

Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO)

An Overview of Disabilities and Accommodations at VCU:
Fall 2022

Presented by:
Ian Kunkes, Ed.D.
Director, SAEO
Student Affairs Leadership Team

Meet Our Team

Ian Kunkes – Director

* Reflects positions added since fall 2016

Kristian Carden – Associate Director*

Rachel Holcombe – Assistant Director*

Chris Parthemos – Senior Access Specialist*

Daniel Foster – Access Specialist

Caitlin Provencher – Access Specialist*

Lisa Turner – Office Manager

Rebecca Shepherd – Testing Accommodations Coordinator

Zachary Smith – Testing Specialist*

Erin Rowe – Graduate Student Learning Specialist*

Registering with SAEO and the Accommodation Process

The Interactive Process

- Student discloses disability and need for accommodation
- SAEO reviews request and any supporting materials or documentation
- SAEO determines “reasonable accommodations”
- As needed, SAEO, student, and faculty interact to determine reasonable application of accommodations

Is documentation required to work with SAEO?

- SAEO will meet with and provide support to any student who discloses a disability.
- However, support does not always equal accommodations
 - May include general advising or referrals to CLC, tutoring, Student Health, Dean of Students, University Counseling Services
- In most cases, accommodations require some form of supporting documentation for approval

Growth and Utilization of Services

	<u>Total SAEO Students</u>	<u>% of Students Served</u>
Spring 2016	800	3.2%
Fall 2016	1,000	3.7%
Spring 2017	1,168	4.7%
Fall 2017	1,328	5%
Spring 2018	1,538	6.3%
Fall 2018	1,684	6.3%
Spring 2019	1,893	7.8%
Fall 2019	2,005	7.8%
Spring 2020	2,150	9%
Fall 2020	2,056	8.2%
Spring 2021	1,957	8.5%
Fall 2021	2,297	9.4%
Spring 2022	2,309	10.4%
Fall 2022 Estimate	2,600 - 2,700	>11%

Data reflects MPC-based programs, only.

10–11% of the MPC population has disclosed a disability

<u>College</u>	<u>Total % of students who disclosed to SAEO</u>
Arts	14.17
Business	5.98
Education	8.48
Engineering	8.48
Humanities and Sciences	9.91
L.D. Wilder	8.94
Social Work	15.97
University College	10.74
Life Sciences	13.26

Mid-semester data compiled in partnership with Institutional Research and Decision Support (not reportable figures)

How does this compare to national peers?

For the past decade, the Association on Higher Education and Disability has reported that 10-12% of a given campus population registered for accommodations.

- Higher in community colleges than 4-year institutions
- Lower in Minority-Serving Institutions
- Higher in private schools with higher SES student population
- Lower in schools with large international student populations

How does this compare to national peers?

As of 2022, VCU is on par with our national peers.

University of California, San Francisco - 14.5%

Ohio State University - 10-11%

Washington University, St. Louis - 8-10%

University of Virginia - 10-11%

Alternative Arrangements vs. Accommodations

Student requests for Alternative Arrangements **ARE NOT** approved accommodations.

Approved accommodations will be communicated in an official letter from SAEO.

What to do when a student requests flexibility/alternative arrangements?

- Consider the parameters of your syllabus. Does it allow for the request?
- Can the request be reasonably and equitably implemented without fundamentally altering your course requirements?
- When in doubt (or when disability is cited as the justification)... send them to us!

What to expect moving forward...

Ian's Grand Predictions

1. These trends are not likely to stagnate
2. We will increasingly see a student population that is comfortable advocating for themselves, though they may not always know how or what is appropriate.
3. Speaking about disabilities, mental health, and chronic health conditions will increasingly be de-stigmatized among college students.
4. Greater partnerships and training opportunities between instructional staff and Student Affairs will emerge to better address holistic student needs.

What is the action plan for the increase in requests for accommodations and alternative arrangements/flexibility?

SAEO Specific

- Increased staffing over time
- SAEO Scholars - Comprehensive transition program for neurodiverse students
- SAEO's Faculty/Staff Outreach Initiative

Broader Initiatives

- Increased mental health resources available through University Counseling Services
- Timely Care
- Under DSA's new VP, Dr. Aaron Hart, one of the divisions top priorities moving forward will be a greater focus on advocacy and holistic student support

Contact Information

University Student Commons, lower level

907 Floyd Ave, Room 018

Website: saeo.vcu.edu

Phone: 804-828-2253

Email: saeo@vcu.edu