State of Students with Disabilities Affinity Group at Bakersfield College

Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS) has grown tremendously over the past 5 years with regards to students who utilize the services. Regardless, the overall numbers are still low when compared to national and county averages for people with disabilities. A goal for the coming year is to identify, recruit, and serve even larger numbers of students.

Most high school students with disabilities do not complete a regular high school curriculum; they begin college with greater deficits than their non-disabled peers. The challenge in California community college is to educate high school personnel and parents about the significant differences between high school and college for students with disabilities, and implement additional resources to support successful transitions. To this end, DSPS will continue working closely with community partners such as the Kern High School District, the CA Department of Rehabilitation, and others who transition students to Bakersfield College.

Recently, the number of students on the autism spectrum have more than doubled since we started tracking them 3 years ago. This group of students requires high touch with the student and faculty, as unique behaviors can cause learning disruptions. We anticipate these numbers to continue growing.

Five Year Trend, Disaggregated by Demographics

The number of first-time students with disabilities has remained relatively flat over the last 5 years (see graph below).

As BC is a Hispanic Serving Institution, the DSPS student population mirrors the general student population in terms of ethnicity, with Hispanic/Latino as the largest group served (see graph below).
When disaggregated by age, the largest group served by DSPS are students who are 19 and younger, straight from high school. Also of note, the second largest age group tends to be students who are 30 or over.
Momentum Points

There was a 10 percent increase in students with disabilities attempting 15 units over the past 5 years (see graph below).

The number of students with disabilities who attempted 30+ units in their first year has more than doubled in the past 5 years.
High schools place students with disabilities into one of 3 class settings: self-contained classrooms, resource classes, or mainstream classes. Only the smallest percent, students in mainstream classes, are exposed to college prep studies and are required to complete all the work the same as their non-disabled peers. Students in the other two groups have no exposure to college prep coursework, or they are only required to complete a modified portion of the curriculum. As a result, very few high school students with disabilities are able to successfully transition into and complete transfer-level English and math classes.

![First-Time Students with Disabilities Completing Transfer-Level English and Math in Their First Year](image)

**Events and Actions Taken to Advance the Momentum Points**

Throughout 2018-19, DSPS has made great strides working with students, the campus, and the community to raise awareness of DSPS programs and services, as well as to increase participation and collaboration. DSPS staffs a table at every appropriate on- and off-campus recruitment event, presents an annual Disability Awareness Day, and hosts groups of students with disabilities on campus throughout the year. Sample activities include the fall Kern High School District Transition Fair, the fall BC Vet Fest events, the spring Shafter Transition Fair, two DSPS student/family orientation nights (fall 2018 and summer 2019), and a summer Student Development B6 class, specifically for students with disabilities taught by a Learning Disability Specialist. DSPS has also hosted about 200 students from 12 school special education programs throughout Bakersfield for tours and DSPS orientations.

The DSPS Affinity Group is not a Pathway, so the role is to get students connected with the Pathway associated with their major and/or career goals. To this end, DSPS has participated at Pathway events, such as the Business Pathway Expo in April 2019, trained Department of Rehabilitation counselors on BC, DSPS and Guided Pathways in October 2018. A DSPS counselor and director presented at a statewide conference on BCs implementation of Guided Pathways.

Finally, the DSPS Affinity group met bi-monthly to share information, discuss students, and make plans.
Looking Ahead at the Next 3 Years

- Continue to increase the population of students with disabilities served by BC DSPS
- Build on campus and community partnerships through coordinating the monthly Kern Disability Collaborative meetings, weekly Disability 101 campus discussions, monthly Accessibility Task Force meetings and the monthly Region C DSPS Director meetings
- Offer sections of Student Development B6 specifically for students with disabilities throughout the academic year
- Develop stronger bridges for students with disabilities to successfully transition from area high schools to BC
- Meet bi-monthly with the DSPS Affinity Group
- Develop mechanisms for students at rural locations, in dual enrollment settings, or in prisons to register for DSPS services and to get accommodation and support needs met