

# Disability Snapshot

## SJSU & Nationwide Portrait of Disability

1. According to the United States Census, 2006, American Community Survey:
  - 15% of the population five years and over reports having one or more disabilities; this equates to about 50 million people.
  - 13.9% of 18-34 year olds enrolled in college/graduate school report the presence of a disability
    - 14% of these students report a sensory disability
    - 11.7% of these students report a physical disability
    - 13.4% of these students report a mental disability
2. According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS) 2000:
  - 10% of undergraduates report having a disability. Of these, half have more than one disability.
  - Female students report higher rates of mental illness
  - Students with disabilities (SWD) are, on average, older than their counterparts without disabilities (SWOD), 36 years old versus 26 years old, respectively.
3. The percentage of college students who report disabilities has increased dramatically in the last 25 years.
4. The most dramatic change has been the increase in the subgroup of freshmen with learning disabilities, which increased from 16.1% in 1988 to 40.4% in 2000 (Henderson, 2001).
5. Furthermore, the severity, in addition to the prevalence, of mental illness on college campuses has increased over the last several decades (Beamish, 2005).
  - The increase in the number of college students with psychological disorders is attributed to (1) legislative changes committed to treating psychiatric patients in their local communities, (2) increasing effectiveness of psychotropic medications in stabilizing psychiatric patients in non-institutionalized environments, and (3) the perception of a welcoming and structured environment offered by postsecondary institutions (Amada, 1992).



## SJSU DRC Student Composition

Spring 2008

Disability	# Students	% of Students
Other	10	0.82%
Communication	6	0.5%
Deaf, Hard of Hearing	24	1.98%
Functional	403	33.22%
Learning Disability	609	50.21%
Mobility Impaired	128	10.47%
Visually Impaired	33	2.72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1213</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Fact:** 3.8% of **enrolled students** use DRC resources.  
(1,213 out of 31,906)



## Implications for Student Retention

- Several studies have indicated that ...
  - “Students with disabilities who do not receive needed accommodations experience much higher dropout rates than students who do (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; National Organization on Disabilities, 1998; Witte, Philips, & Kakela, 1998).
- What studies and statistics tell us is that there are more SJSU students with disabilities than the 1024 students currently registered with DRC. Why?
  - Stigma attached to disability
  - Lack of current medical coverage
  - Choice
  - Lack of awareness of the Disability Resource Center
  - Lack of awareness of one’s disability
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a way to go beyond accommodations and increase learning, retention, and academic success for:
  - Students with disabilities, including those registered with the DRC and those not registered
  - Students aware and unaware of the presence of a disability
  - Students for whom English is a second language
  - Returning and non-traditional students
  - All learners
- Furthermore, UDL...
  - Reduces stigma as students do not need to disclose their disability to receive accessible materials and instruction
  - Disability documentation is not needed prior to receiving accessible instruction
  - All college students benefit from the universally designed curriculum