

Disability Concerns Benchmarking Summary August 2003

As a part of an ongoing process to assess the quality of services for students with disabilities at Illinois State, Disability Concerns conducted a benchmarking assessment of accommodation services provided by the office. Institutions selected were of comparable student population to Illinois State University and had disability service offices. The institutions selected for benchmarking were:

Ball State University at Muncie Indiana
Bowling Green University at Bowling Green, Ohio
Miami University of Ohio at Oxford, Ohio
Indiana University of Pennsylvania at Indiana Pennsylvania

Each of the disability service offices at these institutions was asked a series of questions to compare the types and levels of services provided to develop a comparison model for Disability Concerns in determining the quality of services this office provides.

Major Points Considered for the Benchmark Study

Number of Students Served

- Illinois State serves 500 students
- Ball State serves 435
- Bowling Green serves 500
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania serves 400
- Miami of Ohio serves 600

These numbers are reflective of all accommodations provided including academic and non-academic.

Reporting Hierarchy

Each one of the disability service offices is a unit in the division of Student Affairs except Miami University of Ohio which reports to the Office of Equity under the President.

Staff Structure

The intensity of service varies between Illinois State University and the other institutions. Illinois State adheres to a more personalized case worker interaction model in providing accommodations. The other institutions provide a less involved model of approving accommodations that consists of fulfilling requests with less intense coordinator interaction.

- Illinois State University has a director, 2.5 Coordinators to provide academic accommodations, 2 secretaries and graduate assistants.
- Ball State University has a director, assistant director, office Coordinator, graduate assistant and 2 student workers.
- Bowling Green State University has a director, assistant director, secretary, graduate assistant, staff person who supervises 15 student workers.
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania had a director, assistant director, secretary and 2 graduate assistants.
- Miami of Ohio has a director, assistant director, 1 Coordinator, Secretary

Funding

Each is solely funded by the respective universities with some additional small grants.

Alternative Formats

Illinois State offers Electronic Text, Braille and enlarged text. It is the only one to offer Electronic Text. All others offer books on tape, Braille and enlarged text.

Academic Accommodations

All offer the same basic academic accommodations.

Non-Academic Accommodations

Examples of non-academic accommodations are: housing, parking, mobility orientation, maps in alternative format, key modifications, service animals, adjustable height tables and chairs.

- Ball State and Illinois State offer the most extensive non-academic accommodations.
- Ball State, Bowling Green and Miami of Ohio offer a shuttle service.
- Illinois State is the most extensively involved in Commencement. Each of the other offices involvement is in the providing of interpreters only and the names of students who will need accommodation to participate.

Faculty/Staff/Visitor Accommodations

Illinois State and Miami of Ohio provide faculty /staff accommodations in addition to student accommodations.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology offerings are similar at all institutions.

Interpreters /Real-Time Captionists

- Illinois State and Miami of Ohio hire interpreters/real-time captionists.
- The other three use outside agencies to perform these services.

Transition Programs

- Indiana University of Pennsylvania provides a one week summer orientation experience for students with disabilities.
- Illinois State is developing such a program to be implemented in two years.

Admission Procedures

There are no special admission procedures at any of the universities. Students with disabilities must meet the same criteria as all other students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- When viewing Illinois State University's overall accommodation services, it can be concluded that these services are comparable to the benchmarked universities.
- The accommodation of text conversion at Illinois State could be viewed as "more technologically up to date" and as promoting and implementing an individual independence model with the use of Electronic Text and the elimination of books on tape.
- Illinois State would improve accessibility by implementing a shuttle system of transportation currently under consideration.
- The Transition Program being developed by Illinois State University will bring the institution inline and beyond the other benchmarked universities when addressing the needs of students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary education.