

Nursing Student Perspectives on Campus Accessibility; Identifying and removing barriers

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

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Disclaimer

This presentation is part of a larger, 3-year research project funded by a Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation grant.

We will be sharing information from year 1 of our work.

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a foundation for distributing accessibility surveys at your own institutions
2. Receive guidance for recognizing patterns in access barriers in health science programs

Interactive paddles

- Hold up the **blue** "YES" side of the paddle:
 - When you've had a similar experience to one shared by the presenters
 - You notice similar patterns or scenarios at your school
 - You agree that what is being said prevalent in health science programs

Paddle Instructions 1

- Hold up the red "NO" side of the paddle:
 - When your experience differed from the presenters
 - You have not noticed these patterns or scenarios at your school
 - You disagree with a certain issue being prevalent in health science education.

Paddle Instructions 2

- Shake the paddle side to side:
 - When you neither agree nor disagree
 - When you're unsure

Paddle Instructions 3

- Presenters will ask attendees to hold up their paddles at certain times.
- But attendees are encouraged to hold up their paddles whenever they hear something that they feel responsive to.

Linfield University

- The nursing campus is located in Portland, OR
- About 350 nursing students
- We have 3 pre-licensure programs
 - **BSN** (Bachelor of Science in Nursing)
 - **ABSN** (Accelerated BSN)
 - **MEPN** (Master's Entry into Professional Nursing)



Linfield University Continued

- A non-direct admit school
 - Most students transfer to SON from the main Linfield campus in McMinnville
 - The rest are transfers or second-degree students
- Commuter campus with most students driving personal vehicles to school

How did we know Linfield was ready?

- This is the question we needed to ask before distributing this survey.
- We didn't want to collect information and do nothing with it.
- We needed to assess whether SON as a whole was ready to make changes.

What were the signs?

- Faculty were asking questions (lots!)
 - How do I make my class more accessible?
 - Am I implementing this accommodation right?
 - I don't really understand this accommodation, can you explain it?
 - How would a student with "blank" diagnosis be successful here?

Signs Continued...

- Students were advocating for themselves and others
- Disability Services was not the only department bring access into the conversation

However...

- If your school is not at this stage, we don't want to discourage you from doing this work.
- Accessibility is essential at ALL schools, whether or not they are "ready" for it.
- Our evaluation of our school's overall "readiness" helped us gauge our timeline for action and distribution of resources.

Some Notes About Survey Results

- The nursing campus is entirely single floor buildings
 - There are some internal split levels which are joined by ramps
- Students have two primary classroom experiences:
 - Mostly seated lecture courses
 - Simulation Lab (on campus) and practical clinical placements (off campus)

Example of Lecture Room



Example of Simulation Lab



Campus Accessibility Measure (CAM)

- A survey created by the National Disability Center for Student Success (NDSS)
- The survey is designed to be distributed to all students because access impacts everyone, not just students receiving formal accommodations.
 - The survey contains questions answered by all students and subset answered by those who self-disclose a disability.

Methods

- The survey was distributed to 330 prelicensure students.
- Informed consent was included in the survey.
- The survey was conducted in Qualtrics per NDSS recommendation.
- Data analysis used SPSS version 31.0

Demographics (N=45, 13.6% response rate)

- 50% have a disability or chronic health condition lasting 4 months or longer.
- 10 students said their disability was first diagnosed while in college/university
- 11 respondents said they currently use accommodations at Linfield

Most Used Accommodations

- Assistive Technology
- Extra time on tests/assignments
- Quiet or separate test settings
- Speech to text for assignments
- Alternative formats
- Notetaking support

Disabilities disclosed in order of frequency

- ADD/ADHD
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurodivergent
- Chronic Condition
- Autism
- Blind or low vision
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Mobility-related condition

Feedback areas

CAM surveys 3 facets of accessibility

Classroom
Accessibility

Campus-level
Accessibility

Social
Engagement

Classroom Accessibility

12.7% of respondents said 1 or more of their instructors expressed negative attitudes about people with disabilities.

46.7% indicated that all online materials for class were easy to use (e.g. websites, PDFs, videos).

Campus-level Accessibility 1

4.3% indicated that they've experienced bullying related to their disability.

6.7% indicated that they've witnessed related bullying.

Campus-level Accessibility 2

88.9% somewhat to strongly agree that the university is welcoming of people with disabilities.

20% somewhat to strongly disagreed that the campus has adaptable seating and workplaces.

Social Engagement

Over half of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed:

1. They are friends with their classmates
2. Social activities are easy to participate in and inclusive
3. They participate in activities at the university
4. They feel like they belong at the university

What did we do with the feedback?

There are a few "types" of changes that we saw the need for:

1. Physical/space changes
2. Policy changes
3. Attitude changes

How does the feedback translate

- What are the major areas we see barriers
- Anything missing?
- Does it compare to LSS experience? What does that tell us?

Physical/space changes 1

- Many students commented on the lack of accessible seating
- This is consistent with feedback often received by LSS.



Physical/space changes 2

- We addressed this first because we could purchase accessible seating for an immediate impact.
- It did not require administrative approval or faculty collaboration.

Disclaimer: We are thankful to the Josiah Macy Junior Foundation for providing funding for accessibility updates.

Policy Changes 1

- We wanted to do something to address the reports of bullying, negative attitudes, and lower sense of belonging reported by disabled students.
- Attitudes can take a long time to change, but inclusive policy can support students while we work toward attitude change.

Policy Changes 2

- We are updating our technical standards.
- This takes collaboration across programs and departments.
 - Getting people involved helps with culture shift
- Impacts both current and incoming/future students.

Why Technical Standards?

- Technical standards indicate to a student what a school believes is necessary for successful nursing practice.
- Technical standards have historically been used to gatekeep, what if they were welcoming instead?
- Technical standards should indicate there is path forward and that there are many ways to display competency.

Practical Considerations

- Attitudes don't change over night. But technical standards offer a policy that indicates that inclusion is not just expected but required.
- It gives students a concrete pathway for navigating grievances and finding support.

What next? Education

- Our next goal is to work on developing disability inclusive Simulation Labs for education both students and instructors.
- We're excited for the next part of our journey!

Distributing CAM at your school

- Find your faculty allies and get some help encouraging students to respond
- Plan to leave the survey open for a long time (health science students are busy bees)
- Have a backup distribution method in case Qualtrics isn't accessible for someone

What to do with the results

Things we can
change right
now

Things we can
change in the
near future

Things that will
take a long
time to change

Identify action items in each category

Look for patterns

Example:

Assistive technology is a highly utilized accommodation AND a majority of respondents indicated that digital classroom resources were hard to use.

(We have a WCAG working group focused on this)

Look for where more information is needed

Social belonging was lower for disabled students than non-disabled students.

How can we get additional information about this? What partnerships might make sense?

e.g. Student life, Simulation Lab

Resources

[National Disability Center for Student Success](#)

[National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities](#)

[Docs with Disabilities](#)

Thank you!

Session Evaluation

tiny.cc/8zu1101

Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape future programming.

