

**2013-14 Administrative Audit Pilot Program
Pellissippi State Community College
Program: Office of Disability Services**

I. Introduction - Briefly describe the unit/program evaluated, the date of the Audit, the protocol observed by the auditors, and other relevant information.

The office of Disability Services at Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC) coordinates services and academic accommodations for students who self-identify and provide appropriate documentation for the condition(s). The core functions of the office include:

1. Arrange classroom academic adjustments/accommodations and services for students with disabilities
2. Provide alternate format materials for students with disabilities in a timely manner
3. Provide sign language and TypeWell services for all Pellissippi State programs
4. Provide TypeWell services (captioning) for all live-streamed college programs
5. Provide student training in the use of assistive technology
6. Provide training for faculty
7. Assist students with disabilities in the transition to college

The program voluntarily participated in the Administrative Audit Pilot sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents during the 2013-2014 academic year. The administrative audit site visit occurred on Monday, May 19, 2014 at Pellissippi's Hardin Valley Campus (Main Campus) in Knoxville, Tennessee. The audit team consisted of two auditors: Dr. Debbie McCarter, Vice President for Planning, Research and Assessment, Walters State Community College and Ms. Kay Dayton, Director of Learning Commons & Learning Support/Coordinator of College Success, Volunteer State Community College.

In preparation for the on-site visit, the audit team members communicated via email and conducted telephone conversations. The members also met the evening of May 18 as well as the morning of March 19 at the hotel to review the self-study report, develop potential interview questions, and discuss issues and logistics associated with the site visit.

During the visit, the audit team met with Disability Services staff and key stakeholders including college administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The exit interview was conducted at the end of the day, following interviews and

review of relevant documents. The vice president for Student Affairs and Disability Services staff were present at the exit interview.

II. Overall Performance - What is the team's overall summary conclusion about the state of the unit/program?

Based upon the review of the self-study report and interviews, the audit team concludes the office of Disability Services fulfills their purpose and is substantially achieving their core functions in a thoughtful, efficient manner. The staff and administrators demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement of program outcomes and processes through their ongoing self-analysis and solicitation of feedback from key stakeholders.

Total Number of Commendations (What processes, practices, initiatives, and commitments that are commendable and merit recognition?)

Commendation #1 – Ongoing professional development to keep abreast of current best practices in postsecondary disability services

Commendation #2 – Caring, but professional assistance to students seeking support through the office of Disabilities Services

Commendation #3 – Commitment to providing information and training for key stakeholders at PSCC to promote an inclusive environment for students receiving services

Total Number of Affirmations (Processes, practices, or plans warrant the team's affirmation and encouragement)

Affirmation #1 – Improve alternate textbook delivery to students

Affirmation #2 – Improve students' knowledge re: rights and responsibilities related to Disabilities Services at PSCC

Affirmation #3 – Develop and implement internal procedures to improve successful response to student phone calls and voice mail messages

Affirmation #4 – Increase faculty knowledge regarding assistive technology, knowledge of students' disabling conditions, faculty rights and responsibilities related to accommodation of students

Affirmation #5 – Implement student surveys on an annual basis

Total Number of Recommendations (What are some areas for improvement identified by the team on the basis of the unit/program's self-study and site visit?)

Recommendation #1 – During the implementation of Improvement Initiative 2, the audit team recommends adding mini-training sessions to the necessary tasks. These training sessions were suggested in the Disabilities Services’ self-study and the suggestion was received positively by students interviewed during the site visit. During the interview, students also recommended soliciting student suggestions for the training and/or the addition of student mentors’ for incoming students. As one student noted, incoming students would benefit from interactions with experienced students because incoming students “don’t know what they don’t know.”

Recommendation #2 – During the implementation of Initiative Improvement 2, the audit team recommends distributing materials in multiple ways so that more students are exposed to the materials. For example, students that were interviewed suggested placing posters across the campuses in addition to placing materials in orientation packets and on the webpage. Students suggested that posted materials should include a list of available services including equipment rental and testing center alternatives.

Recommendation #3 – During the implementation of Improvement Initiative 2, the audit team recommends consulting with the office of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment, and Planning to implement student surveys to coordinate all institutional assessments and improve response rates.

Recommendation #4 – During the implementation of Improvement Initiative 4, the audit team recommends including sensitivity training in the training plan to increase awareness of the need to treat students with disabilities with dignity and respect. The audit team also encourages the development of the blog by the DS technology specialist as identified in the self-study.

III. Performance in the Focal Areas – How does the unit/program’s work in each focal area measure up against the quality and evidentiary principles?

Service Objectives The role of Disability Services in supporting a student learning environment is clearly described in the office’s statement of purpose. Service objectives are set forth in seven core functions. The statement of purpose and list of core functions align with the PSCC Mission Statement while annual planning goals and objectives document efforts to improve performance.

The office has identified key stakeholders as students, potential students, and family members seeking services and accommodations. Staff members strive to meet stakeholders’ needs through the implementation of the core functions. Staff members interact with many other officers to facilitate equal access for students; they work with external groups including federal and State entities to ensure compliance with applicable laws and policies.

Operational Processes The office of Disability Services has specific office procedures to assure that goals are achieved. Each staff member has been assigned to work with students with specific disabilities although all staff members are capable of working with any student. The team works proactively to prevent problems by responding to student needs in a timely manner and by providing training for faculty and others outside the Disabilities Service office who engage students while at PSCC.

Operational Environment Disabilities Services has solicited input from stakeholders - students, student affairs personnel, and faculty - through a number of surveys. The staff has identified or implemented a number of planned initiatives based on the results of these surveys.

Staff members strive to eliminate barriers to good work by ongoing communications with students and other faculty and staff. The office hosts workshops and provides information regarding the use and availability of assistive technology.

Assessment of Operational Effectiveness The office of Disability Services has identified indicators of effectiveness derived from the core functions. These indicators are incorporated into goals and objectives that support the College's strategic plan. Annual reports of planning progress document the level of attainment for these indicators. Additionally, the office assesses its own performance by establishing office goals and developing procedures to assure that office goals are achieved. The office conducted a series of surveys to establish the level of student/stakeholder satisfaction. The results from these surveys have informed the development of the improvement initiatives identified in the self-study.

Quality Assurance – The office of Disabilities Services examines not only their quality processes, they also work with other offices and departments within PSCC to make quality an institutional priority. Staff members work with individuals in other departments and divisions to review assessment processes in an effort to continually improve. However; it was noted during the Student Interview Session that some processes could be improved in regard to classroom activities and physical access to facilities.

IV. Conclusions - Briefly indicate the team's conclusions regarding the following by providing each in bulleted or numbered sequence:

The audit team's conclusions as related to commendations, affirmations, and recommendations are listed in Section II – Overall Performance.

In addition to these conclusions, the audit team also shared information from the Student Interview Session during the Exit Interview. Multiple students relayed individual stories of the Disabilities Services staff responses to student needs

and the staff's efforts to resolve issues promptly and effectively. Students who had attended other higher education institutions expressed the belief that PSCC was better prepared to assist students with disabilities. When asked about their classroom experiences, students expressed their desire to be treated with dignity and respect, noting that they did not expect any treatment above and beyond what was fair and equitable. Students recommended possibly educating the faculty with regard to student rights and responsibilities in the classroom. Students also expressed a desire to see access to physical facilities improved, noting that many areas were difficult to navigate in wheel chairs and that classroom furnishings could be improved.