Social Justice: Disability Awareness, Identity, and Culture

Paul Vogt MS, CRC (he/him/his)
Access Consultant at McBurney Disability Resource Center
Learning Objectives

• Provide context to McBurney’s role on campus
• Provide overview of major disability models and legal considerations
• Discuss disability trends in higher education, especially UW student population with disabilities
• Overview of accommodation application process and common accommodations and supports offered through McBurney Disability Resource Center
McBurney Disability Resource Center

McBurney is part of the Student Affairs – Identity and Inclusion Thematic Area under Associate Vice Chancellor Gabe Javier

MISSION

Leading the campus community forward in access for students with disabilities.

VISION

Our vision is a universally accessible educational community that fosters the full participation and contribution of every member, with individual accommodation needed only in unique or uncommon situations.

https://mcburney.wisc.edu/mission-and-vision/
A Sampling of McBurney Core Values

- **Social Justice**: We commit to actively recognize the perceptions and experiences of individuals with whom we interact and how they are impacted by their statuses in the community. We recognize *disability as one aspect of an individual’s social identity*.

- **Inclusion**: We foster a *sense of belonging* across campus by ensuring that people with disabilities have equal rights, access, representation, opportunities and expression of their culture.

- **Empowerment**: We provide information, tools and training that support student *self-advocacy* and *self-determination* and that also guide our campus in providing *equal access* to education.
What is disability?

Models attempt to...

• define disability,
• find a basis of support for individuals, an
• establish laws around disability.

They provide frameworks used to conceptualize how someone may experience disability in society over time.

• Medical model
• Social model
• Legal guidelines
Medical Model

Disability is...
  A deficiency or abnormality.
  Resides in the individual.

The remedy is...
  A cure or repair.
  An agent of remedy is a professional (doctor, surgeon, researcher).

The goal is...
  To fix the person or “problem”.

The belief is...
  that the person is deficient or “broken” and needs to be “fixed”.
Social Model

Disability is...

A difference in a person that is neutral.
Derives from an interaction between an individual and society.

The remedy is...

A change in the interaction between the individual and society.
An agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate or anyone who can affect change.

The goal is...

to neutralize the barrier/environment thus equalizing ability.

The belief is...

The environment is deficient and makes barriers for individuals.
How can a model shape our understanding of disability?

Provides some foundation for conceptualizing the interaction between one’s ability and the world.

Assists in developing guidelines for laws or policies.

Take caution:

– Does not reflect the real world in every case.
– Promotes a narrow view of one’s experience.
## Framing Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Person-First</th>
<th>B. Identity-Based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student with a Disability</td>
<td>Disabled Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student with Autism</td>
<td>Autistic Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who is Deaf</td>
<td>Deaf Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Wheelchair User</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following legislation defines disability, outlines rights and protections of those with disabilities, and provides guidelines for implementing those protections so individuals have better access.

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990)
- Amendments to the ADA (2008)
The role of the McBurney Disability Resource Center

Federal law requires the provision of accommodations and resources for people with disabilities at any federally-funded institution. The McBurney Disability Resource Center is the designated office at UW that reviews and determines disability eligibility status, recommends reasonable accommodations and advocates for access.

We’re here because we want to be...

First established in 1977—13 years prior to federal mandates.
We strive to make UW accessible beyond what has to be done.
Students do not need to submit documentation with a formal diagnosis to McBurney when applying in order to be approved for disability-related accommodations.
Working Definition for Disability

**Disability** is... having a diagnosed physical or mental condition **persistent** for 6 months or more that **substantially limits** one or more **major life activities**.

Determined after reviewing **self-report** and **documentation** from an affiliated licensed medical provider or mental health clinician.
# Overview of Students Affiliated with McBurney Disability Resource Center 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Disability Group</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADD/ADHD</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Injury</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Condition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Disability – Deaf/Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility/Physical Disability</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Disability</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Disability – Blind/Low Vision</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Disability</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3667</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total is over 4,000 for Fall 2021 semester
Disability Trends

• 156% growth in the population of students affiliated with the McBurney Center since 2007.

• Students with **psychiatric disorders** make up the fastest growing population of students with disabilities both at UW and nationwide.

• Students with physical and sensory disabilities make up the smallest population at UW.
Theories on Disability Trends in Higher Education

• Increased access to accommodations in K-12.
• Reduced societal stigma.
• Increased access to physical health and mental health care.
• Transition to college is a significant change in environment and routine for young adults.
• Reduced access to familial and/or professional supports and resources.
McBurney Connect

Online database and accommodation request system
Student applications
Student accommodation requests to generate Faculty Notification Letter
Faculty portal
Notetaker portal

https://mcburney.wisc.edu/mcburneyconnect/
Question: What is my job title at McBurney?

A. Disability Coordinator
B. Access Consultant
C. Disability Advisor
D. Accommodation Specialist
Disability Eligibility Determination Process

1. Online request for services/application – McBurney Connect
2. Self-report and interaction with an assigned Access Consultant
3. Submission of documentation from a licensed medical provider or mental health clinician.
4. Complete training(s) on accommodation requests and implementation.
5. Request accommodations from faculty/instructors using McBurney Connect.
6. Meet with faculty/instructors and negotiate accommodations listed on the student’s Faculty Notification Letter (FNL formerly VISA).
Common Accommodations

- Testing accommodations
  - Time and a half, 50% extended time, 1.5x
  - Small group testing
  - Use of computer
- Reasonable Course Adjustments/Flexibility letter
- Note-taking services
- Interpreting services
- Captioning, CART
- Document conversion
- Reduced credit load (RCL)
- Priority registration
- Advocacy
Accommodation Trends

• Alternative testing accommodations are some of the most recommended accommodations.

• Advocacy is recommended for all students affiliated with McBurney.

• Flexibility, or Reasonable Course Adjustments, is on the rise due to high numbers of students with chronic health and mental health-related disabilities.
Reasonable Course Adjustments and Modifications

• Flexibility relies on being proactive, interactive, individualized, and clearly defined.

• Adjustments can include:
  – Flexibility on attendance, exam dates and deadlines
  – Alternative to public speaking and/or class participation
  – Alternative to group work
Other Resources Within McBurney

- Study and Learning Skills Specialists (SLSS)
- Transition Programs
- Assistive Technology Consultation and Support
- Ambassadors Program
- AS WE ARE
- CP 105 Stress Management through Mindfulness Course
- CP 115 Transition Course
- Campus Liaisons: Writing Center, SAS, UHS
How to Support Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

• Use a syllabus statement
• Offer options
• Offer resources
• Incorporate Universal Design principles wherever possible
• Ask McBurney staff
Questions?

Paul Vogt, MS CRC
Paul.Vogt@wisc.edu
Mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu
608/263-2741 (Front Desk)