

**DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**

**STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2011-2016**

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## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that between 8-10% of high school students entering college have some type of disability. As the result of federal legislation (The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), students with disabilities are protected from discrimination in postsecondary education with respect to access to services, programs and classes. Traditionally, students with disabilities have been categorized solely in terms of physical, sensory or mental differences, with little attention paid toward their shared sociocultural history or contributions to the university environment. In reference to cultural diversity, education often attends to groups of people who share values, rituals, customs, traditions, language, folklore and art and who have developed a sense of unity and identity because of a common history or set of experiences. Thus, depicting students with disabilities as a specific cultural subgroup is a new way of thinking when it comes to celebrating the diverse student population at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Only recently has education begun to explore the idea that students with disabilities often share socioeconomic and political goals that have arisen from a history of oppression in order to protect their basic civil rights. Student Disability Services (SDS) recognizes these experiences by promoting disability as part of the diversity at UTSA. Student Disability Services at UTSA works as a liaison between the University community and students needing academic accommodations by addressing current and emerging issues with respect to accessibility to achieve universal access in the classroom and throughout campus. Students are encouraged to stay informed about their rights and responsibilities and as young adults they must “self-identify” to Student Disability Services in order to receive services. SDS counselors provided exemplary practices in disability counseling by meeting with students and family members one on one during the intake process. SDS staff review new documentation and follow up on general inquiries via email, phone calls or in person about disability services at UTSA. In addition, Student Disability Services provides accommodation letters for students to give to faculty for all students who request accommodations each semester. SDS staff provide testing accommodations and use state of the art adaptive technology to convert textbooks and/or reading materials into alternative formats for students who are blind or who have print disabilities. SDS staff also provide auxiliary services in the form of sign language interpreting and captionists for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Student Disability Services at UTSA serves as a community resource for families, faculty and staff. SDS personnel participate in community and on-campus outreach presentations as part of the

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office effort to maximize educational success and ease some of the barriers that exists for students with disabilities as they attempt to navigate the differences between high school and postsecondary education.

### OUR MISSION

Student Disability Services is committed to the full inclusion of students with disabilities by promoting equal access for all university programs and activities for students with disabilities at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

### OUR VISION

Student Disability Services envisions a university environment that is committed to accessibility and inclusion where students with disabilities actively participate in all programs and services throughout UTSA. Student Disability Services engage students with disabilities by employing exemplary practices in disability counseling, assistive technology, alternative media, reasonable accommodations and the sharing of disability related information.

### OUR CORE VALUES

Student Disability Services at The University of Texas at San Antonio values equity, respect, empowerment and connectedness for all students with disabilities. Student Disability Services assist students in the development of self-reliance and the personal independence and we create a comprehensively accessible environment where students are viewed on a basis of ability, not disability by:

- **Facilitating** the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the UTSA community.
- **Working** as a liaison between the University community and students needing accommodations throughout campus.
- **Demonstrating** our commitment to diversity, personal growth and development by employing exemplary practices in disability counseling, assistive technology, alternative media, reasonable accommodations, student self-advocacy and the sharing of disability related information.

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### OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE AND PROGRAMMING

COMMUNICATE	CONNECT	COLLABORATE	CREATE
<p>Building on a foundation of excellence requires a great amount of discussion, some discord and eventually, much agreement and understanding.</p> <p>We communicate by:</p>	<p>Our goal inside and outside of the classroom is to provide opportunities for students to connect with each other, with UTSA and with the community.</p> <p>We connect by:</p>	<p>As we work to build and maintain lasting relationships, we collaborate with others in the Division and across the University.</p> <p>We collaborate by:</p>	<p>The creativity of our diverse staff fosters the perfect environment for us to achieve excellence with unique and innovative experiences.</p> <p>We create unique and innovative experiences by:</p>
<p>Talking with faculty, students and staff every day in our efforts to make sure students with disabilities are included in all university services and programs. Communication is a key concept in accomplishing the mission of equal access for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Engaging in both on-campus and off-campus development opportunities so that professional staff stay abreast of best practices in the field of disability services.</p>	<p>Serving as a liaison and mediator in disability related issues between faculty, staff and students. We also work with other departments throughout campus to achieve full inclusion of students with disabilities in all programs and services.</p>	<p>Employing creative solutions to complex barriers faced by students with disabilities in the classroom and on campus.</p>

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### STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES

- Student Disability Services (SDS) strives to be an educational consultant and expert in providing accommodations. As a result, Student Disability Services continually works to professionally develop both faculty and staff concerning their responsibilities for providing equal access for students with disabilities in the classroom. SDS staff provide numerous workshops, training and outreach to the UTSA and surrounding San Antonio community. SDS staff also consult on campus-wide accessibility issues and on improvements to accessible campus facilities (i.e. Web access, Disability Way Finding) as needed.
- Student Disability Services is inherently collaborative through its basic mission and function as a liaison and mediator. As a result, SDS has worked through the years with Career Services on a Federal career placement programs to help with career/internship placement for students with disabilities throughout the nation and in the surrounding communities. With this inherent strength we hope to expand these collaborative processes with additional department across campus.
- Student Disability Services has ongoing relationships with academia throughout campus and we continue to promote the concept of Universal Design. As a result, SDS currently provides valuable data to the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching Department for a grant entitled "Universal Design and Technology for Students with Disabilities" from the National Science Foundation to increase the number of students with disabilities who graduate with a degree in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM). These types of programs promote the university wide mission of becoming a tier 1 research institution.
- With the completion of a new multipurpose building on campus, Student Disability Services personnel and offices will be moving into a more accessible and contiguous office space with increased square footage and appropriate testing facilities.

### STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

- Student Disability Services continues to experience increases in the number of students served which was up 9% from the previous year. Student Disability Services is challenged by a growing demand for all services. Thus, as UTSA's enrollment numbers grow, SDS will also be challenged to continue to provide effective disability services in terms of space, staff, resources, and adaptive technology.
- Demand for interpreter and captioning services continues to grow as students make more requests for interpreters for field placements, internships, academic support services such as tutoring and supplemental instruction, and University-sponsored events. This highly skilled service, which is mandated by law, continues to pose a significant challenge with regard to limited economic resources and in the recruitment of appropriately skilled employees.
- Student Disability Services staff have experienced a large turnover of personnel and leadership over the past year resulting in numerous transition issues. As these changes take place, all current practices and service delivery policies and procedures are being reviewed. As a result of this arduous review, staff began the process of revamping all policies, procedures, marketing materials and Web site information to reflect best practices in business processes and service delivery for students with disabilities in postsecondary education. Ultimately, SDS

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personnel hope to utilize the 4C's philosophy of connecting, collaborating, communicating and creating to become a more "user friendly" department dedicated to the inclusion of students with disabilities in all University services and programs; all of which poses as a considerable challenge.

- Student Disability Services has not yet implemented a formal database to collect and track data on students who utilize disability services. As a result, SDS staff members are challenged to determine the basic student services needs based on adequate data collection and prediction and communication with the downtown office.
- Campus wide ADA compliance issues also pose a challenge to the department in terms of classroom size and availability of seating as well as web access and access to classroom technology and media. Several classes utilize instructional software that is not accessible to students with visual impairments who utilize adaptive technology. Other classes show videos that are not captioned, which creates accessibility problems for students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- A growing and involved University community through Extended Education, the PREP program and various collaborative conferences/seminars has resulted in some confusion in the responsibility of service delivery for these areas.
- UTSA has a physically challenging terrain, which limits access by some students who have mobility impairments. As the university grows, parking access and shuttle service becomes an even larger systemic problem for students with disabilities.

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## OUR INITIATIVES AND GOALS

### UTSA Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Educational Experiences to Enable Student Success

Student Disability Services collaborate with faculty and staff which enables equal access to education and university life and promotes the retention and timely graduation of students with disabilities at UTSA.

#### **Goal 1.1: Student Disability Services professional staff will promote a high quality service oriented environment for students with disabilities so they feel comfortable utilizing services and communicating issues on a regular basis.**

*Below, please identify your action steps and the timeframe for implementation/completion of each step. Note: The number of action steps will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.*

Action Steps and Timeline	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1. SDS staff will identify true freshmen during the documentation review process and record this in an intake log in order to determine if these students learned and demonstrated self-advocacy skills that are discussed in the initial intake meeting. (Note: This log will be compared to a log of students requesting accommodations in the spring to determine the success rate and by asking for accommodations, students have demonstrated self-advocacy skills).					X
2. Veterans who register with Student Disability Services will be sent an annual survey to assess their level of satisfaction of services provided by Student Disability Services.			X		X
3. SDS Counselors will meet individually with students who qualify for services in order to provide referral information, individual counseling and an accommodation plan.	X	X			
4. Students completing a test in the Adaptive Test Center will be asked upon completing a test if they were satisfied with their accommodations in the Adaptive Test Center during the course of a semester.				X	X

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Please list your outcomes below. Again, the number will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.

Outcomes	Is this a learning outcome or an operational outcome?	Success Criterion	Will this be entered into TracDat? (Y/N)
1. Freshman students who register for disability services will demonstrate self-advocacy skills by requesting academic accommodations in subsequent semesters.	Learning	75% of students identified as freshman during the fall semester and return in the spring semester will request academic accommodations letters.	Y
2. Disabled veterans who identify themselves to Student Disability Services and qualify for services will be satisfied with the comprehensive level of services and referrals they receive during the intake process.	Operational	90% of those veterans who respond to a survey will be satisfied with the level of services provided.	Y
3. Students who participate in an intake meeting in Student Disability Services will receive appropriate referral information, individual counseling and an accommodation plan.	Operational	80% of student who participate in an intake meeting with a SDS counselor will be satisfied with the services they receive.	Y
4. Students who receive accommodations through the Adaptive Test Center in Student Disability Services will be satisfied with the implementation of their accommodations (i.e. reduced distraction, readers, scribe, assistive technology, etc.)	Operational	85% of those students who complete a survey in the Adaptive Test Center during the course of semester will report complete satisfaction with the level of accommodations received while taking a test.	Y



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### UTSA Strategic Initiative III: Ensuring Access and Affordability

Through best practices, Student Disability Services can contribute to the efficient dissemination of services which translates to access to academic classes at UTSA.

#### Goal 3.1: Establish an organization that adheres to best practices and highest professional standards in disability services and which promotes a team philosophy

*Below, please identify your action steps and the timeframe for implementation/completion of each step. Note: The number of action steps will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.*

Action Steps and Timeline	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1. All student employees who are hired by SDS will participate in a progressive training program that promotes a cohesive and informed student staff.			X	X	X
2. Students receiving alternative format text will receive a short Likert-Scale satisfaction survey at the end of each semester to determine their level of satisfaction with this service.			X	X	
3. Captionists hired by Student Disability Services and trained through the captionist mentor training program will demonstrate increased level of skill as noted through increased typing speed and a short demonstration to D/HH staff.					X
4. Part time Sign language interpreters who participate in ongoing staff development opportunities through the course of an academic year will receive a self-report survey to determine if they increased their level of knowledge in a particular subject area.					X
5. Students receiving interpreter/captioning services will be receive a satisfaction survey at the end of each long semester to determine their level of satisfaction with this service.	X	X			
6. SDS staff will develop a short survey instrument and conduct phone surveys with 5 comparable disability service offices at 5 different universities in order to benchmark best practices in disability service in higher education.				X	

*Please list your outcomes below. Again, the number will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.*

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Outcomes	Is this a learning outcome or an operational outcome?	Success Criterion	Will this be entered into TracDat? (Y/N)
1. Student staff will provide appropriate customer service and will be knowledgeable the SDS mission and purpose as well as all SDS policies, procedures and university resources/referrals.	Learning	After completing a progressive training program, all student staff will score 90% or higher on a disability service's knowledge quiz.	Y
2. Student Disability Services will satisfactorily convert all educational material as requested into an accessible format for students who have a print disability.	Operational	85% of students who receive converted materials will be satisfied with the alternative formats they receive.	Y
3. Captionists who complete mentor training programs over the course of semester show improvement in their captioning abilities a demonstrated to D/HH professional staff.	Learning	85% of those captionists who participate in captioning mentor programs over the course of a semester will demonstrate an increase in their captioning skills.	Y
4. Part time sign language interpreter staff will increase their knowledge/skills through their participation in ongoing staff development opportunities in SDS.	Learning	90% of part time sign language interpreters will self report an increased level of knowledge and/or skills.	Y
5. Students receiving Interpreter/Captioning in an academic setting at UTSA will be satisfied with the professional level of services provided.	Operational	85% of students who receive professional interpreter/captionist in the classroom will be satisfied with their service provider each semester.	Y
6. Student Disability Services will adhere to best practices in higher education access by conducting ongoing assessment through surveys conducted with comparable universities.	Operational	85% of those disability practices reported by comparable universities will also be done by SDS at UTSA.	N

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### UTSA Strategic Initiative IV: Serving the Public through Community Engagement

Through educational outreach efforts both on and off campus, Student Disability Services contributes to the overall education of students, faculty and staff which helps to promote the use of disability services and contributes to the overall inclusive environment at UTSA.

#### Goal 4.1: Engage in external and internal outreach efforts that promote the social and academic well-being for students with disabilities at UTSA

*Below, please identify your action steps and the timeframe for implementation/completion of each step. Note: The number of action steps will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.*

Action Steps and Timeline	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1. Participants who attend a disability awareness program at UTSA will complete a self-report survey on pre-identified learning outcomes for that particular program.	X	X	X		
2. Student Disability Services will facilitate the establishment of a chapter of Delta Alpha Pi (a national honor society for students with disabilities) at the UTSA.				X	X
3. Students who participate in the Workforce Recruitment Program (a collaborative career/internship program between Student Disability Services and the Career Center) will assess their level of knowledge of job seeking resources using a survey instrument.		X			X
4. Student Disability Services staff will attend various established information fairs through UTSA and ask participants to sign a list with their name and email address.				X	
5. Student Disability Services staff will contact the chairs of UTSA academic departments to request time in faculty meetings to conduct short staff development programs regarding disability services.					X

*Please list your outcomes below. Again, the number will vary for each goal. Please add or delete rows as needed.*

Outcomes	Is this a learning outcome or an	Success Criterion	Will this be entered into
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	operational outcome?		TracDat? (Y/N)
1. Students, faculty and staff who participate in disability awareness programs will report an overall increase in their level of awareness of disability issues.	Learning	70% of respondents will self-report that they had increased knowledge of learning outcomes identified in a brief survey	Y
2. Student Disability Services and students with disabilities will establish a chapter of Delta Alpha Pi at UTSA	Operational	Student Disability Services will recruit the required number of participants and complete the application to establish a chapter of Delta Alpha Pi at UTSA.	Y
3. Students who participate in career/internship programs will demonstrate an increased level of knowledge in job resources at UTSA.	Learning	80% of student who participate in the Workforce Recruitment Program will self-identify an increased level of knowledge in those job seeking resources located on the UTSA campus.	Y
4. Students who visit the Student Disability Services information tables during outreach fairs will become familiar with SDS services.	Operational	SDS staff will follow up with 100% of those individuals who leave their contact information during UTSA information fairs.	Y
5. Faculty who participate in a short development program conducted at faculty staff meetings will be familiar with those services provided by SDS	Operational	SDS staff will follow up on 90% of requests by chairs of various UTSA academic on conducting faculty training programs.	Y