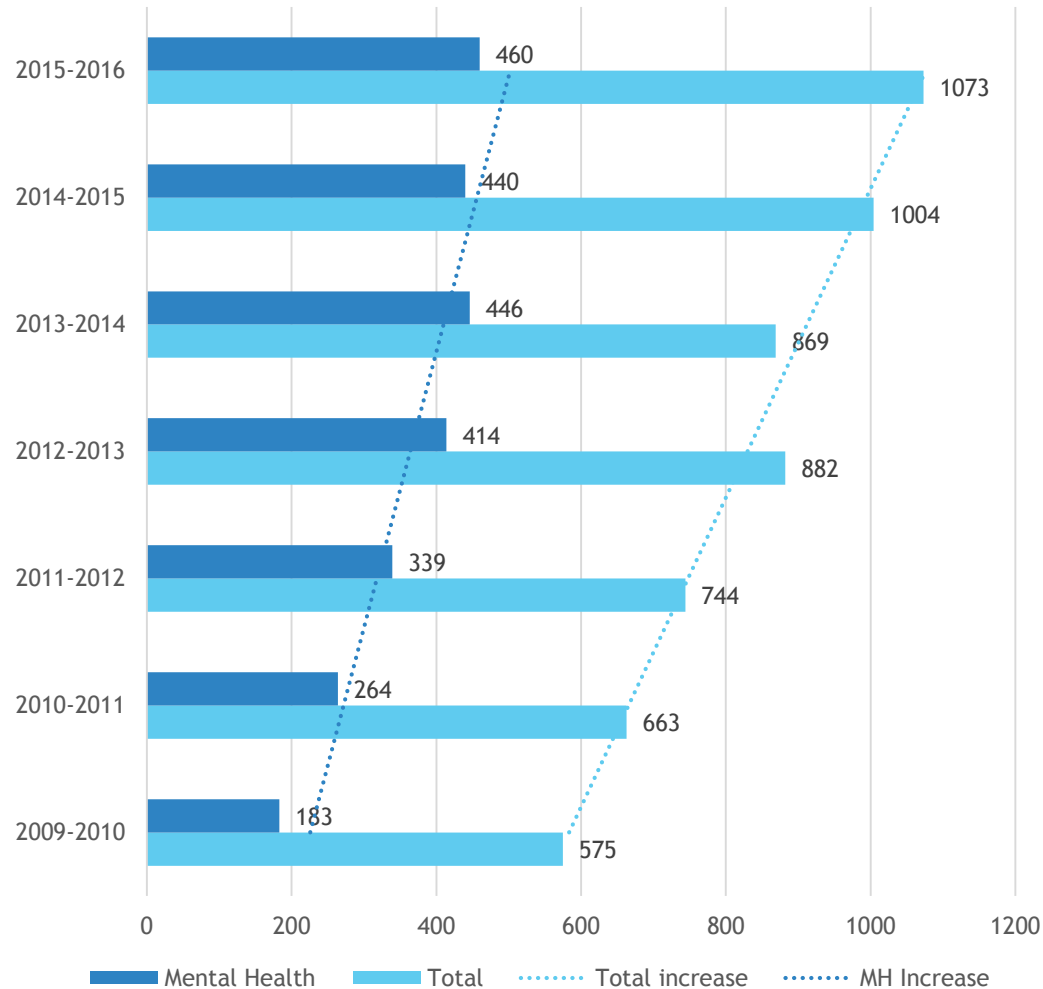


disAbility Resources for Students (dRS)



What are utilization trends telling us?

- ▶ Since 2009, DRS has experienced an 87% growth in the number of students qualified for accommodation services. Within that total there has been a 151% increase in the number of students with a mental health diagnoses.
- ▶ The current counselor to student ratio and space allocation was aligned with a service population of about 450 students. Staffing levels have not been increasing with this growth. Staffing levels must be improved to maximize availability of counselors for accommodations and services.
- ▶ The location of the services is also of concern as it is seriously inadequate in size, particularly strained during times of heavy test taking, and not best suited for accessibility for those with a mobility impairment.

Addressing the Issues

As growth continues, responsiveness, timely compliance and DRS's ability to partner with institutional stakeholders are at risk. At the core of this matter is the potential harm to the University's reputation and our ability to serve this group of students - a service for which we have regularly received high praise from students and their family members and for which we have historically had strong retention and graduation rates. Here are examples of ways in which we have addressed these concerns.

STAFFING

- ▶ With a vacancy at the Assistant Director level there was an opportunity to re-evaluate the structure of the office. The Assistant Director position was re-classified to an Associate Director position with more hands-on, operational responsibility for the department. This re-structure provides more time for the Director to attend to his other responsibilities as Registrar and in oversight of Veteran Services.
- ▶ Through internally rebased funds, two accommodation counselors have gone from part time (.75) to full-time positions.
- ▶ As the data presents there has been a significant increase in the number of disability cases involving mental health diagnoses, which require extensive follow up and case management to ensure that the student continues to access resources and follows their prescribed treatment plans. Over the past two years, Western has added case managers to the Counseling Center and the Dean of Students/Office of Student Life. However, with the growing mental health needs staff are facing in the disAbility Resources office a third case manager is needed. A Case Manager position is in a state legislative request addressing student success issues.

TECHNOLOGY AND EFFICIENCIES

- ▶ There has been an ongoing annual institutional cost (approximately \$800k) to address overages associated with providing required accommodation services on campus to students, staff, faculty, and campus visitors. These services have included sign language interpretation, alternative text strategies, Braille services, and Type Well transcription. As evidenced, many of these are high cost services. An external consultant is in the process of being hired to conduct a financial and technological review of services to see how Western might streamline costs and services.
- ▶ dRS recently implemented AIM -an interactive secure software that allows students to request accommodations on line and for dRS staff to communicate electronically with students and faculty in regards to accommodations which have been identified and approved. Furthermore, this software tracks all exam processing and is a secondary resource for case notes. AIM implementation replaced a 100% paper process.

SPACE PLANNING

- ▶ Based on space/size concerns, Western is in the design planning stages to co-locate dRS and Veteran Services in Wilson Library's Learning Commons. This move is expected for occupancy in fall of 2018.
- ▶ In addition, dRS continues to request ongoing minor capital requests for ADA improvements campus-wide. The committee overseeing such requests is chaired by EOO. Ongoing input is submitted to Facilities Management.