

We're All in This Together

A SESSION ON STANDARDIZING HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

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Conference Civility Statement

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



Access and Inclusion



Civility and Respect

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

Introductions



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Session Goals

1 **Understand** the history and pitfalls of individual housing accommodation determinations

2 **Explore** how a standardized process and partnership-based committee improved consistency and outcomes

3 **Practice** applying the framework through a case study

4 **Begin** drafting a questionnaire tailored to participants' own institutions

History and Pitfalls of Individual Housing Determinations

Pressures of campus environmental limitations and student expectations = historical tension between Res Life and the Disability Access Office

FEEDBACK FROM COLLEAGUES: ACCOMMODATIONS DECISIONS PUT STRAIN ON RES LIFE

1

Isolation from our procedures

2

Did not understand
determinations

3

Little time to implement
accommodations

We Needed Change.

Prior to 2023

Highly individualized, ad hoc decisions influenced by emotions during the intake meeting

Limited documentation and inconsistent rationales

Decisions often dependent on who was “in the room”

Facing Down Trends

Sharp increase in volume and complexity of requests over time

Inconsistent outcomes for similar disability-related needs

Strain on staff time and housing inventory due to bespoke solutions

We Were Putting Ourselves at Risk



Equity concerns

Similar cases handled differently, leading to inconsistent outcomes



Lack of transparency

Students and staff couldn't anticipate how decisions would be made



Hard to repeat

One-off exceptions were difficult to implement or scale



Forecasting difficulty

Hard to plan housing inventory without consistent patterns

Discussion

3–5 MINUTES

“

What challenges have you seen — or do you anticipate — when accommodations are handled on a purely individual, ad hoc basis?

How the New Process Standardized Housing Accommodations -1

Key elements of the new process

1**Standard categories**

e.g. single room, private bathroom, and other defined accommodation types

2**Multi-year data**

Used to identify trends and recurring needs across cohorts

3**Written criteria**

Decision-making guidelines documented for each request type

4**Functional assessment**

Evaluation of functional impact and supporting documentation

How the New Process Standardized Housing Accommodations - 2

Outcomes and improvements of the new process



More defensible, predictable outcomes — Rationales hold up and stay consistent



Fewer bespoke workarounds — Less reliance on one-off fixes



Clearer communication — Students and campus partners know what to expect, and when



Smarter inventory planning — Housing prepares stock earlier and joins the conversation

How the New Process Standardized Housing Accommodations- 3



To the Qualtrics!

A quick look at DAO's intake forms used for every accommodation request

Any questions or comments?

PART TWO

Why and How the Partnership-Based Committee Improved Outcomes

The Partnership-Based Committee Model - 1

Committee composition

1 Disability/Accessibility Services

2 Housing/Residence Life

3 Student Affairs

4 Health and Counseling representatives (as appropriate)

5 Other subject matter experts

The Partnership-Based Committee Model - 2

Benefits



Shared expertise



Consistent application of criteria



Reduced reliance on a single decision-maker



Stronger institutional alignment

Standardized Review Process

Example workflow

- 1 Request submitted
- 2 Documentation reviewed
- 3 Standard criteria applied
- 4 Committee discussion
- 5 Decision documented
- 6 Communication to student
- 7 Ongoing assessment and improvement

Outcomes of a Standardized Process

Improvements observed

- ✓ Greater consistency in decisions
- ✓ Clearer communication with students
- ✓ Better documentation
- ✓ Increased stakeholder confidence
- ✓ More efficient review process

Success measures

- Reduced appeals
- Improved satisfaction
- Consistent case outcomes
- Stronger institutional accountability

Facilitated Group Case Study: Single Room Request

CASE STUDY

Lydia

Incoming First-Year

Type 1 Diabetes

Never shared a room
before

Documentation
recommends a single room

FUNCTIONAL IMPACT

Lydia manages her medical needs throughout the night and worries about disrupting a roommate.

Her bed-shaker and sounding alarms can go off every 5 minutes until her glucose returns to target range — at least once a night, and on rare occasions up to 4 times a night. The alarm keeps going until she wakes up and even if she has awakened and taken action, the alarm can still go off until her levels even out.

She says her symptoms, “fluctuate and are unpredictable.”

Work the Case in Groups

Guided step-by-step framework — 10 minutes

1**Identify**

the student's disability-related
functional impacts relevant to
housing

2**Map**

those impacts to possible
standardized housing
accommodations

3**Weigh**

constraints — inventory, budget,
timing, and competing needs

4**Use**

the questionnaire to guide the
decision and write a brief
explanation to share with the
student and housing partners

Debrief

5–7 minutes — 1–2 groups will share

What Groups Share

Their decision — approve, deny, or modify

Their key reasoning

What We Discuss

How standardized criteria and the committee approach support or refine the decision

Any variations, and how data and policy can help resolve them

Building a Questionnaire for Your Campus

Good questions are...

- ✓ Clear and accessible
- ✓ Focused on functional impact of disability — not diagnosis alone
- ✓ Aligned with standardized decisions and committee review

Questions to consider

- What functional impacts affect housing — mobility, sensory, medical equipment, environmental triggers, etc?
- What accommodations are commonly requested at your institution?
- What are the primary barriers to access?
- What information do you need to evaluate requests fairly, and what should you avoid asking?

Share & Wrap-Up

1**2–3 volunteers** — share the questions they drafted**2****Feedback** — from presenters and participants

Key Takeaways and Closing

1

Shift from ad-hoc to data-informed

Standardized categories, written criteria, and multi-year data replace one-off decisions.

2

Partnership over unilateral

A committee including DAO, Housing, and other Disability Service professionals creates consistency, multiple perspectives, and buy-in.

3

Practical, reusable tools

Frameworks and a starter questionnaire participants can bring back and adapt for their own campus.

Session Evaluation

Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape future programming.

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