilities"

"Maybe more wheelchair ramps"

"More knowledge of the therapy and on campus help services."

"Add ramps to all buildings"

"To a point, but more give students the tools to succeed is more important than awareness"

"There honestly isn't much, granted my disabilities don't affect my life on campus as much as others"

"Accept that there are things in life that are difficult to seek help for even if the individual wants too. Previous trauma can be caused by counselors."

"Add a disability awareness class to Saddle Up".

"Make DSS more accessible"

"Make mental disabilities just as important as physical"

"Make the campus more accessible."

"I think accessibility is still an issue, even though it's better than it has been in the past"

"Make it more clear and less intimidating to apply"

"Increased awareness of counseling services. better clearing sidewalks especially for physically impaired"

" Make their buildings way more accessible, most of the handicap doors don't work and I've seen barely any ramps."

"Talk about it. I don't think there is enough discussion or information available to the general student population"

"Fix the speed of response for DSS"

"Make the teachers actually accommodate the students"

"Expanding DSS services"

"Actually, listen to the science on teaching those with disabilities because it doesn't negatively impact neuro-typical learning at all."

"Campus is not very physically welcoming to disabled students. Lots of stairs."

"This doesn't personally affect me, but the university has HORRIBLE building accessibility."

"Just to be patient, if you give me the tool and sometimes help, I can get the job done."

"I think the university does everything it can to support disability"

"Not all are physical, and they can't be treated all the same."

"The main thing that comes to mind is accessibility of buildings and spaces"

"Show that there are many different kinds of disabilities."

"More ramps are always a good thing, especially considering the fact that most of the ones on-campus are single-file. An accessibility ramp that isn't wide enough room for two wheelchair users to pass each other without scraping knuckles isn't very 'accessible' at all, frankly."

"More disability presentations"

"How about acknowledging the validity of it even if I don't go to DSS."

"I do not have enough experience in life to fully answer this question. There are a lot of people on campus they suffer from a disability mentally and not physically so I feel that the University and it's staff members are very nice. some professors i wish were a little more understanding. "

"There needs to be more education for instructions, so they realize that things like last-minute changes to test formats and times and unannounced timed in-class assignments make things more difficult and stressful for students with disabilities, especially when it comes to organizing accommodations."

"I think implementing and reaffirming the importance of disabilities and how they can impact students, and how to handle situations rather than dismissing them"

"The campus probably does need to increase disability awareness but I don't know in what way or how. I haven't really seen any instances that my disabilities weren't taken into consideration"

"Ask disabled people what they need"

"Don't make it so it's incredibly difficult to obtain an ADHD diagnosis from UW. Especially when students like myself have previously been diagnosed by a medical provider."

"RA's need to be better trained to know how to deal with Emotional Support Animals and service animals (not treat them like unwanted pets and know not to tell a resident they can bring one into the fish bowl)"

"Needs to be discussed more, ex. on first day of class"

"To make...people aware that others may have any number of (in)visible disabilities? The awareness should be at a faculty and staff level to increase awareness and the ability to improve access to recourses."

"Make clearer what is considered a disability"

"Make more disability-friendly buildings. "

"More ramps and easier access for wheelchair users, knowledge on how to let others know you're disabled"
"Increase awareness for mental illness"

"Handicap doors never work"

"Better wheelchair accessibility to buildings Make it obvious that you can get reduced cost ADHD/Learning Disability testing, have Disability Services contact and talk to more people. Figure out if it's possible to provide accommodations without an official diagnosis especially since the wait for diagnosis at UW for things like ADHD is at least a year out which is not helpful for students who need resources now."

"More trainings and sessions"

"The problem with this question is that disability is too broad a term. There are physical disabilities which get more emphasis and mental disabilities which are more invisible. The term disability also invites the idea of being lesser than -- which is highly problematic when one doesn't identify as neurotypical. In either case, additional support for physical disabilities (e.g., clearing ice and snow off ramps and providing handi-capable access to classrooms when elevators aren't working) could be improved. In addition, recognizing that not everyone thinks the way you do and being understanding (not just tolerant) of these differences would be helpful for individuals with atypical neurology."

"Are you kidding? This campus is very anti-wheelchair and lack of mobility."

"There needs to be more required learning about ableism and disability, and UW staff must be better about accommodating a wide arrange of disabilities without relying on DSS to figure everything out because there are issues within the department as well."

"Better disability access to buildings- including the assurance that all doors are properly functioning/opening"

Make a different more encouraging name or something"

"Maybe more learning disability awareness.

"More easily accessible buildings and design better suited for neurodivergent people"

"More free long term counseling"

"I don't think that is possible. Some disabilities are not publicly recognized."

"Make it more present on campus, the university never speaks about disability students"

"I think we should destigmatize talking about disabilities"

"Be more open about mental health"

"Letting people know about DSS. So many students are completely unaware of it and what it can do for them."

"Make buildings more accessible for all"

"Help DSS advertise how they can help students succeed"

"There are many "cookie cutter" options for accommodations, especially for neurodivergent people"

"More things to support those with hearing disabilities"

"A club with activities!"

"I would prefer no awareness"

"Spreading information about invisible disabilities"

"Show more compassion. Awareness is not an issue. Everyone knows what a freaking wheelchair is. We need ramps at real doors, we need basic elevator maintenance, and we need to get rid of the fluorescent lights for the autistics."

"Understanding that everyone is different. Which is already done very well."

"Market some more resources!"