



One Campus' Journey to Improve Accessibility Across Indoor & Outdoor Spaces

AHEAD – July 2025

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Director of Compliance Director of Disability Resources

University of
Mary Washington

Welcome

- Tell us who you are and...
- Share one physical accessibility challenge on your campus



Objectives for Today

1. Learn about one approach to improving physical accessibility
2. Better understand the critical need to engage multiple stakeholders in any plan/process to improve campus accessibility
 - Who are your own campus' stakeholders?

SPEAKERS

Dr. Ruth Davison

- **Director of Compliance**
- **ADA/TIX Coordinator**
- **Since August 2022**
- **My
Facilities/Construction
Experience**

Alex Ecklund, M.A.

- **Director of Disability
Resources**
- **UMW since 2020**

A bit about UMW

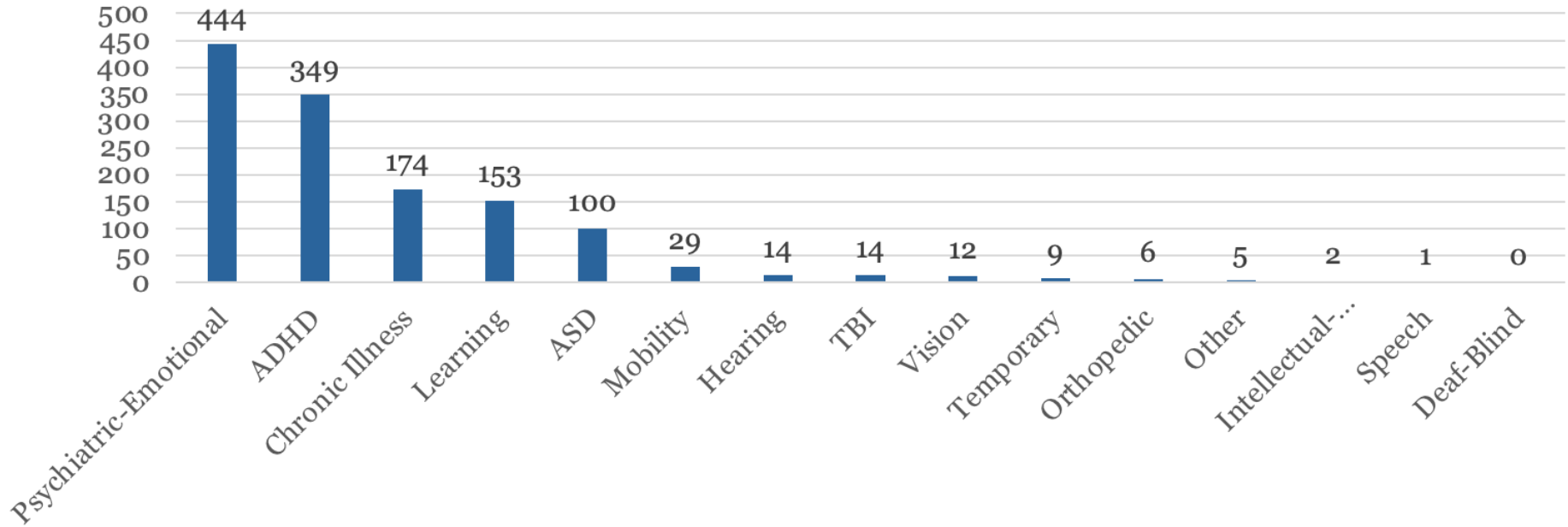


- Founded in 1908
 - State Normal & Industrial School for Women (a teacher's college)
 - Affiliated with UVA in 1944 and became independent in 1972
- Located in Fredericksburg, VA
- Liberal Arts Focused Public 4-year (State Funded)
- Baccalaureate College - Arts & Sciences
- Approx. 3,800 Students
- Highly Residential
- NCAA Division III

The Office of Disability Resources

- In 2021, expanded to a new office location, added testing as a service and 2 staff positions
- 5 full-time staff
- 782 Registered Students (June 16th)

Students with Disabilities



Facilities Deficits/Challenges



- **Historic Campus and Buildings**
 - **Originally founded in 1908**
 - **Elevators**
 - **Access into Buildings (sometimes hidden away)**
 - **Retrofit of Spaces**
 - **Need more accessible spaces**
 - **Lack of Signage**
 - **Campus Walk**

Many Historical Structures



Deficits/Challenges



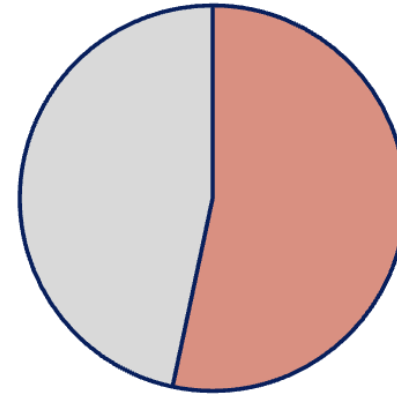
Assessment of Needs

- 2019 Campus Accessibility Working Group Formed
- Consultant – Jim Bostrom (OCR)
 - Completed an accessibility study of campus
- Campus Wide Focus Groups
- Anecdotal and/or Specific Incidents

FOCUS GROUPS WHO PARTICIPATED?

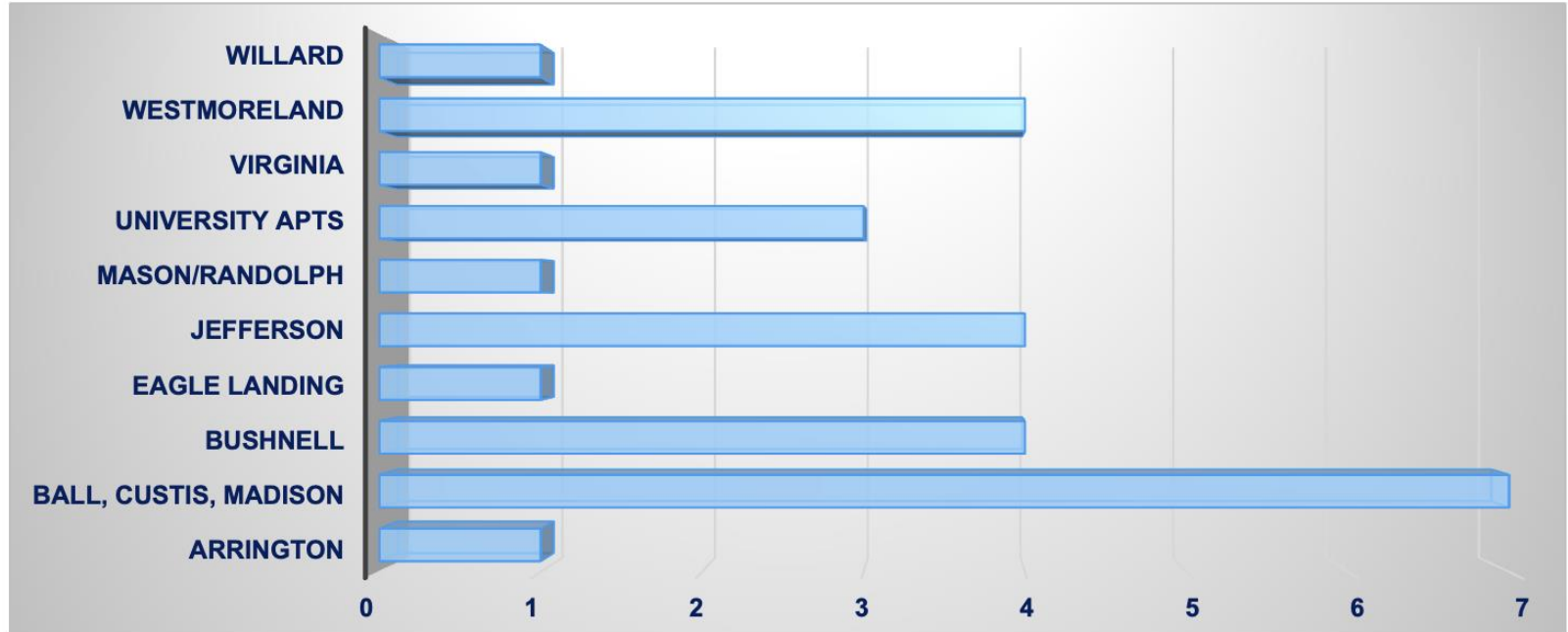


- ***21 Focus Groups***
- ***195 Total Participants***
 - ***43% Faculty/Staff***
 - ***47% Students***



■ Students ■ Faculty & Staff

Specific Residence Halls Mentioned



Funding

- 2022-2024 Biennium Budget Requests were submitted
- Majority of campus buildings were constructed prior to 1970
- A detailed list of deficiencies was provided (across all spaces/buildings)
- Emphasis on Compliance and Universal Design
- Awarded \$11.25M from the Commonwealth

NEXT STEPS

- RFP for Design Team
- Selection of the team
- Site Visits & Design Charette w/Many Stakeholders

Stakeholders

- Academic Affairs
 - Including Historic Preservation Faculty Member
- Disability Resources
- Facilities and Capital Outlay
- Residence Life
- Athletics
- Marketing and Communications
- Office of Community Relations and Compliance
- Historic Preservation

Collectively this became the Accessibility Enhancements Steering Committee

Phases of Construction

- Multi Year Delivery (Challenges)
- Whole building accessibility improvements for five residence halls
- Designing and building accessible seating for three classrooms which currently have fixed stadium seating
- Accessibility improvements to the Battleground Athletic Complex
- Exterior site work at James Farmer Hall and the Heslep Amphitheatre
- Additional enhancements focused on ramps, handrails, signage, and Blue Light call boxes.

SOME CHALLENGES

- State Review Process
 - DEB Division of Engineering & Building
- Timing and Delays
- Budget
 - Tariffs
 - Value Engineering



Update

- **Campus Walkway work near completion**
- **Elevator Upgrade Project**
- **Phase One – construction begins Fall 2025**
- **Phases 2 & 3 - DEB review early 2026**
- **Communication is Critical**

Campus Master Planning

- Most recent cycle in 2023-2024
- 7 subcommittees, including Accessibility
- Accessibility's written report was focused on:
 - Legal Compliance and Universal Design
 - Universal Design = “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.”
 - Universal Design considers accessibility and usability for a broader, diverse population regardless of ability or disability.
 - Beyond compliance with Section 504 and the ADA

Dialogue/Questions

