

Campus Wide listening session #11 Disabilities

October 19, 2022

What we heard

Communication

- Need better communication where to learn about accommodations that are available for employees
- Need to communicate/educate students better so they can self-advocate
- Communicate to students that we have many buildings on the historic register, and if they haven't been significantly renovated, they may not be ADA compliant.
- Need to communicate, if you see someone in a mobility device, give proper space due to their inability to maneuver quickly.

Understanding of Needs

- Not recognizing the full, broad range of what it means to have/live with a disability
- Stigma of being labeled as disabled, people may treat you differently
- students who need accommodations but do not think/want to identify they have a need
- Respect by colleagues for learning differences.
- We need to broaden our education about service animals.
 - Service animals are trained to do particular tasks and are welcome all over campus.
 - Emotional support animals are not the same is something provided in a living environment and not something that people should be taking to class

Accessibility

- Problems getting access to accommodations as a student/employee (i.e. Federal Work study (FWS)).
- How to streamline the process so that people with disabilities aren't overwhelmed trying to get access.
- Also, the challenges they are experiencing may magnify the challenges/hurdles/obstacles they might encounter.
- students may not feel they 'need' the services at the beginning of the semester and don't realize what the process entails to get accommodations and/or other supports in place (including how long this may take).

Facilities

- Too many scooters on the pathway obstructing wheelchairs and accessibility bars are being blocked
- HSC campus is also not very mobility device accessible

Barriers in obtaining help?

- Could the DRC work in collaboration with the HR office so that students who are also employees aren't having to do redundant work in getting accommodations? I.E. submitting medical documentation.
- Knowing what documents to fill out for the requirements
- Onus on the students to ask for accommodations and at times they do not want to disclose or divulge this
- Major shift from lower grades and high school to when you come to college. Parents and teachers were the advocates for accommodations in college the shift is on the student to self-advocate.
- sometimes students need help to wrap their head around, creating an even playing field versus an advantage in creating an accommodation
- Access to learning disability and neuro diagnostic testing and the fee for these diagnoses
- students in professional/graduate competitive programs find it can be detrimental to their standing in the program to disclose a disability.
- stigma that follows people in the workplace
- respect by colleagues for learning differences
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) does provide therapy/counselors, but it can take weeks to schedule

Financial Barriers

- FWS students can only work 15 hours a week (financially this creates a burden).
- Health insurance only covers so much, increasing inflation and lack of salary increases makes it more difficult to afford necessary medications and services.
- recognition that people with disabilities may need to be out of the office for doctors' appointments therapy more than people without disabilities.
- While resources like Counseling are free for students, the assessments needed for a diagnosis incur a fee.

Intersectionality

- acknowledging the intersectionality and the multiple dimensions of dealing with any disability
- the autism center, every year they do a training for faculty on teaching students with autism and different supports in the newest research

What is working well

- The immediate team and people who we work with are great
- Flexible Scheduling
- Staff at Disability Resource Center (DRC) have been great to work with, answering questions thoroughly and timely

- helping brainstorm possibilities for students
- For the most part professors are understanding of student's needs.
- Temporary handicap passes in addition to the handicap issued by city, however the process was fast and easy.

What organizations or individuals do you rely on for help?

- Academic advisors are the first stop.

Recommendations

- More conversation around mitigating biases
- Advisory group with a variety of individuals with a broad spectrum of disabilities that can regularly be consulted for feedback
- More sick time and paid time off bank
- Going beyond the minimum ADA requirements for buildings and other physical spaces.
- Disability awareness Day/Campaign
 - We heard that ADA office is working on updated webpages to answer some of the questions that we brought up in today's session (they were taking notes for a Q&A section)
- having a disability awareness day or campaign educating others about needs and resources.
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- more training and awareness for staff, administration, faculty, and students on disability resources.
- Employee Resource Group (ERG) for employees with disabilities
- Disability Cultural Center - Disability focused space that is not compliance based
- Maybe UofL could negotiate better rates with insurance for testing/therapy sessions
- funding for testing for those who have financial need
- The autism center does a training on campus for faculty - but I'd like to see it expanded to countering bias and teaching full neurodivergence
- Education/Talk about biases
- Having someone at the employee Success Center be a sounding board for questions about disability accommodations before or instead of going to HR.
- considering having higher education leaders in Kentucky lobby for legislative support for funding for sources for evaluation.
- negotiate discounted rates for example, like assessments. EAP adding additional sessions.
- Help in finding support for assessments.
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From the Anonymous form

- We had a new employee introduce themselves as being bipolar as part of a new employee introduction email that went to the entire unit. To me, it seemed this was important for them to disclose this but it made other employees uncomfortable, saying they shouldn't have shared this in a public forum. If the employee wants to disclose a disability publicly, should they first sign a "release" of some sort since one might think this is a HIPAA violation?

Links that were shared:

HR Employee accommodations resources

- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) You can contact the Employee Relations and Compliance office at emrelate@louisville.edu."
- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource \(SOAR\)](#)
- Employee request form: <https://louisville.edu/hr/forms/ada-request>
- <https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>
- The DRC shared a checklist
 - <https://louisville.edu/disability/students/getting-started-checklist>