## Western New England University, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences LogoContact Information

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## Introduction

**Purpose:** Understand the lived experiences of students on campus as it relates to perceptions of inclusivity and accessibility

**Research Question:** What are the differences in the lived experiences of campus accessibility and inclusivity among students with disabilities and without?

**Research Aims:** Empower and educate students & highlight need for intentional inclusivity of students with disabilities on campus

## Methods

* **Qualitative Survey**
	+ 10 question online qualitative survey with multiple choice responses (Likert scale) & open-ended questions
	+ Anonymous survey using google forms
	+ Open ended questions thematically coded & multiple-choice survey questions generated frequency statistics via excel
* **Participants**
	+ 110 graduate & undergraduate students at Western New England University
	+ 66 students identified without a disability
	+ 44 students identified with a disability

## Findings



Qualitative Themes:

1. ***Lack of knowledge & understanding of campus accessibility***
2. ***Inconsistent implementation of both learning and physical accommodations across campus and classrooms***
3. ***Situations requiring self-advocacy cause students with disabilities stress, fear, & anxiety***

## Discussion

* On average, students with disabilities rated campus inclusivity & accessibility lower than students without disabilities
	+ One contributing factor noted includes the lack of knowledge and understanding of campus accessibility
* Inconsistent implementation of both learning and physical accommodations across campus and classrooms contribute to stress
	+ 75% of students with disabilities rated the process of obtaining accommodations mildly to extremely stressful
* Situations that require students to self-advocate on campus can cause stress
	+ 82% of students with disabilities rated self-advocating for their rights as a student mildly to extremely stressful
	+ 84% of students with disabilities rated talking to classroom faculty about their accommodation needs as mildly to extremely stressful
* Limitations:
	+ Small sample size & self-reported data may have bias such as telescoping, selective memory, attribution, & exaggeration

## Implications

| Future Practice and Implementation | Future Research |
| --- | --- |
| Implement campus wide educational initiatives on the importance of accessibility, & the process & qualification requirements for accommodations | Utilize data to identify gaps in accessibility for students  |
| Develop a streamlined accommodations process incorporating all departments on campus for consistency and uniformity | Compare the experiences of acquiring accommodations for students with visible vs invisible disabilities |
| Improve communication strategies between departments/service providers on campus to reduce gaps | Evaluate possible differences in accommodations for graduate vs undergraduate students |
| Develop training program on self-advocacy for students | Deeper investigation into stressors for students with disabilities |
| Provide mental health support & guidance for students navigating accommodations process | Further inquiry into faculty implementation of classroom accommodations |
| Involve students with disabilities in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion initiatives | Examination of universal design and ADA compliance |