It has been a huge year of change for all students,
and especially so for students with disabilities
in the shift to online higher education in a pandemic.

Listening to
Students with Disabilities
2021

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Students with Disabilities…

"It's very hard to do my homework and manage my time with assignments. Especially with the pandemic going on and not being able to interact with people.

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) That its hard for me to manage my time, I tend to take more time than I need to on assignments.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) N/A

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Talking to my professors and letting them know that I need more time to do the assignments and some of them letting me.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Trying to do assignments ahead of time especially because I have so much reading to do.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Be more understanding and kind. Offer more helpful resources to me that can help me with my studies."

—Mexican American, I have OCD and depression, I am a 5th year student.

"It sucks, balancing school and my pain is very hard. I think about dropping out, but I can't, I need to stay in school, so that I can have a future.

I wish I didn't have to suffer in silence, people look at me and don't think I have a disability, people don't believe me on the severity of it. It's real and painful and I deal with it every day and it really messes up my quality of life.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) I haven't fortunately yet, but I'm afraid for the future.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) I can stay home and not worry about going and sitting in class, because sitting is sometimes something I can't do. I am able to attend class more, in the comfort of my home.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Nothing

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Have understanding faculty, that respect my accommodations."

—I have a medical condition, it's a chronic pelvic pain disorder, I'm female, Mexican, 19, second year.

"(What is it like for you right now, as a student with your disability or disabilities?) Difficult because …. People don't understand at all….

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) Prejudicing that we are lazy or dumb….but we are not…

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Nothing, is very frustrating not having any direction in using the technology and also get the focus in checking the discussions or watching the class videos that professor prepare in advance. It has been difficult taking classes online for me.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Isolation, short availability for talking with the professors, some professors don't understand that we are having more classes and tons of homework and go so fast in covering the chapters. I feel online teaching is kind of abstract.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Better awareness for the professors and staff about the students with disabilities. Knowledge and understanding…I would like to see the University prepare a class for the professors and taking awareness about these especial students."

—Attention deficit Disorder Dyslexia short memory Dysgraphia

"Some days are challenging to talk. It's always awkward speaking to people who do not know my challenge with speaking because they give me weird looks or do not wait for me to speak.

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) Give me time. It's not always easy to speak or to ask questions in front of everyone. Don't judge me because I can't say certain words or think that I'm not as smart as I actually am.

The biggest thing I deal with as someone who stutters is that though I don't get a chance to explain my challenges, they judge me by making me feel less of a person. You can tell a lot by the body language or the tone of someone I am speaking to who is displeased by my communication.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Not having to have those conversations and explain my situation.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Same thing. Not having those conversations and getting those experiences to educate those about a stutter.

I think there needs to be a disability conference type of event that students can talk to staff and peers about their disabilities and their experiences. I think it would be very helpful for those to hear and for people with a disability to express themselves."

—Speech impediment 21 Hispanic and white Senior

"Transitioning to the online learning environment has been very difficult, at best, and has had a negative effect on my GPA. There have been many tears and lots of emotional breakdowns. I had considered dropping classes, but if I had, then I would have lost my ability to continue participating in the … Honors Program. The ability to transfer date/information from the screen to paper just to be able to do the work required complicates the learning process and impacts my ability to retain the information. It is especially impactful for mathematical calculations, accounting, data analysis and MIS. Online textbooks are not helpful for me at all. I need physical books. Although some professors have tried very hard to be engaging in their video lectures, watching videos are not the same as in person lectures and videos provided by publishers are even worse. Technological glitches/issues cause constant interruptions and makes for a very frustrating/triggering environment.

For the most part I think that all faculty and staff is familiar with PTSD. They have shown great compassion and a willingness to understand.

I have not experienced any ignorance, stereotyping, bias, or prejudice while in school. It has actually been quite the opposite.

As I become more familiar with the technology/apps being used, it has gotten easier to navigate the online environment and has eased some of my symptoms. I do like that my professors are very responsive to questions and concerns, and in many cases can resolve issues quickly. I enjoy my synchronous classes the most. Being able to engage with the class and ask questions is helpful in my ability to retain information.

I feel like the ability to accommodate the different learning styles of students has been affected greatly. Especially for tactile learners like myself. Seeing the professor write on a whiteboard has basically been eliminated from lesson plans. Handwritten examples of calculations is easier for me to understand than to see typewritten formulas. I tend to be somewhere between Visual and Kinesthetic. The reliance on PowerPoints is draining, especially when there are PowerPoints included that are not covered in the lecture. Asynchronous classes are a chore to get through and in my courses have been devoid of any kinetic offerings.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Dedicated tutoring services for students with disabilities. The current tutoring being offered is not sufficient. In-person tutoring for students with disabilities should be an exception to the current rules in place, just as certain in-lab classes have an exception. I feel like it would be possible to provide in-person tutoring in a safe manner and should be implemented immediately. Also, to ensure that there are tutors that can tutor a range of subjects especially for some of the more time consuming/complicated math and accounting classes."

—PTSD Female, Full-time status First generation college student

"The teachers must understand that unless we school them about our specific disabilities as they relate to college and learning, we don't expect them to know how to treat us.

It's happened so many times, I can't count. The feeling of "Vulnerability" & "Shame" is brought out in Zoom. I don't care to show my face or speak because of the brain trauma which makes my answers come a little slower and when I speak, because of the broken jaw, I am not clear.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) It's quiet!

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) It takes an average of 24 hours before someone gets back to me. I'd like to suggest that more personnel are hired to use the phones. We need to have some engaging vocal exchanges.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) We need tutors! We need help with shoring up our academics! Get us some tutors in subjects across the board."

—This writer's disabilities are "Traumatic Brain Injury" from a car accident, and also as a result, Low Vision in one eye, and a prosthetic occupies the other space. My jaw was also broken in the accident and was never reset.

"Extremely difficult. My professors have been wonderfully supportive but I've not received …accommodations until last week….

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?)

Faculty: my professors have been awesome, but I've encountered professors in the past (at another college) who shared my disability to the class without my consent. Generally, I think faculty need to do more to understand disability rights. My professors at Sac State so far have had a great understanding, show of professionalism, respect for privacy, empathy, and have worked interactively with me to make class accessible. The major is one that works with people with disabilities. In other majors and classes (other school), that hasn't been the case (with the exception of a disabled professor).

Staff: As a disabled person with a manual disability, it's not accessible to chase…information down. It should be in one, clear place.

Students: need to be aware of ableism and how to treat disabled people with dignity, and not pry into their disabilities.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?)

At sac state: (A) suggestion to me was to take fewer units (not possible since it's an accelerated program)… then suggested I don't enroll (bias). I'm just as academically capable as anyone else. Treatment like this is why there are low rates of disabled students graduating accelerated advanced, and STEM major programs....

At other schools: Denial of reasonable accommodations. Violations of ferpa rights. Discriminatory comments. Inaccessible buildings."

—Manual and physical disabilities, and chronic pain. White, gender fluid

"I'm having a hard time finding a way to record the live lectures. I really enjoy the Professors that have pre recorded their lectures as I can watch them multiple times and take notes.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) None

I'm loving it. Not having to commute to campus and find a parking space. Not having to get ready in the morning. Being able to take my classes in my pajamas.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Trying to record the live lectures. Next I'm going to see if I can get Sonocent to do it.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Can't think of anything. I am very grateful for the services I receive."

—I'm a first generation student graduating this May. I suffer from depression, anxiety, and early stages of dementia

"Currently I'm having a problem with one of my teachers and constantly having to tell him to add more time to my quizzes and still hasn't after even telling even after class on zoom and emailing him. Other teachers have not been a problem except this one.

I would like them to know them giving me a 10 question quiz with 10 minutes isn't very easy and makes me feel very pressured. Also being dyslexic and getting marked wrong for spelling still on my fill in the blank exams is very wrong.

Some teachers who don't understand my type of disability don't try to understand me and it's very difficult. I feel just because my disability isn't visible they don't take me seriously when contacting them about my accommodations.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Some teachers being able to understand that it is more challenging and being able to work with students.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Being in contact with teachers isn't easier and some won't even get back to you or may take days due to many messages they might be receiving.

I feel Sacramento State should enforce more to the teachers that there is students with disabilities and just because they aren't visible and may not seem like they have a disability that it is still there."

—I am a senior college student, Latina, I have a learning disability that comes along with test anxiety and dyslexia.

"It is difficult because some professors are not so accommodating or understanding. But that has always been the case.

I would like everyone to know that having a disability is difficult. We need time and assistance and for people to be patient and give us accommodations.

I have mostly faced racial bias in my STEM classes and gender bias. Some students and professors do not take me seriously because I am a Latinx femme identifying person in STEM.

I like that the lectures are recorded and we can do everything on our own time. This is extremely helpful as a student with disabilities and I believe this option should be in effect permanently.

I do miss being in person but that is all.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) To have hybrid learning permanent in this institution. I genuinely like online learning bc it gives the option of recorded lectures. So if I am unable to attend class because of my disability I won't miss the material. I believe Zoom lectures or a hybrid in class & online option should be required once covid is over. Being hybrid, with the option to go to class but all classes will be recorded and online, will help tremendously for students with disabilities."

—I am a queer, latinx, first generation college student with a cognitive disability. My disability is debilitating. At any given moment I can lose the function of my body.

"(What is it like for you right now, as a student with your disability or disabilities?) I feel like it does not bother me at all as a person with a learning disability.

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) Just be patient because they don't understand the people with learning disability even if the person looks like they don't have one.

I dealt with people who think it is acceptable to say 'I am going to go get tested' (for a disability) because they want a better registration date for classes or because they are stressed/anxious about an exam

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Having a quiet place to take an exam

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Trying to work with classmates via Zoom

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Maybe better outcomes for students with both physical and learning disabilities who are voicing their opinions or thoughts."

— I have a learning disability and sometimes it takes me a while to learn a topic. I am bi-racial.

"I am struggling a lot. Working from home has been incredibly stressful as I am given very little regular supervision which I thrive with. Having therapy in my house is terrible because I can't be open because I don't have a private place to have therapy. I miss my friends and family. COVID has really taken a lot of things from me.

I work very hard to pass as neurotypical. I occasionally miss class because I am just drained from things but I feel like telling your professor that you have mental illness makes them treat you differently. I have a pretty severe case of ADHD so I have to work really hard to succeed and I would like to be recognized for my efforts but I feel like I can't say that an hour assignment takes me 4 hours because then I have to explain how hard I'm working and they won't take me seriously.

When people say they are being so ADHD when they don't have it, it is very frustrating. I have an executive function disorder that impairs my daily life. I forget to pay bills. I forget to eat. I forget to shower. Doing normally day to day things is incredibly difficult for me and people don't expect me to have those issues. For example, one of my professors said they were very understanding of mental illness but expressed frustration that I would constantly miss class, but I was in a down spell and having problems leaving my house due to depression and agoraphobia. I would drive to campus and start sobbing in the parking lot from anxiety. However, if I told her that I had been at school and couldn't make myself go to class she would have reacted poorly.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) The ability to do it anytime. I like being able to nap during the day and work till 4am. I like having my courses available to me at any time so I am able to work ahead so if I have a down spell, I'm not behind.

The isolation has been hard. I thrive around people and being at home alone all the time has been really difficult for my mental health.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Support disabled students better. Like there isn't a support group for neurodivergent individuals on campus. We exist and need support like everyone else. There is more to school than just the classroom."

—I am a reentry student with mental illness as well as ADHD. I am a black woman as well.

"It goes well as I'm very high functioned.

I would like them (faculty and staff) to know that I am here to take any services they have to offer and provide.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) None

I like that I continue to learn, but at times, with my own pace for reading and writing and/or keeping on track.

I have just only missed being on campus and doing the in-person stuff.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Keep doing what you do best to keep up with good learning and staying safe in our environment."

—I have ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

"It's really been really tough and at moments terrifying, but it has improved since I dropped a class. I feel like the workload has increased more and I can't keep up with it. Not that I'm not understanding the material, but it takes me longer to do the work, and then I have to understand/learn the concepts which translates to me falling behind. Because the work is points and I have to get the points for my grade.

My 1st semester here (in-person) I took 13 units and I did fine. This semester (1st full online semester) I had 12 units and had to drop (a class) because the work volume was so much that I didn't have time to learn the content because the work is the only thing I could think keeping my grade up. Additionally, the workload was so much that I couldn't focus on my other classes which lead to me falling behind in those as well. To make things further, the classes are designed to teach yourself and math is my worst subject and with my disability it's a nightmare (I suffered a couple anxiety attacks and mental breakdowns in just the 2 weeks I was in the class before I dropped it). I'm not saying I'm not willing to do the work (which I am) but, I didn't feel supported in the 1st 2 weeks of the semester. Now I'm doing fine but I hate that I had to drop a class, just because it was fast paced and the amount of work was too much. I didn't have a fighting chance, so now I will probably have to stay another semester because of this.

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) That I learn slower than the rest of the class. I understand the class has got a pace to keep and I'm with that, I just take longer to comprehend the material.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?)
I haven't had any until online learning, with the assumption that just because the tools are here that it's my fault for not doing well. If I don't have the time to access tools that are to help me, because I have to get stuff done for the class (for any points possible) then I'm set up for failure.

I don't like any of it. I don't like: -the increased workloads – impersonal – less classmate comradery

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) I feel like my issues are more in line with the 'Online Experience', I've always avoided online classes because these were my fears. So, I don't know if there is anything to do better."

—I am a black male and I have Mild Neurocognitive Disorder due to Traumatic Brain Injury.

"(What is it like for you right now, as a student with your disability or disabilities?) Headaches, lots of breaks to do assignments, am slow at completing tasks, no one knows how to treat me even if they know I have a disability.

It's important to know that it takes longer for me to understand complete tasks. I shouldn't be exposed to flashes of light or quickly switching screens.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) None

I like that I don't have to exert so much effort into transiting just to go to school and that I can stay at home with my parents to watch over me should anything go wrong. I also like that I can easily take care of myself with the convenience of my own restroom at home, food at home, kitchen, and bed whenever I need to rest. I don't feel embarrassed taking care of myself at home. I don't have to put much effort in socializing with people at school and that there's so much going on versus at home where I can focus on a few people at a time such as on Zoom.

I like everything about learning online at home.

CSUS can train or inform professors about the cases of disabilities which students may have. Having a website or catalogue handy for the professors to review would be important when they notice or know that they have a student with a disability in their classroom."

—Disabilities: Traumatic brain injury, seizure. School year: Sophomore First generation college student qualified for financial aid federally, but CSUS won't help aid me because of university qualifications

"(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) My professor and advisor/professor: My advisor/professor made me feel undeserving of my accommodations because I wouldn't need to use all the time given to me for my exams. She would always comment on how early I would finish my exam. For my first quiz, my professor refused to provide me with my extra time accommodation and ended up formally writing me up for lack of professionalism when I spoke with him in his office regarding the matter.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) It's working for me. I can take breaks and move around as needed.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Not interacting with friends.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Educate staff and faculty about disabilities and their appropriate interactions with students. I would like the disability center to educate faculty and staff regarding common disabilities and how they should appropriately respond regarding accommodations."

—29 years old, female

"As a student with a disability, right now I am experiencing issues in regards to online timed testing. Thus, when I take the timed tests/midterms/finals I fail because I run out of time to complete the work within the given frame. I had other small online issues as well. Such as with low connection…

If you have/know any students with diagnosed/low vision/disability, be aware they will always experience online submitting timing issues because of their condition which limits to slowing down testing time and I wish/hope changes will be done from everyone in understanding students need to receive a fair opportunity in testing. Call out disabled students and ask them what they are experiencing if they are failing.

If I said I ran out of time then I am formally being put into one group of the students that failed within the time frame. If trying to state I need more time for the test work then I get compared fairly to students that passed the test and get asked the question: How come they were able to complete the work within the time frame and you not. This comes to me being viewed by professors as not a disabled student, but as a regular student with bad vision even though I was given extra time because I sent the accommodations prior to this spring semester. Moreover, I had one midterm where only 3 students passed (10%) and every one failed just because of the time. I understand that if we were meant to meet in person then things would be different in regards to timing, but that is not the case with timing online.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) PowerPoints/Group assignments = more knowledge

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Online testing (timed) = 100% failure

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Help me understand what other ways I could improve. Help me not give up."

—Disability: bad vision/low vision/vision impaired and take a lot of time to complete timed tasks…due to processing information visually. Age: 19 Race: White/Russian What I am planning to achieve: Graduate with B.S. degree and obtain experience in the engineering field of study.

"It is difficult. Winters are harsh and exacerbate my injuries

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) None, which may have a lot to do with me being white.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Less exposure to the elements, less depending on campus transportation.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Vision problems, trouble concentrating, time management

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) I don't know"

—Physical disabilities, white

"Very difficult. Distant learning has voided all benefits I receive for disability especially test taking. I do still receive extra time but, I have many distractions at home with kids interrupting. Learning is challenging because of the communication gap through Zoom. Processing information and taking notes is required at a greater pace for teachers are not writing because the read prewritten note.

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) I had classmate whom I help learn the materials actually say that they would be doing better if they were allowed to take tests in the testing center as well. As if, I don't deserve the grade I receive.

The recording of lectures help because when I can't keep up with writing everything I have recordings to go back to watch. Unfortunately, I take my handwritten notes, teachers notes and recorded lectures and rewrite final notes and it takes hours….

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Everything. Lack of access to help. Collaboration, which is key to learning math.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) N/A"

—Both learning and physical disability.

"I learn best when I can have different stimuli all on the topic. COVID has put a limit on relationship building, getting help from fellow students, and added a new layer of distractions, one of my weaknesses. My ADD should have been accommodated with 10 units as full time and a price reduction.

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) I am 64 years old. Age does not matter as much as willpower….

The list is too long. But 1 stands out (a professor at another college) was going to allow me extra time though I had not finished disability testing. At the end of the class final time she demanded I turn in my test. I got a C instead of a B.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Not driving to class. Not being around sick people sharing.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Time management. Getting extra help. Talking to others for a better understanding. Being able to touch what is talked about…

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) We should have learned many valuable lessons in these times. Classes should be both online and in person when possible. Sick people that can share their discomfort, should be mandated to not come to class. The school should track sickness."

—ADD, physical disabilities: back, neck, arthritis, hip replacement….

"Well, I can say that the Professors are doing a shy job at providing lectures. When you sign up for a class that says Monday and Wednesday I expect you to have a video of at least an hour or for you to commit your time to provide lectures relevant to the material….***

Learning styles need to be respected. Please remove the word Uh or Umm from your lecture videos as this is extremely distracting. Please provide lecture videos that complement the book and contain the relevant details to the material being assessed in the exams. Self aggrandisement and bird walks are not helpful to lecture and seriously distract from my ability to follow topics….

Learning styles have been completely ignored and as a result, students have to work a lot harder than other students to keep up with the materials as they shift through content that is irrelevant and relevant. If the book doesn't have audio to compliment it then it is harder for someone like me to digest and thus if you don't provide lectures then it is even harder for me to retain the information. This is something that the community college system appears to do very well and the State College system fails at miserably.

The lectures from the classes that I do have … have been going great. They are involved and interactive and are encompassing of the materials that are pertinent to the class.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Every teacher uses Canvas in a different way with different formatting and places to find their materials. This is super confusing and thus requires me to have an assistant to help me find everything as I become very confused. Consistency is the key to learning.

The CSUS system in general needs to be more readily available and ready to serve its students. This is a problem across all departments, hiding behind emails and voicemail boxes. I find that this treatment has made me feel subhuman and has aggravated some of my conditions."

—Male, 3rd year, Mexican & American, ADD, Anxiety, PTSD, Depression, Reading Comprehension Issues, Auditory Processing Issues (lipreader)

"I have had a professor refer to my accommodation form as a 'learning disability' which I don't have and so I felt he already thought that I would not perform well academically. If I show my form to teachers at the beginning of the semester, most often they pay extra attention to my work. I usually wait until I need to use the accommodations so I can delay the discrimination.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Saving time from commuting.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Focusing is very difficult and I will be marked down for participation if I don't speak often which is very hard to do. Bad WiFi."

—Student with Disabilities

"I've been grateful and privileged not to personally be discriminated for having a learning disability but I have peers in my major who have and continue to be. I support students with disabilities as well as students from intersections. I have however been mistreated, isolated due to my ethnicity.

I'd like professors and faculty to listen to students with disabilities. If a student or students are calling out ableism, listen and do better. Phrases such as 'Thank you for sharing your experience,' and then actions such as not doing anything, don't change terminology, address outdated phrases and words. Also when talking about disabilities in class making sure to direct students to the disability community. As far as students – refer to disability community when disability is mentioned, don't assume how someone identifies and be open to a call out and a call in.

The isolation, pressure I felt in my first semester at Sac State was really eye opening. From the curriculum being taught in class, to the competitive nature in my program and having a professor teach stereotyping curriculum and generalized statistics. I went to a senior professors office hrs (this professor is the only POC professor in my department) monthly just discouraged, sad and wanting to change my major. My major is predominantly white so I felt very uncomfortable sharing my experience in classes often that semester. And overall, didn't feel welcomed, the student chapter my major has also wasn't inviting, most of the board members as well were white.

I like the flexibility of online classes and how for most of my classes I have a three day window to take a test during a time that best suits me.

I don't like how unmotivated online classes make me, and the aspect of notetaking I used to enjoy about going to class is gone because we're provided slides. I also prefer in person for my learning personally, I had to accommodate to an online space quickly and I'm still adapting as well.

I'm a senior so I'm done in May, but I'd like Sac State to actively commit to anti-ableism work, anti-racism work and get rid of the 'politics' when it comes to student concerns. It doesn't hurt anyone to add intersectionality into curriculum and accessibility."

—My learning disability is short-term memory deficiency & audio, visual delay. I'm a mixed female-Black, Mexican, Filipino. I'm pansexual and I'm a Senior at Sac State.

"(What is it like for you right now, as a student with your disability or disabilities?) Very difficult

(Any instance of ignorance, stereotyping, or bias experienced your higher education?) None

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) I can be in a comfortable chair at home, I do not have to try to get around campus. There are so many things I like.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Nothing

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Make books audible."

—Learning Disabilities, Psychological and Physical female

"I am part of SSWD which helps tremendously as a hard of hearing student. They help provide me with captioners for my non-ASL classes. I wouldn't pass my classes without that program!

(What would you like faculty, staff, and students to know most about your disability or disabilities?) ALWAYS provide videos and lectures with closed captions/subtitle. High volumes are overstimulating and providing subtitles would help students capture every part of the video without missing anything. If a student such as myself are in the class with a captioner, please place yourself on my side of the classroom so my captioner can catch everything you say without interrupting you to clarify missed dialogue. Pass a sign-in sheet rather than verbally roll call to avoid any student missing their name. Encourage small group discussions in classrooms with movable desks only.

I have found myself struggling to secure a desk closest to the teacher. I usually communicate with teachers in the first week that I need a close spot and I've experienced a good handful of teachers who view it as a bothersome request as well as me requesting captions on videos shown in class. I've had a teacher scold me for not participating in group discussions in-class and pressured me to do so when my captioner wasn't available and there was drilling construction outside my classroom.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) Closed captions in videos! Zoom has this feature to provide automatic captions or to be captioned by a remote captioner. That alone is super amazing. I like being able to pause and slow down videos for my ASL classes. I feel that participating in class is easier because I'm able to wear headphones and not pick up every outside noise.

With ASL classes, it is difficult to capture every sign due to poor internet connection. ASL to begin with is a very social language. It definitely hurt my progress in learning ASL and pursuing it outside of classes.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) Inform professors and other educational leaders how to encourage better accessibility for it's Deaf or Hard of Hearing students AND Deaf faculty. My Deaf professors deserve accommodations in any form of educational meetings to ensure they get all of the information other professors are receiving…. Deaf professors are truly the best people to teach students about Deaf culture and it's language and it shows in the students."

—First generation college student Latina – Mexican Hard of hearing

"I was granted access to the accommodations that I requested … although it is still a bit difficult to get the information in a special format from my professors, at times leaving me without the accommodations that work. The added stress has left me disconnected to the work and to be frank like maybe I just don't belong at a school who doesn't seem to work with disabilities…. I am not in a wheelchair and you can't put your finger on my disability, yet I still demand a modicum of respect. I feel like when my doctor has offered a statement letter of my disabilities and that I will need support to manage being a student in college that it should be adequate to access information that accommodates the way I process information. It is a very frustrating situation which I hope gets a lot better as the semester progresses.

I have a stress disorder that affects me profoundly. The more stress I am under the less capacity I have for learning. It takes me longer to process information so I can't always participate well with on the spot questions, I do better in discussions. I spend a lot more than 3 hours study per credit hour trying to hold memory. To give a reflection on what that looks like for me; I have been unable to count change in my pocket because I forgot what I had just counted…. I just want to be able to access information in a way that I can process and try to get a bachelors degree. So often I hear students with goals of masters and PhD's and I think I will be lucky to get my bachelors. This may be a bleak outlook to some but it's a story of triumph for me. It took me over five years to get an associates degree. I don't want to feel pressured into trying to compete or 'get through in two'.

I struggle to sign up for classes and worse I have been denied registration for classes even though I have the prerequisites, by the time someone gets around to help put me in the class its full…. These issues are overwhelming and I don't have the emotional energy most days to cope with it but when I do I have often been referred to another office who will then refer me to someone else, etc. My disability is difficult enough, please don't send me down the line to another office, tell me to contact the tech team, send to sign up for an office visit with a link to a new program if you can't identify the steps it takes to make the appointment. The system in place is not set up for people with disabilities to thrive. I look like everyone else but I have disabilities. It is not a doctors note to get me out of working hard or studying. Last, I do my absolute best to fit in and most are unable to understand the depths of my disability without knowing me well. I look like just another lady but I am not, I don't need equipment to help me walk but I do need extra stimulus to help build memories. 50 First Dates (if you remember the film) rings a bell and I am grateful for the memory I do have, but please if I reach out for help please understand you may not be the first two people I have reached out to about this issue and it may have taken me months to get this far.

(What do you like about/is working for you in online learning?) I absolutely love the fact it is recoded! I can go back while I am studying and listen to a lecture until I have gained some ground on the subject. It is so much better than Sonocent. Most teachers have the slides in the background as well. Thank you all for that! It has helped me tip my applecart back up after some minor meltdowns. I also really like that if I can't sleep at 3 am I have a class that has the weeks lectures ready for me at my convenience.

(What don't you like about/is not working for you in online learning?) Learning how all of my professors use Canvas has been a large struggle that no amount of accommodations can help bridge. Each teacher has their own way of utilizing the application. Let me explain: I have a class that has a discussion due and I remember that but clicking on the discussion link won't get you there, I have to go into modules and then in a lecture and follow that next link to find it. I have another class that has a zoom link only in their 'homepage' and no connection to the zoom link on the Canvas homepage. I have missed a class as well as a few assignments because of this. I need some format that is used in a consistent way to find everything so I can do the actual assignment. Really using the links menu is so clear but so many don't use it for whatever reason.

(What can Sacramento State University do better for you?) (1) Find a way to deal with classes being noted that are prerequisites. I need to be able to register for classes when it is my time I

have enough struggles. Even a professor teaching how to navigate a field was frustrated. I have done the classes CSUS accepted them, why are students with transferring in credits being blocked from classes? (2) Make learning tools like Power Point slides in a printable format (their original format) available to all students but especially people with disabilities who feel they are helpful. I understand there are some academic ownership issues on some of the information but if it is that secret perhaps it shouldn't be used in a slide, or maybe it should be published, or perhaps just having the disabled student sign something saying they won't put them on the internet. Basically, finding a way to work with a person to support them would be really nice and when it does happen I can say I am very thankful. (3) Offer help rather than questions. Ask what I think I need and what that would look like or what may help me move forward at this point and follow through if you offer help. (4) Try to be less like a business and more like a student centered teaching facility. I have a very easy time spending money for my education and a very hard time getting into appropriate classes, getting answer to questions, receiving support for my disability (… access to Power Point slides without nagging), and finding anyone with accountability (sending me to other offices).

By the way, thank you for letting me tell you about some of the struggles and my experiences so far at CSUS. I hope that by feeling heard, and hopefully a better next registration things will turn around for a more positive experience. I have only just learned of the Disabled and Nondisabled Alliance and will be trying to clear time to participate."

—I have been diagnosed with PTSD, ADHD, and memory issues (cognitive disfunctions). I am a first generation college student in my junior year after transferring into CSUS. I am unable to support myself right now, live with my family, and receive disability which I hope to change by gaining a bachelors degree in a field that has employment opportunities working with others who are struggling in similar ways.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity," including disabilities related to sight, sound, speech, mobility, learning and cognitive processing, and physical and mental health.

The Centers for Disease Control estimate that one in five Americans has a disability, which corresponds to the National Center for Education Statistics findings of 19.4% of undergraduates reporting having a disability in the nation.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, "no otherwise qualified individual with a disability…shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity" of a public entity, including postsecondary education.

According to California State University Policy for the Provision of Accommodations and Support Services to Students with Disabilities, a disability refers to "a physical or mental impairment of an individual that limits one or more of the major life activities and requires either a record of such an impairment, or documentation of having been regarded as having such an impairment." Broad categories for disabilities established for reporting purposes in California State University Policy are: Visual Limitation, Communication Disability, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Mobility Limitation, Acquired Brain Injury, Other Functional Limitations, Learning Disability, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Psychological or Psychiatric Disabilities. Students may have these types of disabilities, as well as others not listed here, and be eligible for services and accommodations.

Here at Sacramento State

To qualify for accommodations for disabilities, students must meet eligibility requirements with the campus Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. SSWD is responsible for evaluating and certifying, based on professional documentation, the existence of a disability and identifying and authorizing reasonable program access and/or academic adjustments and accommodations for students with verified disabilities. Reasonable accommodations do not include substantial changes or waivers of essential skills and knowledge of course requirements, but may include: The use of readers, note-takers, interpreters, test scribes, adaptive computers, calculators, tape recorders, and alternative testing methods or additional time on exams.

An Important Note

Not all students go through SSWD for services, and not all students with a disability are aware they have a disability. This section, as well as all of the other sections on Students with Disabilities, will refer to both students with documented disabilities and students who may struggle in college life due to conditions or disabilities related to attention and learning, psychological and physical health, and mobility, sight, sound, and speech.

What We Can Do

As faculty and staff, there is much we can do to help students with disabilities experience greater ease, success, and growth on our campus.

Understand Your Role on a Campus Committed to Equal Educational Opportunity for All

Sacramento State sees disability access as an institutional responsibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities as a cooperative effort, involving administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Campus policy on "Academic Program Access for Students with Disabilities" includes the following responsibilities:

Students

Provide documentation of disability to SSWD and meet with an SSWD counselor to request accommodations before classes start. Students should then contact faculty directly regarding the approved accommodations and provide the SSWD's written verification within the first two weeks of classes or as soon as feasible for students who are certified later in the semester.

SSWD

Verify eligibility, assess, and then authorize reasonable accommodations. Work collaboratively with faculty to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided, and consult with faculty regarding accommodations for exceptional situations, such as lab workstations.

Faculty (any employee who has instructional responsibility)

Adopt practices that promote equal opportunity to students with disabilities, use teaching and evaluation methods that measure abilities not disabilities, and implement student accommodations, consulting with SSWD in a timely manner, if needed. Faculty should treat all matters related to students with disabilities as confidential, in accordance with law and policy.

Campus Staff

Facilitate requests from students, SSWD, or faculty regarding accommodations, which may include referral to SSWD for students not currently served by this office. Staff should treat all matters related to students with disabilities as confidential, in accordance with law and policy, but may consult with SSWD if concerned about a student as long as student confidentiality rights are not violated.

Understand the Terms for Disabilities

While there is some difference of opinion and individuals with disabilities will have their own preference, the following "Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities," is a helpful starting point and was recommended for this writing:

Person First Language

When referencing people with disabilities, Person First Language (PFL) means to put people first, rather than the disabling condition, to place emphasis on the individual and not define or label that person in terms of the disability. Rather than saying such things as a "blind student," "learning disabled individual," or "deaf learner," instead say: "Individual who is blind" or "individual with low vision," "student with a learning disability," or "student who is Deaf (or deaf)" for a student with profound hearing loss (with the first letter of the term capitalized or not in writing depending on the degree the student identifies with Deaf community), or "person who is hard of hearing" and "person who has hearing loss" may also be used (typically for someone who communicates with speech).

The PFL principle also applies when referencing groups. For example, you typically would want to say "people with disabilities" (not "the disabled") or people who are blind (not "the blind"). The exception here is usually the "Deaf" or "Deaf community" is used to show identification or solidarity with folks who share a culture and language (sign), which is why the capital "D" is used. Notice that the wording was neutral in the prior examples ("person(s) *with,* who *is* or who *has"*). You typically don't want to use wording that portrays the individual as helpless or to be pitied, such as "crippled with," "afflicted by," "wheelchair bound," "suffers from," or "is a victim of." You also want to avoid euphemisms for disabilities (such as "differently abled" or "challenged"); these may appear condescending to some or imply that people cannot deal directly with their disabilities. Another term to avoid is "handicapped" (say "person or people with disabilities," "accessible parking spot"). Lastly, say "people without disabilities" (and not "normal," "healthy," or "whole" people—even the term "able-bodied" may be in some cases problematic).

(From the United Spinal Association, "Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting With People with Disabilities" (PDF), http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf)

Identity First Language

There is a growing countermovement called Identity First Language (IFL), which argues that disability is a central part of one's identity, and a culture and source of pride for many. In this view, PFL is seen as distancing people from their disabilities in a way that implies the need to do so—stigmatization of disabilities. Many people consequently prefer IFL, putting the disability identity first, as in "disabled student," "autistic person," or "Deaf people." And some use both IFL and PFL, as some organizations choose to do, including those for people with disabilities.

When it comes to the question of which to use, then—PFL or IFL—the American Psychological Association states: "Both person-first and identity-first approaches to language are designed to respect disabled persons; both are fine choices overall." This guidance is offered: "It is permissible to use either approach or to mix person-first and identity-first language unless or until you know that a group clearly prefers one approach, in which case, you should use the preferred approach."

(Please see the American Psychological Association, Guidelines for Bias Free Language for Disability, https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/disability)

Understand the Impact of Society on the Lives of People with Disabilities

We live in a world where, historically, people with disabilities experienced denigration, discrimination, and even death. In today's world, stereotypes, false assumptions, and stigma continue to exist and are commonly encountered in the form of statements, actions, and reactions to people with disabilities in one's spheres of life, including the working world, medical care, and yes, higher education. Studies of students with disabilities on college campuses, and studies of college campus climate more generally, show this to be true. Such microaggressions against people with disabilities—much like those experienced due to sex, race, sexual orientation, language use, nativity, indigeneity, and more—hurt people and spaces. Microaggressions adversely impact physical health, psychological well-being, and learning, we know from research. And ableism—much like sexism, racism, ageism, and classism in our society—casts disabled people as inferior, serving to marginalize and constrain full opportunities, rights, and experiences in societal life, and diminish sense of identity and personhood.

An Older, Outdated View

Disability Studies scholars see ableism as grounded in what is called the "Medical Model of Disability." In the medical world and society more generally, the tendency is to see disabilities as deficiencies in need of correcting or conditions in need of curing. Individuals with some disabilities may well want and need medical cure and treatment, such as people with disease and pain. But people with other types of disabilities may want no such thing—because they see the disability as a unique gift. For example, members of Deaf culture may decide against getting cochlear implants for hearing and those in the Neurodiversity movement argue that the differences in people with disabilities such as Autism are worthy of appreciation, rather than in need of correction or treatment. In the Medical Model paradigm, as well, disability is seen as the exception, as abnormal, yet 20% of the population has a disability currently and, indeed, almost all people will have a disabling condition in their lifetime, due to such things as accident, injury, illness, or age (making most "temporarily able-bodied"). Lastly, the place of needed remedy in the Medical Model lies with the medical professional to fix or the individual to learn how to adapt to spheres of life not built for them—when those spheres of life could be built for them or rebuilt for them—to remove barriers and increase equity and inclusivity.

A Newer, Needed Way

There is a newer paradigm called the "Social Model," as well as other models that combine the prior view of disabilities with this one. In the Social Model, disability is seen as a form of diversity, not deficiency (the prevalent social construct)—and the place of needed change is society, in how people see, speak of, and treat people with disabilities and design places and spaces for them. While the older Medical Model views physical, emotional, or cognitive disability as internal to the person with these, the Social Model argues no, these are some of the many differences between human beings, and that disability comes from outside the individual. Simply put, society is what disables people in the physical barriers of the environment and attitudinal barriers of other people encountered in their daily lives. In this view, the disabilities are not the problem in need of fixing. As seminal Disabilities Studies scholar Simi Linton once noted, "While disabled people have problems, ... the society creates many of the problems that disabled people experience, and the society has a responsibility to address them." And this is a matter of social justice.

Understand Our Students with Different Types of Disabilities

There are a broad range of disabilities and conditions, and with an accompanying range of circumstances and situations in which people live with disabilities. Students may have one or more disabilities within the broader areas of disability:

Students with Physical Disabilities

They have neurological conditions, orthopedic conditions, and health conditions that may cause physical ailments, and/or mobility impairment, vision problems, and/or difficulties with hearing or speech. Students with physical disabilities may have muscle coordination problems, muscle weakness, paralysis, or loss of limb(s) that impairs their mobility, while visual problems can range from complete blindness to partial sight loss or low vision, hearing problems may range from complete deafness to partial hearing loss, and speech problems can include inability to produce sound or difficulty in finding or producing words.

Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, these students may experience dizziness, nausea, debilitating pain, and/or extreme exhaustion, as well as have anxiety or depression due to their physical ailments or limitations. They may also feel discomfort or embarrassment in performing the functions in class that their peers have no problem with, a sense of isolation if other students are hesitant to interact, and a real disconnect from the majority who cannot fully understand what it's like to live with that physical condition or disability.

Students with Psychological or Psychiatric Disabilities

They have mental health disorders that include Depression, Anxiety, Bi-Polar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Post-Traumatic Stress, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. They may be officially diagnosed and receiving accommodations, with varying levels of self-acceptance and adaptation, or they may be just now experiencing the onset of symptoms and really be struggling to understand what is happening to them and why they no longer feel the way they used to.

These students have to deal with their psychological symptoms, as well as any accompanying physical symptoms (e.g., exhaustion, nausea, headaches, muscle tension or aches), all while trying to come to class and do their coursework. Any medication taken may have detrimental side effects as well that can adversely impact their learning and studies.

Students with Learning Disabilities and ADHD

They are of average to above average intelligence, but have a learning disability, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, auditory processing deficit and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Learning disabilities and ADHD often go hand in hand.

These students have difficulties with paying attention and/or reading, writing, listening, and studying, which impacts what they learn, how they learn, how they feel about learning, how well they do in their classes, and what their college experience is like. Their learning difficulties also likely affect navigating college life (understanding and completing student forms, applications

for financial aid, etc.), daily living (reading directions, paying the bills, etc.), and their vocation (what they end up doing or choose for a career). ADHD, too, can adversely impact all realms of life, from school to work and personal life. Learning disabilities and ADHD may also impact these students' self-esteem (how they see and feel about themselves). It is likely they have been told repeatedly throughout their lives that they are stupid or lazy when it comes to school.

Visible and Invisible Disabilities

Some disabilities are visible, shown through use of a wheelchair, cane, or service animal, while other disabilities are invisible, such as learning disabilities, ADHD, psychological and psychiatric disorders, and chronic pain.

Students with visible disabilities face the likelihood of stereotypes, skepticism about their capabilities, and pity that is not wanted or needed.

Students with invisible or hidden disabilities may face the confusion of their professors or classmates if they struggle or do or ask for things that seem unusual or unwarranted (e.g., "Why do you need campus cart services when you can walk and stand?" asked of a student with illness that comprises balance or causes extreme exhaustion or "Why can't you just read this real fast—the answer to your question is right there" to a person with low vision in need of magnification), or even skepticism (e.g., "You seem just fine to me, so why do you get extended time on tests?" to a student with dyslexia who needs the extra time for a text-to-speech reader, where what is written is spoken for the student, which takes considerably longer for getting through test questions). These types of situations put the student in the position of having to decide whether to disclose something as personal as disabilities to people they don't know well or are strangers, or just suffer the awkwardness.

Temporary and Permanent, Recent and Recurring Disabilities

Disabilities can be shorter-term, such as a broken limb or an illness that needs to run its course, or longer term, such as chronic health diseases or chronic pain, an amputated limb, or a learning disability.

Some disabling conditions have symptoms that are reoccurring or intermittent—come and go, improve or worsen—due to any number of circumstances, ranging from temperature to what one did the day or even week before, such as certain diseases like multiple sclerosis. Often in these cases of reoccurring symptoms or struggles, the student may worry that the instructor or other students doubt that they have a disability when they see the student on "a good day."

Some disabilities are recent injuries or illnesses in the life of a student, such as a car accident necessitating physical therapy to begin to move again or a sudden stroke impairing cognition or language abilities. These students may struggle with acclimating to their altered personal and academic lives, and the process of getting accommodations and getting used to learning with them. Some students may have progressive illnesses that continually require more and greater accommodations as the condition worsens, and this, too, can take time to receive and become accustomed to in one's learning.

Other students may have been born with or had the disability for much of their lives. They may come from a K-12 background where school staff knew what the disability was and what the student needed, and monitored progress to ensure the student was completing coursework—and then entered college life where the student must take the initiative to navigate the process for obtaining accommodations in course work, disclose to instructors what they need, and self-advocate with their professors or disabilities services if their accommodations aren't being met or aren't working. It should also be noted that depending on the type of disability and earlier educational experiences, some students may come to our institution with negative perceptions or feelings toward their educators, who may not have understood their disability, or toward education more generally, because the student struggled so hard in their studies, perhaps not knowing soon enough why, that they had a disability.

Diagnosed and Not

There are differences in diagnosis, as well.

Some students may be walking around with undiagnosed health conditions or disabilities, not knowing why they don't feel well, can't perform daily activities as they used to, or struggle in their studies. It is thought that millions of Americans have an undiagnosed learning disability, for example.

Some students may be under-diagnosed or incorrectly diagnosed in their conditions, and facing the confusion and uncertainty of not matching what they're being told and given for treatment or accommodations with what they may be experiencing or actually need to perform in personal and academic life. Fibromyalgia, for example, is often suspected to be a handful of other conditions first before an individual receives the accurate diagnosis.

Using Accommodations or Not

Some new students may have chosen to forego their accommodations once they hit college—wanting to be more like their peers or independent, sometimes successfully and other times not, as the intensity of college work in contrast to high school becomes evident. Some students may realize they do in fact need accommodations in the transition from lower-division to upper-division coursework, as well. Students in these cases may then have to scramble to complete the SSWD application for services process.

Some students may well qualify for disabilities accommodations, yet not know about the services available to them (e.g., they might have recently been in an accident or diagnosed).

Other students with a history of documented disabilities may be confused about how to obtain services at the university because they are new or transfer students, and there are significant differences between provisions at the high school and postsecondary institutional level, as well as differences between colleges.

The first step to students receiving services they may qualify for at Sacramento State is the student contacting SSWD. Faculty and staff can help students to get the help they need by increasing awareness of SSWD services, in general, and, in some cases, through specific recommendation to a student.

Understand What Students with Disabilities Experience

The National Center for College Students with Disabilities conducted a focus group study in 2019, and found the following:

Common Barriers for Students Included:

1. Student lack of awareness of campus disability services, difficulty navigating the process to obtain or use accommodations, insufficient accommodations, and having to take initiative, self-disclose, be informed, inform others, and advocate for themselves in a complicated system.

2. Instructor lack of awareness about the needs of the student and accommodation procedures, pushback against these, and failure to communicate clearly about or implement those accommodations for the student in a timely way.

3. Physical barriers to getting around the campus and into buildings and rooms, including in the library and housing, and gaps in services to students with disabilities that are available to other students.

4. Negative interactions with their peers and stigma with regard to disabilities.

These and other obstacles create "the added work of disability management"—

"the cumulative impact of these barriers on their daily college experience,
or as one student described it,
'the amount of work it takes to be a disabled student.'"

Common Supports Included:

1. Easier procedures to apply for and receive accommodations, supportive staff, and accommodations that worked for the student.

2. Instructors who are informed about disabilities and accessibility, accepting and supportive of students, and who use a variety of teaching methods and flexibility in testing.

3. Campus communities for students with disabilities to find peer support, and larger campus spaces and events to create greater sense of community for people with disabilities.

[For further information, please see the National Center for College Students with Disabilities 2019 report by Sally Scott: "Access and Participation in Higher Education: Perspectives of College Students with Disabilities," http://www.nccsdonline.org/research-briefs.html]

Make Your Class Conducive to Students with Disabilities Doing Their Best

In light of what we know about students with disabilities and the difficulties they may face in higher education, there are steps we can take for greater equity, inclusivity, and student success in our classes and out on campus.

Give them a good start.

Provide course materials in advance for students who need accommodations. Students with certain disabilities often need things well before the course start date for conversion of materials into alternative media better suited to their individual needs, such as Braille or text-to-speech software that reads material for students with vision loss or students with print disabilities. This is why the student and/or SSWD may contact you before the start of the semester requesting course materials. Having ready your textbook and syllabus, at a minimum, and ideally any Canvas and web content, course packet, handouts, assignment descriptions, and slides—even if just for the first few weeks—gives students the peace of mind in knowing their accommodations will be in place. They then also have the lead time to get ahead with coursework that, for them, may take longer to read or complete than their peers, such as students with learning disabilities or chronic health or pain conditions.

Let them know you are here for them.

Be aware that students with disabilities may be reluctant or even dread having to disclose their need for accommodations to you, especially at the start of the semester, when they don't know you at all. In their educational background prior to coming here, they may have experienced instructors or school staff who treated their needs as an inconvenience or nuisance, who viewed them as deficient or a burden, or who regarded their test accommodations for extended time as cheating, rather than the extra time needed for equitable access. Some students may choose to wait until later in the semester to present their accommodation form, in order to feel more comfortable with the instructor, or to try to demonstrate their capabilities and character to the instructor first. Yet securing accommodations later in the term may hinder their performance and may be misperceived by the instructor as the student not having their act together coming into the course.

Include a statement in your syllabus inviting students with disabilities to discuss their needs with you and reinforce this in your spoken remarks on the first day of class. SSWD offers the following wording for your syllabus: "If you have a documented disability and verification from SSWD, and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible."

Include a more general statement in your syllabus and spoken remarks for the first day of class or in a welcome video inviting any student with questions, concerns, or struggles in the class to come to office hours or reach out to you. This will help students with accommodation forms to feel more comfortable presenting them to you. This will also encourage to come to you any other students with disabilities who may not know they have them and wonder why they struggle in their learning, or other students who may not know how to obtain their accommodations on this campus.

Utilize an in-class or online "Getting to Know You" student questionnaire at the start of the course that includes a question such as "Is there anything you'd like me to know about you?" or "Are there any challenges that you face in learning you would like me to know?" This, too, may help students with disabilities reticent about disclosing and students with unknown or undiagnosed disabilities to share with you what they may need or challenges to their learning.

Create a warm, welcoming climate in the classroom, on-ground or online, and show approachability in your demeanor so that students feel more comfortable coming to you with their letter of accommodations needed or asking questions or expressing concerns regarding their learning needs.

Get their accommodations done right.

Understand that provision of accommodations should occur as seamlessly and naturally as possible—for the sake of the student. We all want to do our part to make the extraordinary gift of higher education accessible to all. That said, we may sometimes fumble about in our implementation of accommodations if we don't give advance thought to how to most effectively accomplish what we need to say or do.

Remind yourself every single time you are about to enter a classroom or meeting with the student, on-ground or online, until considerations regarding their accommodations each day of your class become customary.

Be sure to get exams for students with that accommodation arranged online or to the campus Testing Center in a timely manner, so that the student doesn't have to worry or stress about their test accommodations, on top of the importance of the exam itself.

Be aware and strive to mitigate the fact that in the on-ground classroom testing situation, students with extended test time are often made conspicuous by their absence or departure from the class on the test day—and other students may regard extended time or a distraction-free environment with which to take the exam as unfair. Some students may not realize that students with less visible disabilities (such as poor vision or other vision disturbances and learning disabilities) may require alternate means and how much longer reading an exam or answering exam questions this can take, or how other students with ADHD or psychological disabilities (such as anxiety) may need a quiet room alone to best perform on an exam.

Request volunteer class note-takers, when needed, in a way that makes clear to all students that they will be doing a valuable service for a classmate who faces greater challenges to the coursework than most do because of a disability that makes difficult hearing, seeing, processing, and/or writing lecture information (without identifying that student with the disability, of course). Students who need note-takers will say how disheartened or embarrassed they feel when an instructor requests this service in an unenthusiastic or awkward way. It's also wise to follow through to make sure that the student is, in fact, receiving all class notes in a timely manner.

Remember that as faculty and staff at an institution of higher education, we are well-positioned to create greater awareness and inclusivity for people with disabilities, and part of honoring accommodations is normalizing the need for these for an equitable classroom for all in the eyes of the student with disabilities and their classmates. This may help those students with documented disabilities reluctant to use their accommodations because they want to be like their classmates and as independent as possible or to avoid any potential misperception from their classmates who may then identify them with a disability. And research tells us that when students accept their disabilities, they are more likely to persevere and succeed academically.

Keep an eye out.

Check in with the student to see how they are doing in their learning. Some students may be reticent or reluctant to let the instructor or staff know when their accommodations aren't working, and some may have a more recent disability or one that changes, and are learning what works with accommodations. Students are typically encouraged to be active in their learning and proactive in advocating for their needs, but some students may not do so.

Work with the student to monitor the effectiveness of accommodations, conferring with SSWD as soon as possible if questions or issues arise. Use SSWD as a resource to help you to ensure accommodations are effectively in place.

Be aware that students whose accommodations include the use of alternative media formats typically find the use of such specialized computer hardware or software takes more time than traditional reading. Additionally, it often takes a whole semester of training in the campus SSWD Assistive Technology Lab for students to become comfortable using these formats, especially if they have never used them before.

Don't hold back.

Keep in mind that accommodations for students with disabilities are meant to ensure equitable opportunity for educational attainment for students with verified disabilities. Accommodations do not limit or compromise the rigor or scope of the course requirements or learning objectives. Students are accountable for the same work done and at the same level as their classmates, but there may be needed changes to course materials in an alternative format or other adjustments for physical limitations or learning and psychiatric disabilities.

Note, also, that the students, too, usually have a real need for individual autonomy, competence, and full inclusion in a world that is prone to underestimating their abilities or assuming they can't or don't want to do as much as their peers. All of this means that once the accommodations are effectively in place, students with disabilities should be able to learn, perform, and succeed in your class as much as any other student.

Maximize their learning.

Consider what you might do, above and beyond accommodation, in terms of course format, teaching style, assignment options, and so on to help the student to fully engage and perform in your classroom. You will likely find, as many instructors do, that making a needed change stretches your teaching skills and enhances the instruction for all.

Encourage the student as you would any other to do internships, work experience/work-based learning, service learning, independent studies, and graduate school.

Maximize your learning.

Learn more about campus disabilities services.

SSWD serves as a resource for faculty and staff. You may consult with the office directly or look over the website, which provides further information regarding the needs of and support services for students with disabilities on our campus, including a Working Together: Faculty Handbook.

SSWD Website
https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/

Learn more about students with disabilities.

The more we know, the better we can serve our students. This project offers the following sections regarding students with disabilities at the:

Listening to Students Website
https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/spotlights/listening-to-students.html

Listening to Students with Physical Disabilities
Listening to Students Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision
Listening to Students with Hearing Limitations
Listening to Students with Mobility Limitations
Listening to Students with Speech Limitations
Listening to Students with Learning Disabilities
Listening to Students with ADHD
Listening to Students with Psychological Disabilities
Listening to Students with Disabilities

Learn more about accessibility for your sphere of responsibility on campus.

Further information about how to make your materials more accessible yourself, or schedule an appointment for one-on-one consultation in person or online via Zoom, may be found at:

IRT "Accessible Technology Initiative" Website
https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/ati/

Learn more about students with disabilities in this new era of online learning and pandemic.

To follow in this document you will find discussion of:

1. The Greater Challenges for Students with Disabilities at This Time
2. The Importance of Universal Design for All Students at This Time
3. All We Can Do in Our Online Work for Students with Disabilities

Understand the Greater Challenges of Now for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities face decided obstacles in achieving their higher education in a system not designed for them—and the challenges increase in the current global pandemic and unprecedented shift to online education.

New and Changing Learning Circumstances

In March of 2020, higher education quickly shifted to virtual learning, with costs to many students in terms of a new online format to use, time management skills needed and routine to revise, and a whole new way of learning to become accustomed to in a global pandemic. For some students, such as those with autism, learning disabilities, and ADHD, the strategies they used prior to the online learning pivot may no longer be effective and now they must re-learn.

In the Spring of 2020, a survey of higher education professionals who work with students with disabilities was administered and the findings reported by the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD): Students with disabilities had a harder time than the general student population with communication with their instructors and access to the Internet, needed technology support/training, learning materials and textbooks, and course assessments and exams. These difficulties were further compounded when it came to disability services, with over half of the survey respondents reporting difficulties for students in receiving testing accommodations, using assistive technology, and discussing new access barriers to online learning and solutions. In the Winter of 2021, a second survey went out to get an update on conditions, and found that several of these barriers for students with disabilities had improved on many campuses, but challenges still remained.

New or Changing Accommodations

This same 2021 study found that more students were registering with their campus disabilities office to receive accommodations and that more accommodations per student were being requested, again according to survey respondents who were professionals who work with students with disabilities in higher education.

On our campus, students who have accommodations through SSWD but weren't using them in the on-ground class may now need to in the online class, and they might not be accustomed to informing their instructors or utilizing the accommodations. Students often find it difficult to present that accommodations form to faculty, and remote instruction may make them feel even less comfortable doing so. They may also have to learn to use the accommodations in their learning, and some accessibility technology or processes may take time to figure out or receive training in. And existing accommodations a student was using may change now in online education, and other types of accommodations may become necessary. For example, a student using an assistive listening device in the on-ground class now may need to switch to speech-to-text services and get used to that new system, or possibly a student receiving course materials converted to Braille may now need to become accustomed to a new system of using Braille for online content or a text-to-speech reader, where written material is read aloud to the student, and receive the training for this.

[For further information, please see the 2020 report and the 2021 updated report
by Sally Scott (AHEAD) and Katherine Aquino (Saint John's University): "COVID-19 Transitions: Higher Education Professionals' Perspectives on Access Barriers, Services, and Solutions for Students with Disabilities,"
https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/coronavirus-resources]

And there may well be further struggles for students outside of their coursework.

Physical Health

Students with some disabilities are more vulnerable to the Coronavirus that has taken thousands of lives and imperiled still thousands more. Students with health conditions that compromise their immune system may worry more about increased risk to Covid-19 or may currently struggle with the illness on top of their other health concerns.

Some students are at increased risk of physical contact with others in relation to their support services or assistance in their personal lives, and this, too, may be a source of concern. For example, students with vision disabilities may use public transportation to travel and touch to navigate environments or locate items in the public sphere. Students with attendant care, physical therapists, and others may not be able to limit contact with others or socially distance; in other cases, they may now have less of the support services they used to have, adding further difficulty to their lives.

Students with health disabilities may also find that their symptoms, discomfort, or pain worsen with the increased stress of this time.

Psychological Well-Being

Students with disabilities are prone to depression and anxiety, and some more so, especially now, with new situations and stressors. For example, students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, as well as some students with ADHD, who need stability of schedule for lower stress and greater academic performance, may struggle with the complete upset of routine in the switch to online learning, where they no longer go to campus and attend class, or lack of routine with asynchronous learning, where they aren't held to a Zoom class schedule. There may be changes to homelife or employment situations, as well, that further cause upset for the student.

Students with mental health disabilities are especially at risk in what we likely all understandably view to be uncertain and bleak times.

This past year and coming in the foreseeable future, joyous milestone events in students' lives and yearly celebrations may have been cancelled, postponed, or done remotely (birthdays, weddings, graduations, trips, reunions, and more), and the college experience many wanted or once had may feel largely lost to them.

They may have greater worries about the pandemic and their new online studies, and anxiety or depression can worsen with social isolation or with difficult home-life dynamics due to such stressors as living in close quarters and finances in a tough time for many. Some may be forced to remain in living situations with psychological or physical abuse.

Some students with control-related psychological conditions, such as eating disorders, may find it more difficult to control symptoms; students with obsessive-compulsive disorder whose OCD relates to germs might find their compulsions skyrocketing during the pandemic; and alcohol and substance abuse and addiction, itself a disability, may rise as perceived coping mechanisms.

A New Way of Looking at Teaching and Learning

There are some positives to online learning for students with disabilities, it should be noted. For example, students with health conditions or pain, or who must take medications with debilitating side effects, can choose the best time in asynchronous learning for them. Students with health or mobility disabilities no longer have to travel to campus and then across campus to get to their classes. Students with speech disabilities often bloom in their contributions to written online class discussions, in contrast to those on-ground. Students with some psychological disabilities, such as social anxiety, or other disabilities, such as seizure disorders, may find education easier in their own homes than the outside world. And some students say they find it freeing when their disabilities are no longer seen or seen as much in remote learning with their peers.

But that said, there are many more negatives in this new time in our society. Given the global pandemic, racial unrest in the nation, extreme weather and natural disasters, economic downturn and uncertainty, as well as the social distancing that goes against our most human need for social interaction, some have called for a *"trauma informed pedagogy,"* that realizes stress and survival will take precedence over learning and may comprise optimal academic performance for our students. And students with disabilities for all these reasons and more, may be the most at risk.

As we socially distance and learn remotely, the safety nets and support system on campus of friends, classmates, staff and faculty able to readily observe and support students is no longer firmly in place. Young adulthood is the age where onset of mental illness occurs, and certainly the unprecedented stress of this time can serve as the trigger or worsen any existing mental health conditions.

As faculty and staff, we can support our students in the following ways:

- Begin the first day/week of the semester with an icebreaker in Canvas or in Zoom to help build a sense of community and support in online class climate
- Start classes and meetings with students with "how-are-you?" check-ins
- Utilize online discussion boards and Zoom class discussions to increase the sense of community and connection students have with one another in their online learning
- Keep a watchful eye and reach out to students who appear to be struggling academically or psychologically
- Share campus Counseling services information and other needed resources with students
- Relate and show empathy to students sharing troubles and hardships
- Show grace and flexibility in course grading and deadlines
- Help students to see the positive sides of our current situation (e.g., no traffic or campus parking to fight or worrying too much about appearance, and you can sleep in a little longer and eat meals while viewing Zoom or recorded lessons!)

Some of these things we may have always done and are needed now more than ever.

(For further information regarding "trauma informed pedagogy" during this time, please see
"Leveraging the Neuroscience of Now,"
https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/06/03/seven-recommendations-helping-students-thrive-times-trauma
by Mays Imad, Inside Higher Ed, and
"What Does Trauma-Informed Teaching Look Like?"
https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/teaching/2020-06-04
by Beth McMurtrie, *Teaching*, The Chronicle of Higher Education)

Understand the Importance of Accessibility and Universal Design in Learning Right Now

As faculty and staff, we may already be stressed and overwhelmed due to the scramble to online teaching, and unsure of, for many, entirely new technological practices such as captioning, alt text, tagged headings, and descriptive links. But it is important learning and practice.

University Commitment to Accessibility

The university is committed to accessibility. Campus Accessible Technology Policy states: "Sacramento State is committed to providing an inclusive environment that allows access to its resources regardless of ability" and accordingly, adopts as its own the California State University Board of Trustees Policy on Disability Support and Accommodations – CSU Executive Order 926: "It is the policy of the CSU to make information technology resources and services accessible to all CSU students, faculty, staff and the general public, regardless of disability."

This includes making campus resources and course information available to students who cannot read or use standard print materials, and students who cannot hear at all or well information conveyed auditorily, or cannot easily navigate manually online learning or campus processes easily, as well as ensuring greater accessibility on campus in other ways, such as campus held events, on-ground or online.

Universal Design

It is helpful to understand the benefits of Universal Design for all and to understand the real significance of this time as many begin their first ever or first full online course design or begin reconsidering what they currently do online—and we can expect moving forward that the number of online courses in the future will be greater than pre-pandemic.

Universal Design has its historical roots in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the 1940s. A war veteran and attorney named Jack Fisher noticed how difficult it was for people with mobility disabilities, such as wounded veterans, to gain employment due to difficulty in getting around town, and worked with officials to install curb cuts, ramps, and rails. These are improvements that benefit greatly the intended group—as well as the elderly, pregnant women, and anyone else with compromised balance, and people with bikes, strollers, rolling service carts or luggage, and skateboards and skates. Years later, law decreed public spaces need be accessible.

Universal Design (UD) today emphasizes *accessibility* (for example, a person in a wheelchair can go through a doorway to get into a room, but not always easily or equitably)—and also *usability* (the door handle or push button door opener is at a lower level within reach, the doorway is wide enough to pass through with ease in a mobility device, and/or there is an alternative archway to enter the room). UD advocates designing our world with human differences utmost in our minds, in terms of architecture, engineering, products, and services. Many see this as a new frontier in practice, given that medical advances allow more and more people to survive illness and accidents, and an aging population means an increased number of people with disabilities.

Universal Design in Learning

The same can largely be said for academia, where more students with disabilities are coming, and there is greater diagnosis of learning disabilities, ADHD, and psychological disabilities, too.

As applied to education, Universal Design in Learning (UDL) asks that we create learning systems and courses for people of all abilities and disabilities, with different learning styles and needs, of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with different degrees of technological access and competence, and more differences. UDL advocates designing (or re-designing) campus systems and course set-up that is equitable and easy to use, with appeal and relevance to a wide range of individual preferences and skills, and anticipating barriers and working proactively to eliminate or minimize these for a diversity of learners.

This puts the responsibility on us and in the now—rather than on waiting to receive a student with a disability in our class, who then must take responsibility to go through the application for accommodations process and present an accommodation form to their instructors, and then we make changes to accommodate that one learner, who may or may not receive the same learning experience of their peers in that class if the accommodations differ significantly.

Sometimes we, as faculty and staff, may feel that accessibility only helps the very few students with disabilities with accommodations in a class, not realizing how many more there may be who struggle without accommodations. The National Center for Health Statistics of the CDC reports that 32.2 million people in the country have vision trouble (12.9% of adults), 41.3 million people in the country have hearing trouble (16.5% of adults), and 40.7 million people in the country have a physical functioning difficulty of some type (16.3% of adults). The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports that in our nation, 7.5 million people have trouble using their voices, and 6 to 8 million people have some form of language impairment. This means that even though not all who are enrolled in college will seek accommodations in your class or in some cases even qualify for accommodations, there will likely be students who have difficulties seeing, hearing, navigating, processing, or communicating in relation to your course content.

And sometimes we, as faculty and staff, may feel that accessibility only helps the very few students with disabilities in a class, not realizing that many accessibility features benefit far more. For example, providing spoken and/or written descriptions of visual items or demonstrations makes things clear for students with vision disabilities, but also clarifies the material for all students (and sometimes the instructor, too!). We also know from research that captioning benefits people with hearing disabilities—as well as many other students, including: Multilingual students (who often can follow written words better than speech), students with learning disabilities and ADHD (who can then both see and hear the words), students who are trying to follow the online lesson in a loud or distracting place (so they can at least see the words, even if they can't fully hear them), and students who are at work or home where they need to be quiet (and so they can follow the lesson captioning no matter how low or muted their volume need be). Even students without these limitations may also choose to view lessons with captioning enabled, because oral instruction is reinforced visually.

In this document to follow, you will find the different things we can do, as faculty and staff, in our teaching and work, Zoom meetings and classes, and assignments and materials in the name of greater inclusivity, equity, and accessibility.

Understand All We Can Do in Online Learning for Students with Disabilities

The technical "how to's" of accessibility we'll leave to the experts on the matter, such as the great sources recommended in this document for this campus. To follow in this section are considerations and suggestions for teaching and meeting with students with disabilities in this new era of online learning.

Online Course Learning

Online learning management systems such as Canvas can help or hinder learning, depending on how they are used to structure and provide course content. Being very clear and consistent in your course Canvas design in terms of how to find and submit assignments, due date times, and so on can help all students to feel more comfortable and capable in your class, but especially those in need of that higher structure, such as students with forms of Autism, anxiety, ADHD, and more.

Reminders, as well, and redundancy might be helpful for all our students during this confusing and chaotic time.

Reading

In the huge shift to online, there is considerably more reading for students in terms of information, assignment descriptions, discussion boards, announcements, emails, and more—for your class and then all of their other classes—and this will be harder on students with some types of disabilities.

Students with ADHD, for example, can sometimes find reading to be a more passive form of learning, which may make it harder to focus. When what may have been a more dynamic lesson in the on-ground class, with the greater ability of the student to ask questions or comment and see and possibly interact with peers in relation to the material, is given over to course materials to read in the move online, the student loses this more active learning. Breaking up the reading with good discussion questions and interactive exercises may prove very helpful.

Numerous items to read and/or lengthy walls of text can also feel demotivating or daunting to students with disabling conditions that cause fatigue. Breaking things up with a video or podcast to listen to may be nice for these students.

And for students with some vision or print-reading disabilities, they may use a text-to-speech screen reader that reads the text line by line sequentially down through each page, which increases the time to complete the reading, as well as focus needed. Readings can take even longer, because if a student using a screen reader takes a break or needs to go back to a certain area of the material, they may have to start over because they cannot skim to quickly locate that place to re-read, like a sighted person could, without proper headings, which is the way a screen reader can skim, by jumping from heading to heading. But those headings must be frequent (the information per page is "chunked" into smaller increments with a heading) and the headings must all be "tagged," meaning built into the document or Canvas page through the Styles feature for headings on the toolbar (in contrast to headings that are simply indicated as such through font size, highlighting, or spacing). People with lower vision or other visual problems who don't use

a screen reader can also see material more clearly with headings and material in easy-to-manage chunks, and students with ADHD may find it easier to maintain focus, rather than long sections of paragraphs without headings.

With text-to-speech screen readers, it is also important to know:

- Presenting information in tables with rows and columns doesn't convert easily in a screen reader unless the table is formatted correctly—made accessible with the proper tagging of headings—that built-in labeling and structure that a screen reader understands
- Using all capital letters is difficult to read for people with low vision and may not be read by a screen reader
- Reducing the use of blank lines is helpful (because text-to-speech readers may read "blank line" for each one)
- Listed items are treated as such only when the bullet point feature or the numbering feature on the toolbar is activated; otherwise, the speech reader won't identify the items you have as a list, and this could be confusing (a speech reader reading this list prior here without the bullet points, for example, would read one very long run-on sentence)
- Providing information via a scanned image (such as a scanned article for students to read) cannot be read by the screen reader, but instructors can convert image-based documents into text-scannable PDFs through services such as:

  RoboBraille: Convert a File
  https://www.robobraille.org/

When creating online content, a good strategy is to put yourself in the perspective of a student who has vision loss or visual problems as you work to make materials accessible: Close your eyes and imagine what headings, prompts, and lay-out would be easiest for a student who is hearing the material relayed auditorily through text-to-speech software.

Images and Color

Non-text visual material can also pose problems. Screen readers cannot convey images, but instead will say "image" or "graphic" and then any alternative text provided by you to explain what is being shown. No alt text lessens the inclusivity of the learning experience because the student is left out. Worse, no alt text, for when the image was necessary to full understanding, hurts the student's learning of the material and performance on tests or other assessments where the learning needed to be demonstrated. And, of course, more complicated imagery, such as diagrams, maps, and illustrations, may need longer written descriptions of the imagery in accompaniment or provided elsewhere, with that location clearly stated for the learner. It should also be said that relying on the alt text that accompanies many images may be confusing to the student, as that alt-text can be inaccurate, or not provided in the necessary context of the material you are presenting. Creating your own alt text may well be the better way to go.

When it comes to the use of color, it's helpful to keep in mind students with low vision and choose shades with a strong color contrast. Students who are color blind, as well, may see no color or may not be able to distinguish between colors, such as red from green (the most common form of color blindness) or yellow from blue. And students who want or need to print out class materials will likely be making black-and-white copies. We also want to remember to not rely solely on color alone for teaching of points or announcing the importance of items.

Websites

With regard to websites for students to visit: Some students with vision disabilities, as well as some with hand or arm mobility limitations, may not be able to use the mouse function, because eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills are needed, and keyboarding is the only way to navigate websites. Canvas is accessible in this regard, with maneuverability via keyboarding and keyboard shortcuts to limit the movement or sight needed, but other websites may not be accessible to these students. That's why it's beneficial to check beforehand to ensure the websites you recommend or require your students visit are navigable solely through keyboarding.

With regard to linking websites for students to visit: Creating a hyperlink describing the web content you are linking to, called a "descriptive hyperlink," is more helpful to the student using a screen reader to scan links, than a long web address that may or may not clearly indicate where it leads or a long list of "click here's" that similarly provide no specific information as to where the click will lead. A good order to use is stating the name or title of the item first and then its general purpose or function (e.g., document, website, clip, tutorial), and no need to use the word "link," as the screen reader already says this. Of course, with shorter, simpler website addresses that you want a student to know, or when you expect some printing out of documents, then providing the web address would be warranted. More generally, it should also be noted that blue underlined text is widely understood to mean an Internet hyperlink and, therefore, blue underlined content should typically be reserved for that. Underlining content other than weblinks, when not necessary, may be confusing.

Software, Apps, and Tech

It is advisable to submit a campus ICT procurement request through IRT if using any special apps or software. The ICT process vets such tools for any limitations that may arise for users in need of disabilities accommodations, as well as for cybersecurity concerns:

IRT Technology Procurement

https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/technology-procurement/

Writing

The shift to online learning also results in a greater amount of writing. Written assignments are likely increasing, as instructors who may have had presentations, group projects, and other types of assignments other than papers in their former on-ground classes now decide that mandating or implementing these in the online era is too difficult. In light of no longer having as much in-class discussions, online ones are becoming frequent, too, to the point that some students complain of "discussion board fatigue."

For the student with arm or hand mobility disabilities, the pain or exhaustion can increase, as can difficulties due to dexterity. For those with some learning or other disabilities, the greater writing needed can be problematic, as well. Offering students a choice in alternative assignments may be a good solution here, such as demonstrations, performance, presentations, and art, for example. In discussion boards, some students may enjoy the choice to write or record their response or provide a response in some other way (e.g., pictures, visual imagery).

Grading

When it comes to grading written assignments, such as papers and essay exams, faculty may encounter greater errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, from students in general, who may

be experiencing the greater cognitive load of figuring how to navigate online learning and assessments. And some students with vision and learning disabilities may be using adaptive speech-to-text software (where the student dictates the content into print, using sound commands for punctuation, new paragraphs, and so on) or possibly Braille translation software (where the student completes work in Braille and the program converts this into typed print for assignment submission). None of these methods is fail-safe, so grading content separately from written mechanics as much as possible is helpful in this regard.

With regard to grading, it should also be noted: Faculty who choose to give feedback using the audio or video feedback function in Canvas assignment grading (a great feature which can increase connection with the student and their understanding of the feedback received) would want to remember to give written feedback instead or a captioned video to students with accommodations related to hearing. It may be helpful to all students to invite them to let you know if they prefer feedback in writing in a general announcement or in the comments section of the audio or video feedback given.

With the cognitive overload and overwhelm of online learning, deadlines and assignment requirements may get lost or confused for just about any student, and especially those with disabilities. Students with ADHD, for example, who struggle with prioritizing tasks and then focusing through to completion, may find online learning especially challenging. For just about any student, too, it should be noted, the in-class pressure of talking about assignments coming due from the professor or with their peers could really keep a student on track with coursework—but remote learning makes this less likely. All of this, and the extenuating circumstances of the times, too, may be such that some flexibility and grace is needed with grading and due dates.

Testing

Extended time for quizzes and exams may be a necessary accommodation for students with health disabilities causing pain or exhaustion, students with eye strain or students with anxiety needing a break, and students with sight and print disabilities using a text-to-speech reader, which takes longer. Making sure to have arranged for the extended time in Canvas modification of a test for the student gives them peace of mind. And if the quiz or exam is one that is to be taken during a set day and time period (say this coming Monday during the time frame for your hour and fifteen minute Zoom class, for example), and you have a student with accommodations for extended test time (that would require, say, two and a half hours), then it may be necessary to go one extra step beyond modifying the quiz to ensure the student has that extended time if, after setting the due date in Canvas, you also choose to set the corresponding open and closed day/time for the exam or quiz to be taken. Then you can click on the "Available from" and "Until" day/time and set that time for the whole class (for that hour and fifteen minute time frame, to continue the example)—but then also click on the "+Add" sign right below to make sure that the close time is extended for the student there also, by simply selecting the student's name and then the extended time frame for that one student.

When possible, make available an exam for taking over a range of time (for example, students have one attempt to take an exam to be completed in one hour, but can choose to take that exam any time over a few days, a weekend, and so on). Then the student can choose the time to take the test that works best for them in terms of pain, medication, exhaustion, and home-life circumstances most conductive to their best performance.

Sometimes screen readers or other forms of accommodation can cause problems in terms of incompatibilities, glitches, and even crashing with online exams. Having a short practice exam can work out some of the kinks ahead of time and set the student more at ease in terms of what to expect. In Canvas, when you create a quiz, under "Quiz Type" you will see an option for "Practice Quiz."

Be aware that some students may have arm spasticity or weakness that could mean they accidentally press the wrong answer to a question or even the "Submit" button before they are actually finished. Students with anxiety may feel their level of anxiety rise at the prospect of taking an exam—and worse, taking an exam online—and this may hinder their best performance.

The various online test proctoring systems may cause accessibility difficulties, as well. Depending on the system and the settings selected by the instructor, some proctoring services record the student's eye and body movement and any sounds while taking the exam, and anything suspicious in relation to cheating is noted. This may flag, then: Students with conditions necessitating movement (to alleviate pain, take medication, use the restroom, or relieve symptoms of ADHD or autism, for example), students whose eyes don't seem to stay on the test at hand (including some students with vision disabilities or ADHD), and students who need to read the test questions aloud (or use assistive technology that reads the test questions aloud) or who listen to music for better exam performance (including students with some types of learning disabilities and ADHD). Some proctoring systems limit keyboarding, which limit the functionality of assistive technologies. This is true of the online proctoring service used here at Sac State, Respondus Lockdown, and so the campus recommends alternative assessments for students with accommodations using these. It should also be noted that students with anxiety may feel increased anxiety in taking any exam, and for some even more so with an online exam, and still more anxious when taking an online proctored exam.

(For much further information regarding online exam proctoring and students with disabilities, please see:
The Center for Democracy and Technology discussion by Lydia X. Z. Brown,
"How Automated Test Proctoring Software Discriminates Against Disabled Students"
https://cdt.org/insights/how-automated-test-proctoring-software-discriminates-against-disabled-students/)

Screen Time

Some disabilities are adversely impacted by the considerably greater screen time of today, such as people with low vision, migraines, or seizure disorders. Making class handouts and other information available for students to print out (as a file upload or attachment), as well as on a Canvas page (for those students without access to a printer or who cannot open documents on their device), can be helpful in cutting screen time down, as is a choice given in digital or paper textbooks. Being able to participate in Zoom class by phone or just by listening with the slides provided by the instructor ahead of time printed out to see on paper rather than the screen, may also be helpful.

Greater screen time may also mean greater sitting, which can exacerbate discomfort, pain, and ease and range of motion for some students with back, neck, or shoulder problems or disabilities. Extended time for reading, assignments, and tests is very helpful.
Greater navigation of the online course via Canvas or Zoom, reading, writing, and test-taking, all require a lot of keyboarding, too, as a part of screen time. For students with arm or hand mobility limitations or discomfort caused by such conditions as arthritis or carpal tunnel, this can be exhausting and/or painful. For these students, too, extended time can be very helpful.

Presenting

In our online age of recording or giving a Zoom presentation, no live audience in front of you can lower anxiety for some students in classes where presentations are assigned. For other students, however, the added uncertainty of figuring out the technological considerations of properly recording and uploading a presentation to their Canvas course or giving a live Zoom presentation with screenshare can make anxiety worse. In this regard, a low-stakes informal live Zoom speech or short video recording of some kind as a small assignment in point value, extra credit, or as a part of a discussion board might be a good way for students to do a run-through ahead of a bigger assigned presentation, work out any kinks, and become more comfortable with the technology.

For other students, seeing themselves on camera can heighten self-consciousness, insecurities, or perfectionistic tendencies, increasing their stress. And for students with some disabilities that are more visible to the viewer in the closer camera shot (such the face) or audible (such as a speech disability), this may spike their apprehension. Speech anxiety is real and can add to and be exacerbated by more general anxiety, and the stress can worsen physical and mental health conditions, chronic pain, and cognitive or speech disabilities.

In the on-ground class public speaking situation, faculty may have greater awareness of a student's level of nervousness due to observation or the student feeling more comfortable in disclosing to the instructor higher speech anxiety, but may have less awareness in the online class. And sometimes greater nervousness in a student can result in a hastily read speech, perceived deficiencies of delivery, or missed parts of presentational content that had been planned but not said, and this can affect grading of the presentation. In this last regard, asking for a draft of the planned presentation, as a part of the assignment, can help the instructor to see what the student had intended, even if not all was actually said or done in the presentation.

More generally, a supportive online class climate created through first day/week icebreakers and Zoom discussions or Canvas discussion boards throughout the semester with their peers can lay a nice foundation for anxious students to feel more comfortable in giving presentations. Offering a choice in alternative assignments (e.g., a paper), when possible, may also prove helpful for some.

Lastly, assigning peer review or feedback of presentations to a student with disabilities related to sight or sound may require extra considerations in terms of accessibility.

And in Person

While the vast majority of instruction is remote, there are exceptions for courses that meet in person or other instances of face-to-face meetings or interactions on campus.

At such times, it is important to note that face masks may exacerbate health problems for some people. Masks may sometimes also serve as a visual trigger to people experiencing trauma, loss, or mental health disorders. Students with hearing loss or limitations may find it harder to lipread, because the mouth is obscured, or harder to hear, because sound is muffled.

Social distancing, too, makes it harder to hear well what someone is saying or to follow an interpreter, who usually signs at a closer distance. And students with vision loss in need of physical assistance from time to time may find less help in the era of social distancing.

Lessons

Lessons change in this new time, as we know.

Some Key Differences

It's important to be aware of the significant differences between the on-ground class versus the online class for students, some of which include:

Less Movement

On-ground classes meet with breaks in between, where students have to get up and out into the fresh air to move from class to class. Online learning, and our more sedentary life-style now in general, typically means less exercise, and this is unfortunate when physicality helps many students with ADHD to release pent up energy, and the fresh air or movement can help with some types of pain and discomfort and can help all students to approach learning with reinvigorated minds.

Greater Distractions

The distractions of home (pets, family members or roommates, and more) are enough to derail any student's attention to class lessons, recorded or Zoomed, but students with some forms of ADHD might find it especially difficult to focus on coursework in the home environment. It may be harder to come to class or open Canvas and start a recorded lesson—and no one will see you in the Zoom class if texting or gaming! It may also be harder to begin and finish schoolwork.

Because everything is online these days—entertainment, social life via social media, and college work—screen time has increased tremendously for students. And academic screen time may lower in priority for many students when the other forms are more fun, but especially for students with ADHD trying to learn online, when distractions may just be a click away. Being online more may also lead to being online too much. Online addiction or gaming addiction, too, is a potential risk for many college students, but more so for students with some forms of Autism and some students with some types of psychological disabilities.

Less a Sense of Academic Connection or Competence

Students with disabilities often feel less a sense of connection in academic life: Students with visible disabilities may feel a sense of divide with others who are reluctant to interact with them or who are disparaging, unintentionally and intentionally. Students with learning disabilities and ADHD, who may have been treated as if or told they were stupid by others in their lives, including teachers and school staff in prior schooling or higher education, may feel a disconnect or lack of competence, as well.

These feelings can deepen in our shift to remote learning, which can feel…remote. Asynchronous classes mean no live instructor or classmates, and even Zoom class lessons can still leave a learner feeling separate from their faculty and peers and distant from their studies. Students with disabilities may also feel their sense of academic competency slipping if they struggle, as many students do, with online learning, or if their accommodations don't work well or at all with their new way of learning and completing assignments.

Lesson Creation

Lesson planning considerations are also important, whether recorded or Zoomed:

Set Up

Strive for the best of audio and visual as possible for your technological equipment, for the sake of people with vision disabilities, hearing disabilities, and learning disabilities related to sight and sound. For Zoom lessons, as well, the highest possible Internet quality will allow for the best audio and visual.

Keep the backgrounds shown behind you simple in class lessons recorded or Zoomed, and with the least amount of distraction as possible in terms of noise. This will help students with vision, hearing, and ADHD disabilities to see, hear, and focus best.

You also want to ensure color contrast in what you are wearing to your background and color of skin, and that you are in a well-lit room, without the light source casting a shadow on you or backlighting you. This will help students with low vision or who have trouble distinguishing colors to better see you.

Slides

When showing slides in lessons, we have slide design considerations such as font type and size and color contrast. When also providing our slides to students to have for the lesson, we additionally need those proper headings and alt text for images, for students with sight and print disabilities, and slide accessibility checkers come in very handy in these regards. With slide show narration, captioning is needed, too, for students with hearing disabilities and some learning disabilities.

We may be tempted to "jazz" slides up with more color, imagery, and slide transitions and animations in our online teaching or campus presentations, but too much may distract a student with ADHD or adversely impact someone with sensitivity to flashing lights or glare, or prone to seizures.

We also need to remember to say what we are showing, when that information is essential to the learning. This means any demonstrations, pictures, charts, graphs, models, websites, and other imagery need stated descriptions. Failing to do so would be like presenting an image without the alt text saying what it is. The student with sight disabilities or some learning disabilities is left out and misses out on the learning. Students with ADHD may find your voice helpful to staying focused on what they are looking at, students viewing the lesson on small phones will also appreciate the description of what is being shown, and all students could likely benefit from the visual content being orally reinforced and clarified.

Video and Audio Lessons

When it comes to videos that you create or find for your students, the prior principles come into play.

Another good practice is to, whenever possible, "embed" a video right there in your online course, rather than inserting a link that takes the student to it elsewhere on the Internet, where, once out of the course, it can be harder to want to return to the learning at hand. Many videos also play with surrounding distractions on YouTube or other websites, that can potentially distract any student, but especially one with ADHD.

As we know captioning is necessary online—but not perfect, for either recorded video lessons or Zoom lessons. Experts estimate that automated captioning is, on average, 60% to 70% accurate. Other forms of captioning, as well, can be inaccurate, with confusing results, to say the least. Discipline terminology is interpreted as whatever it sounds closest to in terms of more common words, and even common words used or names of people and places can be misinterpreted (for example, the name of our campus, Sac State, sometimes has been shown to caption as "sex date"). When we have a student in our course who relies fully or partially on lesson captioning for learning, accuracy becomes most essential, and double-checking the lesson captioning a most worthy time investment for that student's learning. And, of course, when it comes to audio material, such as podcasts, for example, a transcript is needed.

The Use of Zoom for Lessons and Meetings

Zoom is typically regarded as the most accessible video conferencing system at this time, with design in mind for people with disabilities and updates in accessibility keep coming, but still has a way to go. For example: For students with hearing disabilities, Zoom now provides live captioning, in addition to the option of having an interpreter participate in the Zoom meeting and have their video spotlighted by the host or pinned by the Zoom attendee so that the interpreter remains visually present and stationary to the student reading sign. The recorded lesson that you can make available to the class has captioning and automated transcripts, but certainly neither is error free. For students with sight disabilities, Zoom works with screen readers so that the student can navigate the Zoom app, but presenter screen-sharing and other features of Zoom cannot be read by the screen reader.

For instructors teaching and staff presenting or meeting with students, it may be helpful to familiarize yourself with the accessibility features of Zoom prior and to show a student in need, at times, too: Zoom Accessibility Information
https://zoom.us/accessibility

To follow are some guidelines for using Zoom in ways beneficial to students with disabilities, and, as you will likely see, most students.

Zoom Lesson

A little slower pacing can be helpful to accommodate the slower pace of assistive technology online, as well as help students with poor wi-fi to catch up.

A little greater variety is also nice, with movement from you talking, to pictures or a clip, to discussion question, Zoom poll, or Chat time, for example, helps to keep the interest of the student with ADHD, and likely most students, who live in a world where online viewing typically means everchanging things to see, read, hear, and do.

Encouraging student collaboration with class note-taking helps the student with note-taker accommodations and helps students to fill in the holes in their notes of the days they were present or catch up on missed lessons, should disabilities related to attention, health, pain, or psychological well-being adversely impact their learning and retention of the material, or attendance in class. Making available Zoom class recordings can also be helpful to these students, as well as other students with poor wi-fi connection or with

difficult life-circumstances at this time hindering their ability to fully attend or pay attention to class lessons.

Zoom Mute and Video Cams

Being able to actually see the students contributes to more of a classroom feel than just seeing the student's name or chosen profile background or picture. But the more students who choose to have their video showing, the more there is to visually process for students with low vision or other vision disabilities. Students experiencing difficulties in this regard can switch to "active speaker view" to display a larger view of the current speaker, and limit the number of visible participants. Students can also double-click on the Zoom window to enter/exit full screen mode to increase the video size for better seeing.

Some students with ADHD may be distracted by the many different homelife backgrounds of the students' video showing themselves or what those students are doing or have going on in the Zoom webcam shot. Fortunately, there is a stop video button for the Zoom host should, for example, a student's cute pet become too much of a distraction. Asking or mandating all students keep themselves muted, unless they have a question or comment, reduces noise and distraction for students with hearing disabilities or types of ADHD, respectively, and, certainly, the Zoom host can press the "mute all" button when needed, as well.

In short, too much going on at once visually or auditorily in the Zoom room can be hard for some students, it is important to remember. Less to see and hear from their classmates at any one time can help students with sensory disabilities or limit sensory overload for people with pain or exhaustion.

It should also be noted that there are many reasons why a student might not want to show video of themselves in Zoom, including, with regard to students with disabilities, a student whose anxiety spikes when viewing themselves on camera or a student struggling with depression or severe fatigue or weakness for whom just getting onto Zoom is huge, leaving no strength left for appearance of themselves and/or their surroundings. And some students choose online learning precisely because they don't want to reveal their disabilities. We may equate students showing themselves in Zoom with engagement, when that may not be the case at all—some students may be more attentive with that "stop video." For example, having that webcam off helps a student with ADHD who needs to move or pace or to work out excess energy and focus, a student with autism who needs to stim while learning, or a student who needs to stand or walk a bit after too much sitting in a Zoom session in order to relieve debilitating back pain.

Zoom Screen-Sharing

Remember that anything you display through screen-share—slides, handouts, websites, and more—cannot be read by a screen reader, which requires the actual document file to read to the student. This means that what you show is not accessible to the student who is blind or with low vision, or has print-related learning disabilities, as well as not viewable to any student using their phone solely to hear the lesson, due to no webcam or stable Internet. And, of course, some students will be using smaller devices to view Zoom lessons, and what you're screen-sharing won't be as clear.

This makes saying what you are showing essential—and asking any guest presenters or student presenters to do likewise, if they are screen-sharing. This "verbal description" requires some practice to feel natural and become habit. A helpful tip is to listen to a lesson with your eyes closed to gauge how well you do this and where areas for improvement may be, and then following up with any missed information announced in the next class or in Canvas. Sharing all documents you or other presenters plan to screen-share, ideally beforehand in Canvas or via email, is helpful, too. Sharing the documents during the Zoom lesson in the Chat file attachment feature may also be option, but be sure to doublecheck, because some students may not be able to easily access these.

Zoom Screen Annotation and the White Board

Annotation (used to guide students around or highlight the features of a screen-shared slide, website, or document) and the Whiteboard features (for text, handwriting, drawing and more) are handy in Zoom, but cannot be read by a screen reader. Students using screen readers, therefore, cannot comfortably use either feature, as well.

Saying what you are showing is necessary with these features of Zoom, too.

Zoom Polls

Zoom polls can be fun and engaging for students. Remember to give more time for those with a screen reader to respond. Be sure to read the poll results for all, rather than just the visual of screen-sharing results, for students using a screen reader who may experience difficulties. This will also help students phoning into the Zoom class or meeting who cannot see the poll results.

Zoom Chat

The Chat feature can help the more reticent students participate and ask questions and can be a real source of fun and engagement, as well. Students with screen readers can both access and contribute to Zoom Chat. However, a student using a screen reader is trying to follow both what the professor is saying in the lesson and what the screen reader is saying of the Chat (analogous to trying to follow a lecture in a campus class with side conversations going on around you). Also, some students may experience technological difficulties or time delay in screen readers moving between what the instructor and the Chat are saying. It's also important to note that the Chat feature may be distracting to a student with ADHD. Students can turn off the Chat feature, of course, but then may miss the context for answers being given to student questions or follow-up on student comments, or fun chat that contributes positively to classroom climate and student relationships.

As a solution, the instructor (or designated assistant) reading the comments is helpful for students needing to turn off the Chat or who cannot see the Chat due to using audio solely on their devices to hear the lesson. Depending on the nature and degree of Chat in a class and if you have students with these types of disabilities and you think this has been an obstacle to their learning, an alternative solution may be to ask students to limit their chat to what is most on-topic and necessary to the learning at hand. You, as the meeting host, can also disenable the Chat function under "Settings" in your Zoom account.

It should also be noted that files and web links posted in Chat are accessible using keyboarding, but a student using a screen reader may or may not be able to activate the links and open and read documents, depending on the type of screen reader being used and the student's proficiency in using it. Providing document files and weblinks before or after the class or meeting in an announcement or email is a good solution.

Zoom Discussion

We know from research and experience that class discussions create more active learning and greater engagement and interaction with the material and the class. However, faculty or staff in online classes and meetings with students may find student talk is sometimes harder to create or sustain in Zoom, and begin limiting it more in our lectures or meetings. But talking in pairs or groups in breakout rooms or having whole class discussions with their peers can help students with some forms of ADHD or learning disabilities to better process and organize their thoughts.

Zoom discussions may be harder to follow for a student with some disabilities, however, unless we provide some structure:

> Asking students to speak one at a time, as much as possible, helps students with hearing, vision, learning, and ADHD disabilities. This makes for clearer automated captioning for the class recorded lesson later, too.
>
> Asking students to say their name first before offering their question or comment can help the student with vision disabilities to realize more quickly that the instructor is no longer talking but now a student. This can also help the student with hearing disabilities to better follow along signing or live captioning.

Zoom Breakout Rooms

When assigning breakout rooms randomly, and in the case of the student having an interpreter, be sure to move the interpreter into that student's breakout room or manually create the breakout rooms with one room including both the student and the interpreter.

Be sure to instruct students in that breakout room to follow the same protocol above to speak one at a time and to say their name first before their question or comment (especially at first), in order to help students with hearing and vision disabilities to better follow along in the Zoom breakout room.

Monitoring the breakout rooms is helpful to make sure all students are on track with the task or topic given and progressing smoothly can help students with ADHD or other students with disabilities who didn't quite hear or understand the directions before being put into the breakout room. This will likely help other students without disabilities who missed the directions, also. Providing the instructions in the Chat is wise, too, and the print size is larger than the breakout room broadcast feature.

If students are working together using screen-sharing or the white board, then let them know that these features are not accessible to a student using a screen reader, so they will need to provide verbal descriptions to keep their student colleague in step with the group work and fully understanding. They may also need to be mindful of any use of the breakout room Chat for a student with a screen reader.

Double Checking Accessibility of Materials, Lessons, and More

To help with accessibility in course design, Canvas has some easy to use tools:

- There is the *Accessibility Checker* in all Canvas classes, that little stick figure on the right of the tool bar at the bottom in Canvas that you see when you first create or open to edit any announcement, assignment, quiz, discussion board, or page for course information. This checks for sufficient color contrast, alt text, proper links, proper headings and heading structure, and proper table mark up, and lets you know what needs fixing, why, and how to do it.
- There are also *Ally Tools in Canvas* that help, too, with display dials in different colors to measure the level of accessibility of materials instructors put there, in terms of documents, images, and more (green for high or perfect, orange for medium, and red for low accessibility). You can click on the dial to get quick guidance on how to make your files more inclusive for your students.

For any course material that you upload to Canvas (such as documents, slides, and more), students can click on the file and either download the material as is or download the material in alternative formats, such as a tagged PDF for accessible technology or electronic Braille. In order for the materials to be downloaded in accessible formats, they must first be formatted by the faculty or staff member, which can also be easy to do using the further accessibility checkers described below.

- More accessibility checkers may be found when using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and PDFs. For further information on accessibility tools in these programs, please see the campus:

  Universal Design Program
  https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/universal-design/

Further information about how to make your materials more accessible yourself, or schedule an appointment for one-on-one consultation via Zoom, may be found at:

Accessible Technology Initiative Website
https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/ati/

Accessible Instructional Materials Website
https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/ati/instructional-materials.html

Accessible Canvas Pages Website
https://csus.instructure.com/courses/54130

Designing your materials and course learning with accessibility in mind can, truly, benefit everyone. As many faculty and staff have learned, the investment of time in looking at course set-up, materials, and assignments with new eyes sparks changes that benefit all students, as well as equitable learning for students with disabilities. And as many argue, greater accessibility in higher education is a matter of social justice.

(With appreciation to all who work with students with disabilities on our campus,
especially Services to Students with Disabilities,
and with gratitude to Corrine Rowland, Universal Design for Learning Lead,
and Katie Beekman, Accessible Technology Consultant, of the Sac State IRT
for their valuable expertise and assistance with this information.)

Campus Resources

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD)—
Offers a wide range of support services to ensure students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity to pursue their educational goals. Application instructions are provided on the website for students with mobility or other physical disabilities, blindness/visual impairment, psychological disorders/cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, and ADD/ADHD, and students who are deaf/hard of hearing. Services and accommodations for students may include, but are not limited to: specialized educational materials, adaptive equipment, adaptive computer training and use, note-taker services, testing accommodations, consultation with faculty for students with special academic needs, library assistance, disability management advising/counseling, on-campus housing accommodation, and graduate and professional program assistance and information referrals. Students with questions and faculty with inquiries or wanting to make a referral will find further information, including virtual open hours, on the website.

Email SSWD sswd@csus.edu Phone: (916) 278-6955
SSWD Website https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/

Assistive Technology Lab (ATL)—
Provides technological services to students with disabilities referred by SSWD counselors/specialists, including: a lab with alternative access to computers for students with disabilities to work on coursework and a training room for students to receive instruction on the adaptive technology appropriate to the student's disability (such as screen magnification and reading, scan/read programs). The ATL also provides consultation and assistance to faculty to convert course textbooks, syllabi, exams, class web content, slides, and handouts into alternative formatted instructional materials for students (such as Braille).

Phone: (916) 278-7915
Email ATL@csus.edu
ATL Computer Lab: Academic Information Resource Center 2011B

Maryjane Rees Language, Speech and Hearing Center—
Offers speech, language, and hearing services for people with communication challenges and/or cognitive disorders, including but not limited to: hearing loss, reading disorders, speech sound disorders, stuttering, cleft palate, voice disorders, and conditions associated with stroke, brain injury, concussion, progressive disorders, and other neurological impairment. Services are free to all, and those interested may get further information on the website, call, or stop by.

Center Email speechclinic@csus.edu Phone: (916) 278-6601
Center Website https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/community-services/language-speech-hearing-center.html

TRiO Student Support Services Program (through SSWD)—
Provides to students with disabilities, who meet TRiO eligibility requirements and are in need of academic support to better stay and succeed in college, services that include: supplemental instruction, tutoring, adaptive equipment, readers, note-takers, proctors and test arrangements, specialized instruction materials, individualized counseling, transition coaching, assistance with graduate school admission, and more.

TRiO Website https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/student-resources.html

Counseling (Student Health and Counseling Services)—
Helps students to cope with such things as stress, academic difficulties, cultural adjustment, relationship issues, anxiety, depression, bereavement, post-traumatic symptoms, questioning sexuality and coming out, eating disorders, addiction and alcohol abuse. The privacy and confidentiality of all who use Counseling Services is maintained fully within the bounds of law and professional ethics.

Phone: (916) 278-6461
Counseling Services Website https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/counseling/

Students in an immediate crisis should contact 911 or the Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Students with urgent concerns who would like to speak with someone as soon as possible should call the 24-Hour Counseling Services phone number above and here: (916) 278-6461.

Students who want to receive ongoing counseling or explore if counseling is right for them may schedule an appointment through the online Patient Portal (after 6 pm is best, when appointment slots become most available). This typically begins with a consultation appointment, where the student can talk about their concerns and receive support and feedback. Many students find that they feel better and their needs are met in just one session. Students who want to continue counseling may choose individual counseling in follow-up single session appointments (to meet their needs in the moment) or short-term individual therapy (more than one session with the same mental health clinician), or other options, as well. Counseling is available to all students, and done virtually, through Zoom.