



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND
DISABILITY RESOURCES

Accessibility Working Group

In December 2022, SLU's Student Government Association (SGA) issued a list of resolutions that focused on accessibility concerns at SLU. The resolutions identified concerns related to universal design in the classroom, physical barriers that students experience on SLU's campus, dietary challenges, transportation availability for those with mobility diagnoses, and accessibility connected to events at SLU. In response to the resolutions, the Accessibility Working Group was developed, bringing together stakeholders from several departments on campus, as well as student representatives. The objective of the Accessibility Working Group is to address the accessibility concerns that were identified through the resolutions.

The Accessibility Working Group began meeting in January 2023. During the first meeting, we established goals and created subgroups, which focused on transportation, housing and facilities, dining, and academics.

Goals

Academics

- Provide more learning opportunities for members of the campus community when it comes to disability awareness and policy around disability.
- Enhance communication between the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) and professors to ensure that academic accommodations are adhered to and that the process for using accommodations remains interactive between the student and the professor.
- Continue the partnership between CADR and the Reinert Center in order to provide faculty with training opportunities that focus on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Universal Design in the classroom.

Dining

- Ensure that dining staff are trained to engage in safe and proper handling of allergen free foods to minimize the potential for cross-contamination.
- Improve signage within the dining locations so that visitors are able to ascertain the options that exist for those with dietary restrictions.
- Aim to provide a greater variety of foods that are available to those with dietary restrictions.

Housing/Facilities

- Improve communication strategies regarding the housing accommodations process and timeline so that incoming students are better informed.
- Adjust the language when communicating housing accommodations decisions so that students are aware of the next steps and appropriate contacts.
- Address physical accessibility concerns within the residence halls so that students with mobility diagnoses are better able to navigate the spaces within the residence halls.
- Address concerns related to community kitchen access and how that impacts students with dietary restrictions.
- Improve communication regarding facilities related concerns (i.e., automatic doors, elevators, etc.).

Transportation

- Identify an accessible mode of on-campus transportation for students with mobility diagnoses.

Other

- Identify an accessible method for campus community members who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing to communicate via phone with departments on campus.
- Enhance communication regarding the accommodations request process for those on campus who would like to attend an event with an interpreter or captioner.
- Develop an accessible map of campus that displays ADA bathrooms and entrances.

Current Progress

Academics

- Arriving at appropriate academic accommodations (by law) requires an individualized, interactive process for each situation. Not all possible accommodations will be “reasonable” for all academic contexts, but CADR works with individual faculty to ensure clear understanding of a student’s specific accommodations.
- To enhance support for instructors on the implementation of academic accommodations, CADR has launched a Faculty Consultation Request Form, which is available on the CADR website.
- Additionally, the Reinert Center works with faculty to identify pedagogically-appropriate adjustments for their specific teaching context. This happens through individual faculty consultations and in programming focused on universal design and other related topics.
- The academic subgroup discussed the feasibility and effectiveness of creating a required training for all faculty surrounding disability awareness. The group agreed that it would be difficult to get to a requirement for all faculty, and such training may not have the desired effect. Framing this as “required training” could lead to less buy-in and/or a check-the-box mentality. Getting to a required training also would take engagement in faculty shared governance and multiple approval stages at various levels (departments, deans, schools, etc.). The group supports awareness-raising and inclusion of disability awareness in DICE’s Belonging initiative.
- To provide additional learning opportunities for faculty and other instructors, CADR and the Reinert Center offered an ADA/UDL online seminar, which had fifty registrants. Because of the level of interest, CADR and the Reinert Center will offer a second session in the spring.
- The Provost’s Office invited CADR to share information and digital resources with new faculty in August 2023. This request will happen each fall.
- The Provost’s Office also invited CADR to participate in a Student Support Services Resource Fair for all faculty (with special invitation to new faculty) in Fall 2023. This will happen again in January 2024, and CADR will be invited to participate in such events going forward.
- CADR will present at an upcoming monthly Department Chairs Lunch, hosted by the Provost’s Office, to discuss how CADR can support departments and their instructors when it comes to accommodations.

Dining

- Sodexo staff engage in regular training to ensure that they are familiar with food safety measures that minimize the risk of cross-contamination.
- Sodexo has updated the signage in all their dining locations. Signage now reflects the allergen information so that campus members can identify which foods meet their dietary needs.

- Sodexo staff are engaged in ongoing meetings to discuss the food options for those with dietary restrictions.

Housing/Facilities

- The housing subgroup met with Marcom to discuss strategies for communication when it comes to housing accommodation information. CADR and Housing and Residence Life will utilize social media to address some of the gaps that exist with communication. These departments will also work together to create a flow chart that explains the housing accommodation process. The chart will be available on each department's website. Finally, CADR presented to the University Ambassadors to provide education about accommodations processes so that they can share the information with prospective students and their families.
- CADR, in collaboration with Housing and Residence Life, has adjusted the language when it comes to housing accommodation decisions. The communication now provides more information about appeals when a housing accommodation is denied, and it shares specific contact information for those who are involved in accommodations and placement decisions.
- The housing subgroup has submitted a request for funding updates to some residence halls that will further enhance accessibility. The housing subgroup is aiming for an approach that goes beyond basic ADA compliance.
- The housing subgroup discussed concerns related to community kitchens and the way in which they are used (i.e., often not cleaned after use, misuse of supplies within the kitchen). As an alternative, HRL and CADR are working to provide alternative options to use of a community kitchen, such as a kitchen in the living space. The dining subgroup is also working on offering greater variety for students with dietary restrictions.
- CADR has a "Barrier Button" located on the CADR website. Using this button, students can submit physical accessibility concerns to CADR, who will then pass that information along to Facilities Services. Additionally, CADR and Facilities Services will meet monthly to talk through physical accessibility concerns that arise and will work to quickly address those.

Transportation

- The transportation subgroup identified three options for addressing this concern. Those options included expanding SLU Ride, utilizing an external service (We Drive You) to provide transportation, or purchasing/staffing a golf cart.
 - SLU Ride was ruled out based on staffing and budgetary concerns. Approximate cost could be \$60,500 per year, which is not sustainable long-term.
 - We Drive You was ruled out based on budgetary concerns. The estimate provided by the company was between \$170,000-\$180,000 per year. Similar to the SLU Ride option, this would not be cost feasible.
 - Purchasing a golf cart is potentially an option. An ADA accessible golf cart costs approximately \$20,000. CADR is awaiting a more accurate bid from M&M Golf Carts. Labor for the golf cart is expected to cost approximately \$20,000 per year. Budgetary and staffing concerns remain with this option.

Other

- The Department of Public Safety (DPS), in collaboration with CADR is broadening communication at SLU by offering information about Relay Services, which provides an accessible way for those at SLU who are

Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing to contact DPS in the event of an emergency. This service also extends to other departments on campus. Information about Relay Services is located on CADR's website. It was also shared through CADR's student listserv and on Newslink. DPS plans to inform students about this service as they engage in programming.

- SLU has a contract with both an ASL interpreting agency and a captioning agency so that these services can be provided for students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing. If a student has an accommodation for one of these resources, CADR schedules captioning and/or interpreting for academic related events and courses. For social events, students are able to reach out to CADR or the event organizer to request an interpreter or captioner. CADR has worked with several departments to ensure that this is in place when requested. CADR will use social media to enhance communication regarding the use of this accommodation.
- The Office of Facilities Management provided the academic subgroup with an ADA accessible entrance map, which was posted to CADR's landing webpage.
- Several stakeholders who serve on the Accessibility Working Group are planning to develop an updated map that includes ADA information, such as accessible bathroom locations, elevator information, location of sharp object containers, etc. This is currently in the very early stages of development.

Next steps

Information regarding working group progress will be updated on a semesterly basis, and as goals are accomplished, those developments will be reflected on the website.

The group will continue to meet monthly. During these meetings, we will engage in ongoing discussions about the sustainability of the group. Our aim is to continue to address the goals that have been identified in response to the resolutions. However, addressing accessibility gaps requires ongoing work, and we are committed to meeting those needs as we are able.

We intend to develop this group into a committee that would address accessibility barriers that relate to physical space, academics, and housing/dining. Ultimately, the committee's efforts will center around making accessibility feel organic at SLU. We want students, staff, faculty, and any visitors to campus to notice that SLU stands out as a campus that is ahead of the curve when it comes to accessible curriculum design, physical accessibility, and support resources for students with disabilities. This committee will be at the epicenter of those efforts.