

Centering Disability Justice: Writing Centers as Change Agents for their Institutions

By Christopher Longo, Goucher College
Supervised by Lana Oweidat, Director of the Writing Center

How is the Writing Center working towards enacting disability justice? How do these efforts complement the work of the Accessibility Services Office on campus? Is the Writing Center's ability to influence disability justice limited only to their space?

Phase One: Fall 2021

Interviewed tutors at the Writing Center and the Office of Accessibility Services to compare their initiatives/efforts in promoting disability justice.

Phase Two: Spring 2022

Interviewing students to gauge their views of the writing center in foregrounding disability justice across campus

Same goal, different approaches: While united under the same goal of working towards disability justice, the Office of Accessibility Services has a more formal approach in supporting students with disability than that of the Writing Center.

Synergy: Both writing center tutors and the Office of Accessibility Services agree that more work on educating the campus community on disability justice is needed, including providing resources to students, faculty, and staff, supporting different academic programs in this area, and encouraging students to advocate for their needs.

Takeaways

- (1) The Office of Accessibility Services and writing center tutors are aligned under similar goals; however, their actions are found in different areas of enacting disability justice.
- (2) Through tutor training and their work as tutors, student workers develop the knowledge to advocate for themselves and others, making the Writing Center one of the main change agents in their institutions for disability justice.
- (3) Liberal Arts institutions can benefit from a smaller population size, which makes enacting change easier because they are more likely to reach much of our population. However, this change is difficult to inspire since exposure could be limited compared to a larger institution.