

Mt. San Antonio College Disabled Student Programs & Services

Background: This fiscal year (2011-12), DSPS will mark its 38th year at Mt. San Antonio College. DSPS was established in 1973, coincidentally, so was Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This landmark legislation opened the doors to individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education. DSPS has come a long way in the last 38 years.

Program Updates: In 1974, the program served 150 students, primarily those who had physical disabilities. Last fiscal year (2010-11), DSPS served 2,602 students. This is an increase of 714 students over last year or 37.8 %. The highest growing populations are students on the autism spectrum, veterans with multiple disabilities, students with learning disabilities, and students with psychological disabilities. This year, we've experienced an increase of 63 students who are Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). While 63 students doesn't seem like a large increase, one DHH student taking 12 units and requiring interpreting services for one semester alone could cost around \$8,640. Sign language interpreting is a service the college must provide. Mt. SAC is in the top 5 colleges relative to numbers of students who are Deaf and hard of hearing served per year. This is due to excellent program provided by DSPS' Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

Challenges: Our population has grown by approximately 37.8% from last year (1,881 to 2,602). This could represent a 37.8% increase in workload with the same numbers of staff. The growth and uncertain budget caused us to closely examine our processes. The newly amended ADA provides more access challenges for the campus. For example, there is more latitude provided to students with service animals. The college has an obligation to accommodate service animals, but has no policy or procedures. College-wide processes and procedures to provide access in a variety of areas, such as captioning multimedia products, continue to be a work in progress.

Current Goals: This fiscally uncertain year, DSPS chose to work on examining ways to improve efficiency, while maintaining effectiveness. Examples of activities related to this goal was studying our method of providing appointments to students, exploring student no-shows for various DSPS appointments and services, and "going paperless." Another goal is to address campus-wide accessibility issues such as captioning of multi-media, facility and mobility issues, new ADA Amendments, and increases in certain services outgrowing DSPS resources, such as accommodated classroom and placement testing.

Accomplishments: A few of the accomplishments DSPS realized include the front office eliminated some paper processes which saved hundreds of hours in copying and filing. The Department developed some new processes and combined resources with other departments to save dollars. We've developed pilot projects to address the issue of increasing numbers of students resulting in higher costs. Examples of these processes include a new summer student intake, addressing irresponsible use of DSPS services, and sharing resources and workload with other departments on campus. DSPS embarked on a public information campaign mainly for outreach purposes; however these pieces are designed to dispel myths, stigmas, and stereotypes about disability in general. We are most proud of our new award-winning video, Success with disAbility. The video won the Most Distinguished Communicator Award for 2011 from the International Academy of the Visual Arts.

Your DSPS employees would like to take this opportunity to thank the college for recognizing the importance of keeping DSPS fiscally and programmatically whole.