

Disability Resources Faculty Survey Spring 2020

Purpose of Assessment

Every couple of years, Disability Resources gathers feedback from faculty members to understand how they can best work with faculty to serve students. Disability Resources wanted to understand faculty's satisfaction in working with the department, level of being prepared for online instruction this summer, and preferred method for receiving information. This is the fifth time Disability Resources has conducted an assessment with faculty members.

Method and Sample

A survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The 18-question survey contained nine quantitative questions, five qualitative questions, and four demographic questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw every question. The electronic survey link was sent on May 13, 2020, to 3,657 faculty members affiliated with Disability Resources; however, 57 email addresses were not valid and faculty did not receive the survey invitation. Up to three reminders were sent to non-respondents before the survey closed on May 29, 2020.

The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. Of the 3,600 faculty members who received the survey invitation, 783 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 22% response rate.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, Disability Resources staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community and services provided. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of faculty members' experiences. Additionally, department leadership is encouraged to share results with the department and engage in conversations to develop changes.

- Several faculty members had positive comments related to working with Disability Resources and were appreciative of the work the department does. Some shared their experience for specific issues and with individual staff members. However, some faculty members expressed frustration in working with Disability Resources. The most common aggravations included assistance with captioning videos or online lectures and the communication from the department with faculty.
 - Disability Resources may want to explore options related to captioning videos and ways to support faculty members by providing additional resources on their website, offering training workshops, or creating "how-to" on-demand videos. This information could be extremely important as more faculty members could be teaching remotely in the fall semester due to COVID-19. This could be a larger concern across the institution. Disability Resources could collaborate with other areas on campus, such as Academic Innovations in terms of some resources for faculty members. The department could also collaborate with faculty allies to work with Faculty Senate in advocating for more centralized university resources or services in helping faculty members.
 - Department staff may also consider the timing of their communication with faculty members, especially as it relates to students with a disability in their classes. If the department is not able to share this information with faculty, it could be beneficial to inform faculty of why they are unable to provide this information.

- This survey was administered approximately nine weeks after faculty learned that the remainder spring semester would be fully online. Throughout the survey, faculty members expressed frustration in this sudden change and their feelings of being overwhelmed and underprepared. Additionally, faculty members shared concerns about teaching in the fall and how to accommodate students' accessibility needs. Furthermore, faculty members showed interest in possible training offered by Disability Resources. The two methods most preferred were email newsletters and on-demand videos. Social media was the least preferred. Just over one-third of faculty members reported not using social media and many wrote comments that they only use social media for personal reasons and not for work.
 - Department staff members are encouraged to consider how they can support, inform, and train faculty members to prepare for summer and fall instruction.
 - Disability Resources may also want to consider communicating with faculty in a variety of methods about policies or procedures that have already changed or will change for the fall, especially as it relates to proctoring exams.
 - The department might consider posting resources and links on its website about how to adapt inclusive teaching (accessibility and universal design) or creating short on-demand videos focused on how to do things such as captioning, rather than only sharing information such as videos need to be captioned. This could also include having clear instructions on the website where faculty members could go for help with captioning. Faculty members indicated they would appreciate step-by-step instruction on several topics.
- If the department assesses faculty members in the future and requests faculty to select their role, the department may want to examine the categories for faculty to select and ensure they fit the language or official titles used in Academic Affairs. A couple of faculty members shared that they felt the list provided was problematic.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending order for 2020 means or frequency percentages. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list of responses can be found in a separate document provided to Disability Resources. Comparisons to previous survey will be made where appropriate. One note, there will not be comparisons to the assessment conducted in 2019 because the survey content changed.

Faculty were initially asked if they had contacted Disability Resources when they had questions or concerns during the fall 2019 or spring 2020 semesters. Table 1 shows that there was a large decrease in the percentage of faculty who contacted the department during the past academic year compared to 2018 and 2016.

	2020 Yes Percentage [n=755]	2018 Yes Percentage [n=77]	2016 Yes Percentage [n=546]
Have you contacted Disability Resources when you had questions or concerns during fall 2019 or spring 2020?	35%	61%	53%

Table 1: Contact Disability Resources

Faculty who contacted Disability Resources (n=262) were asked a follow-up question to share their experience when they sought support or information from the department. Of the 234 faculty members who shared, a majority expressed positive comments about working with the department such as helpful, good, excellent, and timely. Some faculty members described why they contacted Disability Resources such as proctoring an exam, assisting

with an individual student’s need, and clarifying policies. Several faculty members mentioned contacting the department for assistance during the remote learning period as a result of COVID-19.

Faculty members were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about their understanding of teaching students with disabilities. Table 2 illustrates faculty were most in agreement about their understanding of how to provide accommodations and consulting Disability Resources. However, both of these areas decreased compared to 2018.

I understand how to:	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]	2016 Mean (sd) [n]
Provide accommodations for students with disabilities.	42%	48%	7%	3%	1%	4.26 (.79) [693]	4.38 (.62) [73]	4.24 (.76) [504]
Consult with Disability Resources for questions, concerns, or support.	45%	36%	12%	5%	2%	4.17 (.95) [686]	4.34 (.79) [71]	4.03 (.93) [501]
Create accessible digital and web content for students with disabilities.	21%	33%	23%	19%	5%	3.47 (1.15) [692]	3.39 (1.01) [70]	3.20 (1.20) [498]
Ensure that all videos used in my classes are captioned.	21%	27%	24%	21%	8%	3.32 (1.23) [687]	3.09 (1.08) [68]	2.88 (1.24) [490]

Table 2: Faculty Understanding

When asked if they felt prepared to provide accessible online instruction for summer 2020, 56% of the 699 faculty members responding said they felt prepared, 29% were unsure, and 15% indicated they did not feel prepared. Faculty who reported not feeling prepared for providing accessible online instruction (n=106) were asked how Disability Resources could best provide information to support them. Of the 77 responses, a common request was instructions or step by step guide on how to do captioning or creating a transcript when using different platforms, especially Zoom. Some faculty members indicated the format they would like information including links on a website, workshop, and on-demand videos. A few instructors indicated wanting assistance in proctoring exams. One faculty member said they basically “outed” a student by letting them stay on the Zoom meeting but others could not. One final theme was that faculty members do not have the time to do this. Some specifically want Disability Resources to do captioning for them, while others commented on not having time so any training or resources needs to be short and to the point.

Using a select-all-that-apply formatted question, faculty members were asked about their preferred method for receiving tips and best practices for promoting accessibility and universal design in their courses. Table 3, on the following page, reveals that the most preferred methods are email newsletters and on-demand videos. Respondents selecting the “other” option (n=55) were provided the opportunity to write a comment. All 55 faculty members shared a wide range of ideas including information/links on a website, written guides, consultation, FAQ sheet, workshops, phone calls, live chat, live web consolation, and step by step instructions. A few faculty expressed wanting resources or actual help, not just tips and best practices.

Which option(s) would be your preferred method for receiving tips and best practices for promoting accessibility and universal design in your courses? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage [n=668]
Email newsletters	69%
On-demand videos	55%
Live videos	17%
Blog posts	13%
Audio podcasts	8%
Other	8%
Social media	6%

Table 3: Preferred Training Methods

When asked if they had visited the Disability Resources website recently, a majority of the 696 faculty members responding (90%) indicated they had not visited the website and 10% said they had. This is similar to the past two assessments. In 2018, 9% reported they had visited the website, and in 2016, 10% of the faculty had visited the website.

Those who had visited the website (n=72) were asked two follow-up questions. They were first asked what information they were seeking when they went to the Disability Resources website. Of the 59 comments, several were looking for contact information, hours, and location. Several also stated coming to the website for information and resources as the university moved to online course instruction during COVID-19. Other reasons included how to caption a video or Zoom, specific accommodations, processes, forms, syllabus, and testing process.

The second follow-up question asked faculty about any additional information to be included on the website that would be helpful. There were 24 suggestions provided such as “how-to” articles or videos, on-demand videos, live chat, online workshops, tools for large classes, types of accommodations, best practices, and common mistakes. Captioning was mentioned, and that there is little information about who is responsible for it or how to do it.

Using a select-all-that-apply formatted question, faculty members were asked about the social media platform they use most often. Table 4 shows that of those who use social media, Facebook is the most used platform. However, just over one-third of faculty members reported not utilizing social media. Respondents selecting the “other” option (n=8) were provided the opportunity to write a comment. Of the eight responses, faculty members reported using GroupMe, Zoom, eCampus, YouTube, Reddit, Quora, and Tumblr.

Which of these social media platforms do you use most often? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage [n=675]
Facebook	46%
I do not utilize social media	33%
Linkedin	22%
Twitter	19%
Instagram	18%
Other	1%

Table 4: Social Media

Faculty members were provided the opportunity to share any other feedback or suggestions for Disability Resources, and 104 opted to provide a comment. Faculty members expressed wanting assistance with captioning videos, proctoring exams, including online exams, and training resources such as short on-demand videos, appropriate accommodations, and working with large classes. While some wanted more tips and best practices, others stated they wanted information on how to do things, not just what to do. Others shared that they would

appreciate more communication from Disability Resources and to know earlier in the semester, or even before the semester, if they will have a student with a disability in their class so they can prepare. Several faculty members commented on concerns they have for potential changes in the fall semester due to COVID-19 and still accommodating students. They indicated a desire for guidance and resources from Disability Resources. Several faculty members provided praises for the department; however, a few also reported challenges they faced and frustrations they experienced when working with Disability Resources.

To better understand the faculty members working with Disability Resources and students with disabilities, respondents were asked four demographic questions. Table 5, on the following page in descending order for each category, reveals a majority of faculty members responding to the survey were professors, in the College of Liberal Arts, with 1 – 5 years of experience at Texas A&M, and have worked with 1 – 10 students with disabilities during their time at Texas A&M. Compared to 2018, there was a 42% increase in faculty who have been at Texas A&M for 1 – 5 years, while a 44% decrease in those who have been at the institution for 15 or more years. Additionally, there was an increase of 28% of faculty who have worked with 1 – 10 students while at Texas A&M; however, a decrease of 32% for those who have worked with 31 or more students. Those selecting the “other” option for their role were allowed to write a response. Seventeen (17) faculty members shared various roles including program coordinator, research assistant, postdoc, director, associate dean, academic advisor, course support, and emeritus. Comparisons to 2016 are not included because some questions and some response options changed.

Faculty Demographics	2020 Frequency Percentage	2018 Frequency Percentage
Role	[n=693]	[n=68]
Professor	66%	79%
Instructor / Lecturer	27%	15%
Teaching Assistant / Graduate Assistant	5%	--
Other	3%	6%
College	[n=676]	[n=68]
Liberal Arts	21%	21%
Engineering	18%	19%
Sciences	14%	10%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	13%	18%
Mays Business School	10%	10%
Education and Human Development	8%	16%
Architecture	5%	4%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	3%	2%
Geosciences	3%	--
Public Health	2%	--
George Bush of Government & Public Service	1%	--
Nursing	1%	--
Medicine	<1%	--
College of Pharmacy	<1%	--
Transition Academic Programs	<1%	--
Dentistry	--	--
Law	--	--
Years Served as an Instructor at Texas A&M	[n=689]	[n=67]
1 - 5 Years	45%	3%
More than 20 Years	20%	57%
6 - 10 Years	14%	12%
11 - 15 Years	12%	12%
15 - 20 Years	9%	16%
Approximate Number of Students with Disabilities Worked with at Texas A&M	[n=689]	[n=68]
1 - 10	42%	12%
11 - 30	27%	25%
More than 50	20%	41%
31 - 50	11%	22%

Table 5: Faculty Demographics

Department Background

According to its website (<https://disability.tamu.edu/home/about/>), Disability Resources “offers accommodations coordination, evaluation referral, disability-related information, assistive technology services, sign language interpreting and transcription services for academically related purposes.” The department has three guiding principles: equity, collaboration, and excellence.

Project Details

The email distribution of this survey in May 2020 coincided with the move of all courses to online delivery, and shelter at home executive orders in April caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This change could have an affect on the survey response rate and the feedback provided by faculty members.

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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