Accessibility Services - Transition to Remote Environments - Survey - Preliminary Results

Student Accessibility Services sent out a brief survey on Thursday, April 16th, 2020 specifically to see how we could be of further support to our student as they finished exams, transitioned to summer on-line learning, and how to be more accessible with our services being remote.

9 questions   6 minutes to complete   564 responses (13% response rate)

## Students want to be connected with regularly and to be heard.
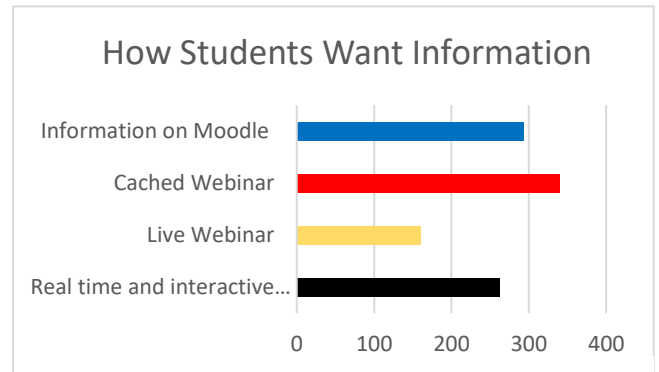
Student Experience with Accessibly Services

Information Delivery

- Familiar Platform -> Moodle
- Asynchronous delivery
- Information in manageable chunks

Top Concerns Shifting to Remote

1) Effectively Dealing with the On-Line Environment
2) Interpersonal Challenges: anxiety, isolation, concentration, motivation
3) Technical and Space issues
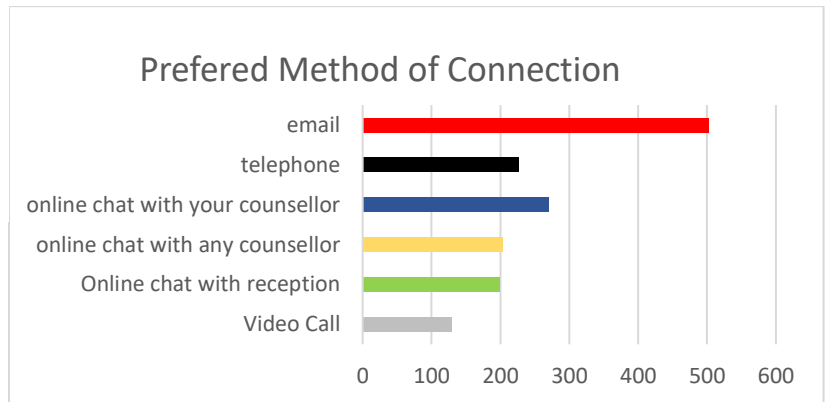
Key Take-Aways

- **We need to explicitly support students' mental health when designing and delivering on-line environments**

- **Students need to have a strong sense of connection with peers and Faculty**

- **Students need to be taught HOW to engage in on-line environments to feel supported**

Top 2 Programming Asks
1) Mindfulness Programming
2) Learning Skills Specific to Disabilities in on-line environments

"I have really appreciated all of the support I received throughout my undergraduate degree. Your services allowed me to feel I had as equal an opportunity as everyone else throughout the last 4 years. Your support allowed me to make real connections and accomplish my best without worrying about how to handle my disability."

# Persisting Challenges in Transitioning to OnLine
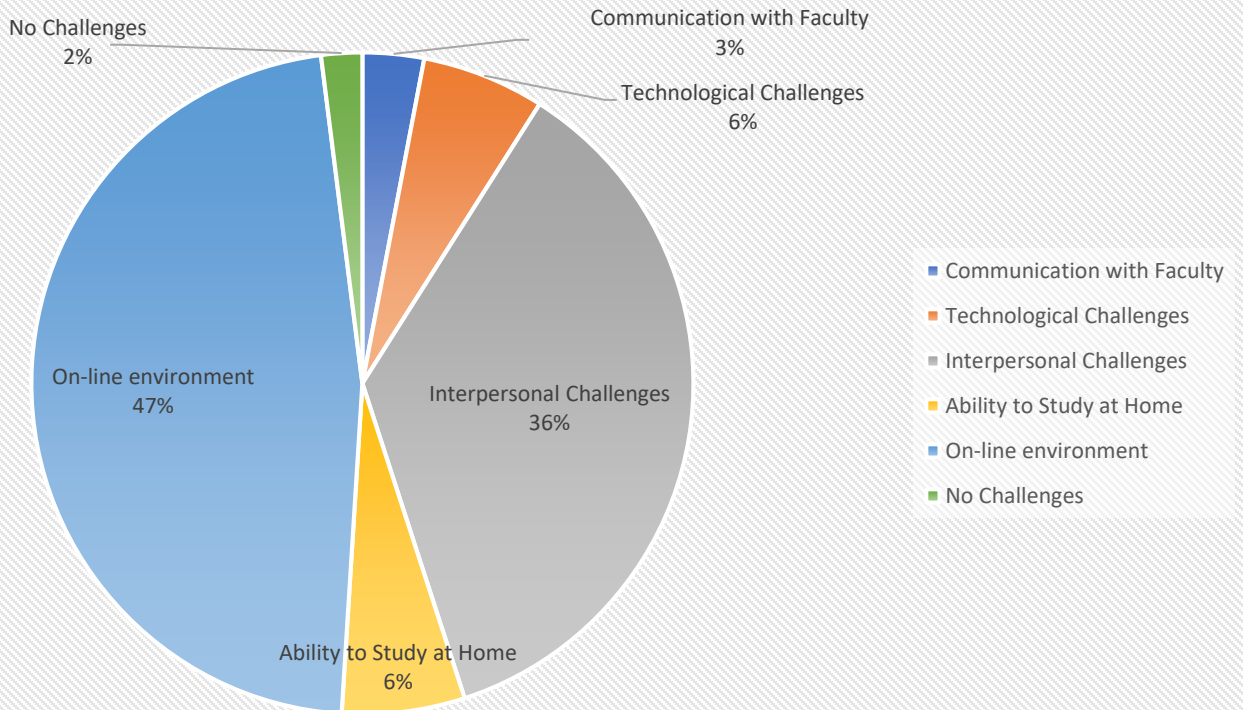
On-line Environment Challenges Excessive screen reading, frustration with doing exams online when there has not been previous experience using this format, no chance to build technical skills, no time to integrate other technologies and support, lack of flexibility when to submit and do assignments, tests and exams, difficulty with on-line materials being accessible (e.g., able to use technology to read on-line material to a student)

Interpersonal Challenge Difficulty with motivation, concentration, focus; Feelings of anxiety, isolation and depression.

Communicating with Faculty Difficulty getting timely responses from Faculty and reassurance that accommodation needs (e.g. additional time allowances in Moodle set) would be met

Summer Needs - On-Line/Remote Environment
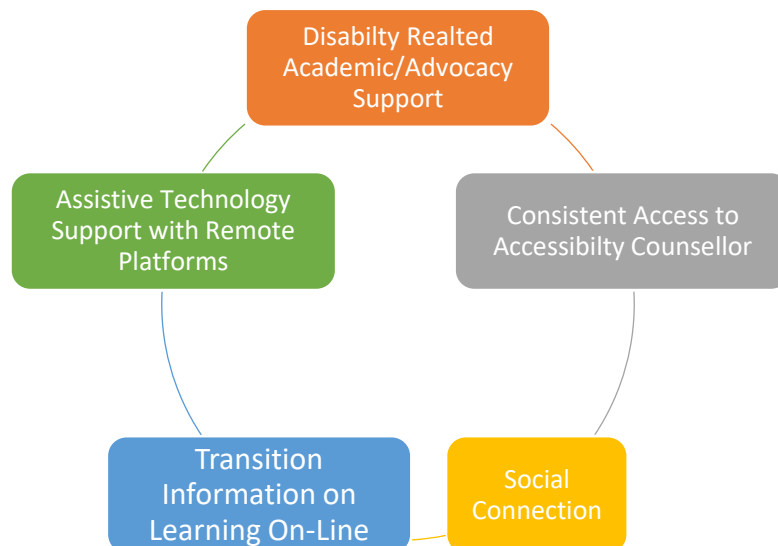
Transition Information The on-line environment was recognized as a different type of learning for students. As students have had less exposure to on-line learning, they requested opportunities to learn study strategies and how to effectively manage the nature of their disabilities in on-line environments.

Disability Related Academic/Advocacy Support The students who reported having trouble adapting to the online environment indicated a need for a small increase in time to their exam/test accommodations while they learned how to engage with on-line testing. The also reported the need for flexible deadlines to assisting them with managing in their time in less structured environments. Learning how to appropriately engage with faculty to remind them to adjust the time on their Moodle for tests/exams was also highlighted as a need.

Consistent Access to Accessibility Counsellor. Students reported that they appreciated the ability to check in with someone on a regular basis as they moved through on-line courses. They had a point person to connect with and ask questions to when they did not understand information or instructions the university was messaging.

Assistive Technology Supports with Remote Platforms. Students did not have an opportunity at the end of the semester to learn how to effectively integrate their existing assistive technology into Moodle. They also were not aware of some of the accessibility features of Moodle. There was a request for on-going support in this area.

Social Connections It was clearly articulated that social connections were harder to maintain in an on-line environment. Consequently, there was the request for Accessibility Services to engage in this type of programming and/or that it could naturally occur as a result of group offerings in the summer.