Creating Accessible Partnerships between Disability Services and Campus Writing Centers to Support Diverse Learners

**Description:** Come learn about our approach to refine and strengthen a partnership between Disability Services and the campus Writing Center. Collaboration and outreach are increasingly important as student populations become more diverse and we maintain our commitment to accessibility for diverse learners.

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As the largest public research university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the student population at George Mason University is 38,000 with plans to reach 45,000 students by 2024. This growth is accompanied by an increasing number of students registering with Disability Services and receiving accommodations to address classroom, testing, housing, and meal plan needs. We are also seeing trends related to more complex needs, multiple disabilities, and requests for consistent meetings (e.g., bi-weekly) and support.

**Disability Services at Mason**

- Actively serving 5% of the student population—**2,174 students** (May 2019)
- On average, 50 students register with Disability Services each month
- 3600+ points of contact in past 12 months—intakes, follow-up appointments, meetings with faculty
- 4000+ tests proctored in Disability Services Testing Center in past 12 months

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<tr>
<th>Rethinking Our Disability Services and Writing Center Partnership</th>
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<td><strong>Former Model</strong></td>
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<td>DS hired and appointed an individual Writing Center tutor each year. This tutor was often hired based on a greater awareness of disabilities and an additional training provided by DS.</td>
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**Results and Discussion**

- **73%** increase in Writing Center visits from students with disabilities
- Majority of students voluntarily disclosed disability-related information to tutors
- Enhancing an existing partnership increased accessibility for students with disabilities
- Examining resource allocation increased alignment with universal design practices

**Summary:** A refined partnership with Disability Services and the campus Writing Center resulted in greater engagement and enhanced support to an increasingly diverse student population and further contributed to a more inclusive and efficient service delivery model.