

# Services for Students with Disabilities

*2021-22 Annual Report*



# University of Wisconsin System

## 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT – SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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## Foreword

This annual report seeks to highlight the important work of disability services professionals within the University of Wisconsin System in supporting students with disabilities and advocating for equal access on their campuses. This year's report continues to highlight trends in four key areas: 1) the number of students seeking accommodations, 2) the types of disabilities presented, 3) the types of accommodations approved to provide equal access, and 4) the level of staffing available to support and advocate for students with disabilities.

Again this year, more students with disabilities affiliated with disability services offices than in previous years, despite an overall decline in enrollment systemwide. Other trends highlighted in recent years—such as the increase in students seeking accommodation for psychological disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and autism—also continued this year, as did growth in the types of accommodations that are approved to provide access to students with these disabilities—testing, flexible attendance/due dates, housing accommodations, and emotional support animals, to name a few.

The structure of this year's report is similar to 2020-21. One addition is a second year of data on accommodations, which allows a preliminary look at some trends. Another addition is more commentary on the effort required to provide some of the more common and/or complex accommodations. The report also documents how disability services professionals continue to manage growth with few additional resources.

I am honored once again to assist with telling the story of disability services professionals in the UW System—a passionate and committed group of professionals who work tirelessly to ensure that students with disabilities experience equitable living and learning environments to help them reach their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Achter', written in a cursive style.

John Achter  
UW System Administration  
Director of Student Behavioral Health, Office of Student Success  
UW System Liaison to Coordinators of Services for Students with Disabilities

## Executive Summary

- **Total Students with Disabilities:** A total of 13,095 students with disabilities were affiliated with disability services offices across the UW System in 2021-22, representing 8.3% of total UW System enrollment. This number has grown by 50% over the past five years despite declining enrollment systemwide.
- **Disability Categories:** Qualifying disabilities totaled 22,229, indicating that an increasing number of students present with more than one disability for which they are eligible for accommodations. Psychological disabilities remained the most common disability category, representing 37% of total disabilities reported. The other most common and growing disability categories are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (20% of total) and health conditions (17%). Among less common disability categories, autism (3% of total) has shown the most growth, with 53% more autistic students affiliating with disability services offices in 2021-22 compared to five years ago.
- **Accommodations:** Disability services staff approve hundreds of distinct types of accommodations annually based on specific barriers to access unique to each student. The top five accommodation categories were: 1) testing (such as extended test time, a distraction-reduced environment), 2) notetaking assistance (through peers or software programs), 3) flexible attendance and due dates, 4) alternative formats (such as large print, Braille, audio files, and captioning), and 5) housing accommodations (such as single rooms, ADA accessible rooms, emotional support animals). Notable increases were seen this year in the number of notetaking, flexible attendance/due dates, and housing accommodations. Decreased numbers were seen in COVID-related and temporary accommodations. The report outlines the complexity of reviewing and implementing some accommodations, requiring significant expertise, collaboration, and time.
- **COVID-19 Impact on Services:** COVID-related impacts on disability services changed this year as campuses more fully returned to in-person learning and safety restrictions were lifted during the spring 2022 semester. While temporary needs related to COVID infection decreased, the increase in requests for remote learning options and certain housing accommodations (such as single room and emotional support animal requests) appear to be tied to ongoing concerns about infection and to an increase in mental health needs. Some of these trends are expected to continue as the pandemic moves to an endemic phase.
- **Personnel/Staffing:** Staffing levels increased slightly during 2021-22. However, with more students seeking accommodations, the average access coordinator caseload did not improve—rising slightly from 368 to 372, which is still considerably higher than average caseloads nationally. Campuses with high caseload levels are often unable to provide anything beyond the most basic level of service required by law. At a time when both the number and complexity of student needs has increased, this is suboptimal. In better-staffed offices, more individualized support and specialized coaching is offered—services that research has shown to significantly enhance student retention and graduation for disabled students.

## Introduction

This annual report is prepared by the Disability and Accessibility Services Directors within the UW System, in accordance with the [UW System Board of Regents Policy 14-10: Nondiscrimination on Basis of Disability](#). The report represents data gathered by the campus offices designated to collect student disability documentation, identify reasonable accommodations that ensure access to programs and activities, and provide services according to Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990; ADAAA, 2008), and UW System Policy.

The director group meets regularly to discuss disability services, trends, and plans for addressing student issues. All UW System institutions collect data on services provided to students based on agreed-upon data collection and reporting guidelines for consistent aggregate reporting and comparison purposes. As of 2021-22, all campuses have implemented an accommodation and case management software system, designed to manage multiple aspects of providing services to students with disabilities as well as tracking several pieces of information used for reporting purposes both on campus and systemwide.

Like last year, an Annual Report Committee of disability/accessibility services directors was formed to guide the report writing process. As noted in the Foreword, each report builds on previous reports by adding information to better tell the story of the work being done to support disabled students. We hope each iteration of the report will continue to provide relevant and useful information to help better understand and advocate for accessible environments at our institutions.

## Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities

As shown in Table 1, across UW System campuses in 2021-22, 13,095 students with disabilities were affiliated with disability services offices. This represents 8.3% of total UW System enrollment.

**Table 1: Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities, 2021-2022**

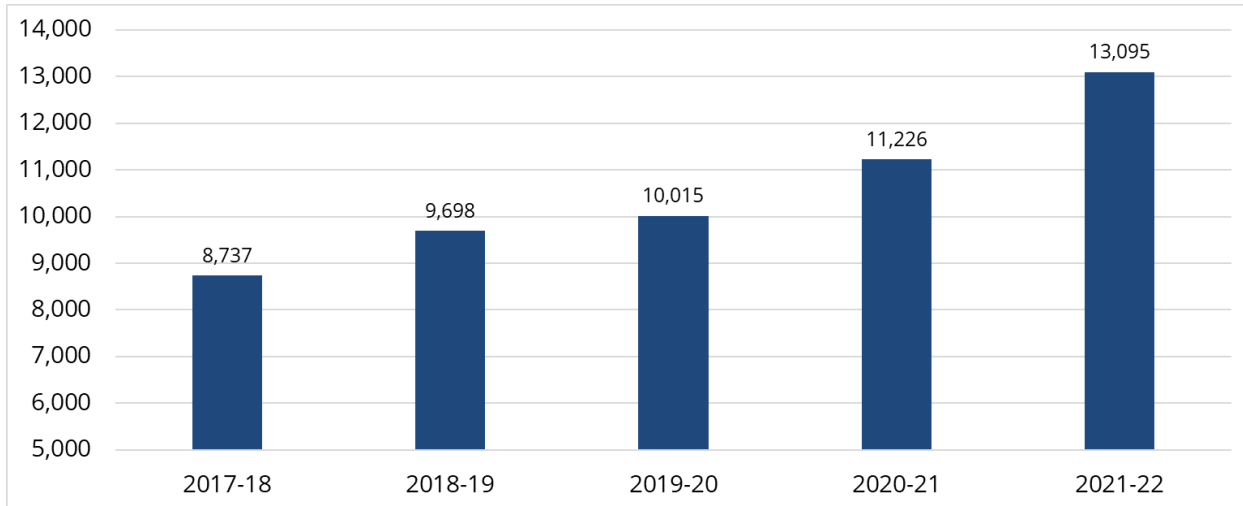
<b>Total number of students enrolled<sup>1</sup> with disabilities who are eligible for accommodations</b>	<b>Total institutional enrollment<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of student population with registered disabilities</b>
13,095	157,536	8.3%

<sup>1</sup>Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022

<sup>2</sup>Fall 2021 10<sup>th</sup> day headcount (including branch campuses, if applicable, and excluding high school special students)

The past five years have seen a steady increase in the number of students affiliating with disability services offices. As displayed in Figure 1, during the academic year 2017-18, a total of 8,737 students with disabilities affiliated with these offices across UW System campuses. In 2021-22 this total was 13,095 students, representing 50% growth in the number of UW students requesting accommodations in that five-year span. It is important to note that, despite many campuses experiencing flat or even decreasing enrollment over this time span, the number of disabled students seeking accommodations continues to grow. Complete five-year campus-by-campus trends in students affiliated with disability services offices can be found in Appendix 1.

**Figure 1: Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities, Five-Year Trend**



**Figure 1 Description:** Bar graph identifying the total number of enrolled students with disabilities across UW System campuses over a five-year period. 2017-18 (8,737), 2018-19 (9,698), 2019-20 (10,015), 2020-21 (11,226), 2021-22 (13,095).

## Disability Categories

UW System campuses collect disability information from every student seeking to initiate the accommodation process, and this information helps to identify trends in major recognized disability categories. Understanding these trends is vital for developing appropriate services, resources, and training. Beginning last year, this report also includes co-occurring disability information in addition to primary disability categories to give a more complete picture of how disability presents itself across the UW System. A total of 22,229 qualifying disabilities were documented in 2021-22, indicating that many students present with more than one disability for which they are eligible for accommodations.

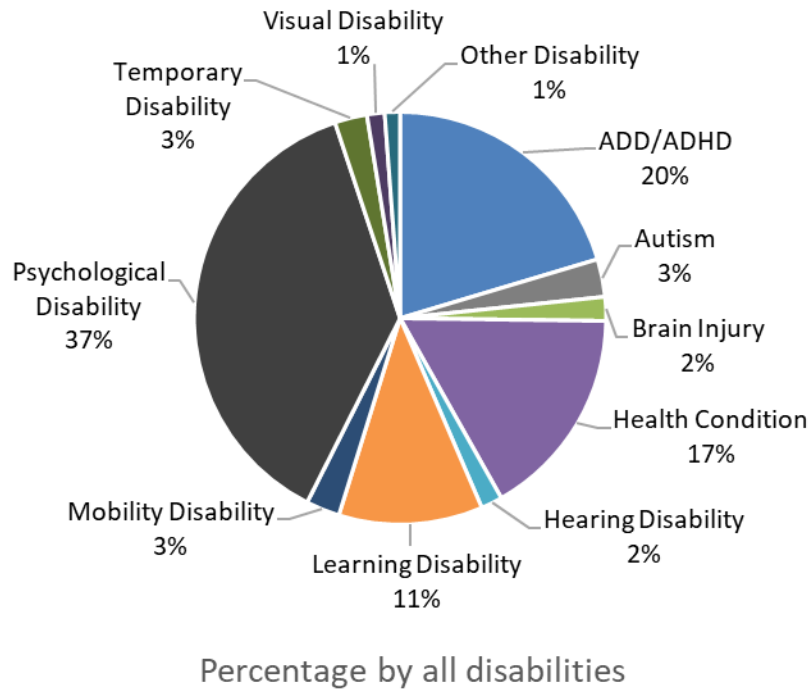
The following 11 categories are used to track primary and co-occurring disability information across the System:

- 1) Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- 2) Autism
- 3) Brain Injury
- 4) Health Condition
- 5) Hearing Disability
- 6) Learning Disability
- 7) Mobility Disability
- 8) Psychological Disability
- 9) Temporary Disability
- 10) Visual Disability
- 11) Other Disability

The pie chart in Figure 2 illustrates the relative percentages of these disability categories among the student population seeking disability services in 2021-22. Campus-by-campus breakdowns of these disability categories can be found in Appendix 2.



**Figure 2: Percentage of Students by Disability Category, 2021-22**

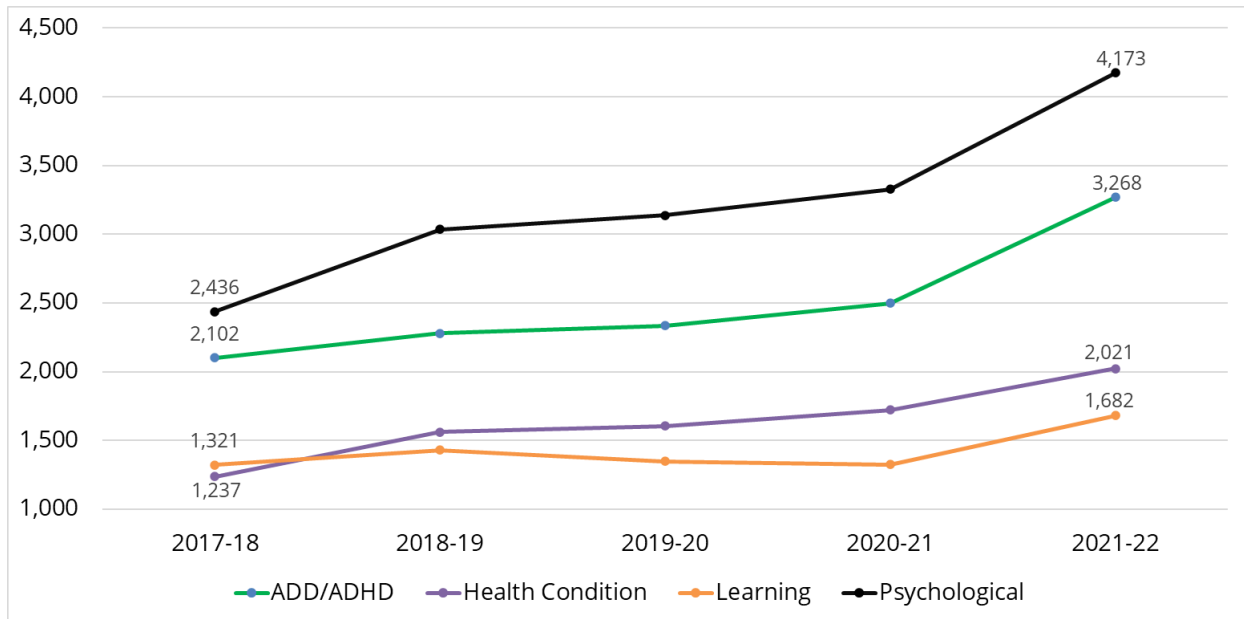


**Figure 2 Description:** Pie chart displaying Percentage of Students by Disability in 2021-22. ADD/ADHD 20%, Autism 3%, Brain Injury 2%, Health Condition 17%, Hearing 2%, Learning 11%, Mobility 3%, Psychological 37%, Temporary Disability 3%, Visual 1%, Other 1%.

Psychological disabilities remain the most common category for which students seek support in disability services offices, and this category continues to grow as a proportion of total disabilities represented. Including co-occurring disabilities, psychological disabilities represented 37% of the total disabilities reported by students.

As displayed in Figures 3 and 4, certain primary disability categories have grown over the past five years, while others have remained stable. Among the four most common disability categories shown in Figure 3, the trends reported last year continued, with the number of students with psychological disabilities increasing 71% between the 2017-18 and 2021-22 academic years and the number of students with chronic health conditions and ADHD increasing 63% and 55%, respectively. These all exceed the 50% overall growth in students seeking disability services during that time span, indicating that these categories are truly increasing as a proportion of students served. The increase in students with psychological disabilities, in particular, has led to an expansion of mental health accommodations and supports—as will be outlined later in this report—and led to a nationwide discussion among disability services professionals about the need re-examine the role of the disability services offices as it relates to student mental health (Aquino & Scott, 2022).

**Figure 3: Number of Students by Primary Disability, Five-Year Trends (1)**



**Figure 3 Description:** Line graph displaying change from 2017-18 to 2021-22 in the number of students in the four most common disability categories: ADD/ADHD, Health Condition, Learning, and Psychological. Table includes data displayed in Figure 3.

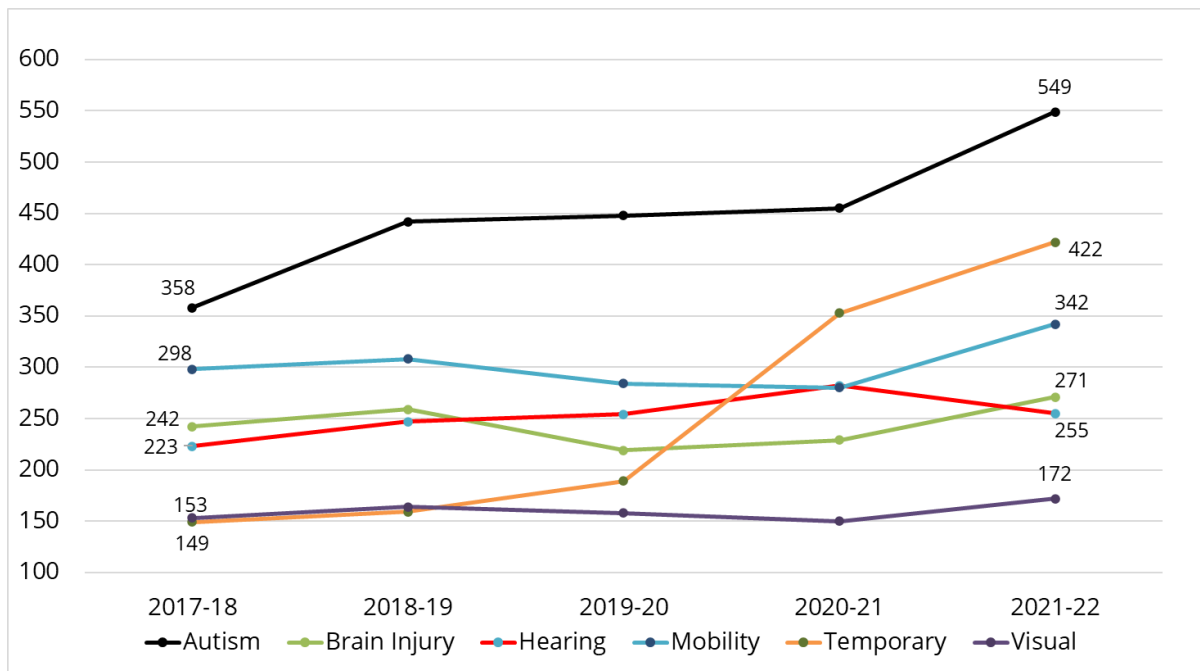
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
ADD/ADHD	2,102	2,278	2,335	2,497	3,268
Health Condition	1,237	1,560	1,606	1,721	2,021
Learning Disability	1,321	1,429	1,348	1,324	1,682
Psychological Disability	2,436	3,034	3,138	3,327	4,173

Among less commonly reported disability categories shown in Figure 4, autism and temporary disabilities have been trending upward over the past five years, while all other categories have shown modest to little change. The number of autistic students has increased by 53% and the number of students with a temporary disability has increased 183%. Some of the jumps in temporary disabilities can be attributed to the provision of accommodations related to COVID-19 and COVID-19 protocols.

The increase in autistic students is consistent with national trends. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network estimated in 2021 that about 1 in 44 children is autistic. This compares to historical estimates that put the prevalence of autism at around 1 in 100. A variety of factors contribute to these increases. First, the improvement in diagnostic tools alone has increased the likelihood of being diagnosed as autistic. Also, more autistic students are able to attend higher education due to receiving more targeted supports and interventions in early childhood and the K-12 environment. These supports and interventions include common academic accommodations like additional test time and notetaking and also address the students' social-emotional needs, executive functioning skills, emotional regulation skills, and social skills to better prepare them for the college transition. It is worth noting that many young people are also self-identifying as autistic, after learning more about the common traits and experiences of autistic people through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Autistic adults empowering young people to seek out evaluation and social media platforms have aided in reducing the ongoing stigma surrounding the disability, suggesting the trend of increasing numbers of autistic students on our campuses will continue. To adequately address their needs requires understanding both the academic and social-emotional barriers they experience, providing reasonable accommodations, and also providing training to faculty and staff so that they can become better partners in serving this important student group (Goddard & Cook, 2021).

**Figure 4: Number of Students by Primary Disability, Five-Year Trends (2)**



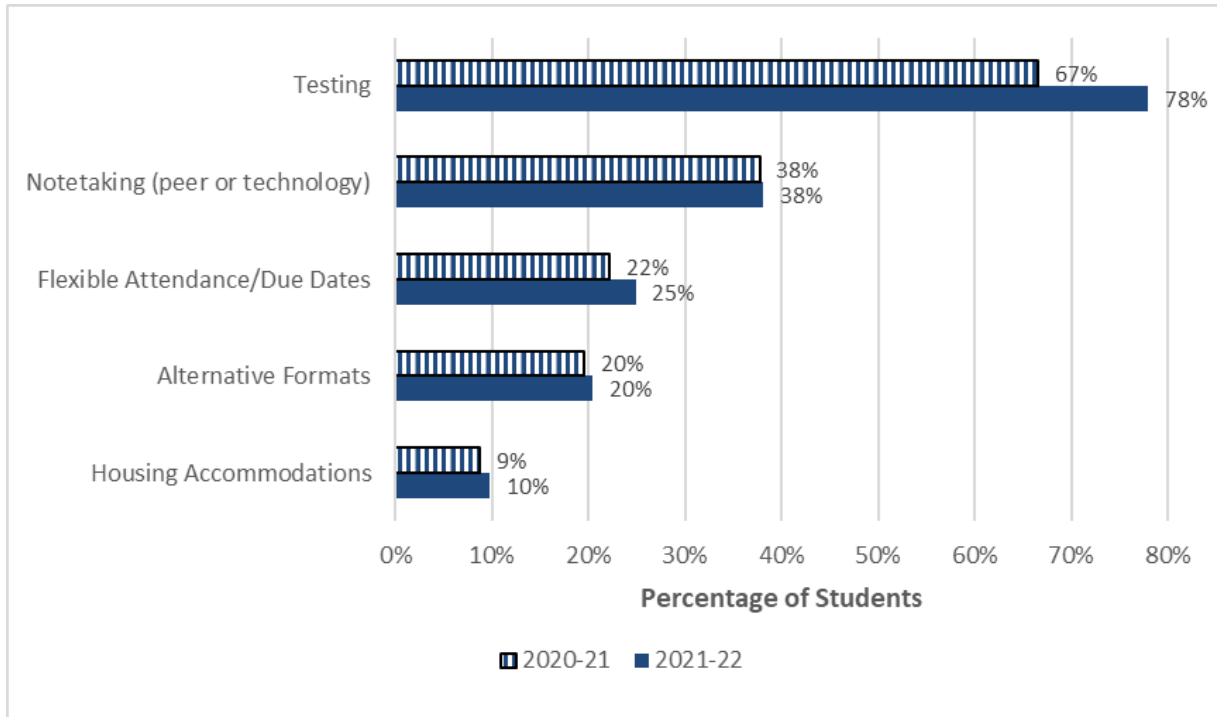
**Figure 4 Description:** Line graph displaying change from 2017-18 to 2021-22 in the number of students in the five less common disability categories: Autism, Brain Injury, Hearing, Mobility, Temporary, and Visual. Table includes data displayed in Figure 4.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Autism	358	442	448	455	549
Brain Injury	242	259	219	229	271
Hearing	223	247	254	282	255
Mobility	298	308	284	280	342
Temporary	149	159	189	353	422
Visual	153	164	158	150	172

## Accommodations

This year's report again includes information about the range of accommodations provided to support access and inclusion to all programs and activities for students with disabilities. The data reflected in Figures 5 and 6 represent some of the most common and/or complex accommodation types and the number of students approved for each. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list—a campus could potentially provide more than 100 distinct types of reasonable and appropriate accommodations that are individualized to address the barriers to access unique to each student. A campus-by-campus breakdown of the accommodations listed below is available in Appendix 4.

**Figure 5: Common Accommodations (1)**



**Figure 5 Description:** Bar graph identifying the percentage of students in 2020-21 and 2021-22 who were approved for the following accommodation types out of the total number of students affiliated with disability services centers. Table includes data displayed in Figure 5.

	2020-21	2021-22
Testing	67%	78%
Notetaking (peer or technology)	38%	38%
Flexible Attendance/Due Dates	22%	25%
Alternative Formats	20%	20%
Housing Accommodations	9%	10%

As shown in Figure 5, the most common accommodations approved are related to testing, with almost 80% of students with disabilities qualifying for exam accommodations in 2021-22, an increase over 2020-21. Possible explanations for this increase may be related to shifts in instructional modalities as campuses transitioned into and out of pandemic-related restrictions—that is, as classroom modalities shifted between online, hybrid, and in-person, exam formats shifted between online, in-person, using technology, and an emerging practice of group exams, all of which provided new challenges to some students with disabilities.

Testing accommodations are necessary for students who experience difficulties with focus and concentration, ability to recall or process information, and difficulty physically writing or typing. Testing accommodations encompass a wide range of services including extended test time, a reduced distraction testing environment, or the use of reading and writing software, to name a few. Many disability services offices coordinate this process by scheduling rooms, requesting exams from instructors, coordinating assistive technology, and administering and proctoring exams. Group testing is an emerging trend in higher education that challenges the provision of a minimally distracting environment and, in some cases, extended time. At one school, students enrolled in first-year math courses were assigned to work in a small group with their peers to discuss and respond

to test questions. Students with disabilities had the opportunity to take the test online independently with extra time, in the testing center on paper with extra time, or with the group without extra time or a minimally distracting environment. The complexity of situations like this requires close collaboration between instructors, disability services, and the students to appropriately consider each student's unique need for reasonable accommodation.

The second most common accommodation type is notetaking support and was approved for almost 40% of total students served. These accommodations assist students who have hearing or vision loss, students whose handwriting ability is impacted by a physical condition, or students with conditions that impact focus, concentration, comprehension, and processing. This accommodation is provided through a variety of methods, including volunteer and paid peer notetakers, assistive technology such as Livescribe Smartpens, and online notetaking systems. All these services help address barriers to learning, processing, and retaining course information.

During the switch to remote/online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, UW disability services offices quickly realized the need to adapt notetaking accommodations from primarily in-person, peer notetaking services, to online, technology-assisted notetaking options. The UW System, in partnership with disability services directors, procured a technology-assisted notetaking platform called *Glean*. *Glean* can record a lecture through a laptop or other device and allow students to simultaneously add notes that sync with the audio. Students can also upload PowerPoints and instructor notes that coordinate with the daily lecture. Through this system, students can independently access recorded lectures more than once and can add notes either during lecture or after class to enhance and strengthen their own notetaking skills. The switch to using *Glean* has drastically changed notetaking accommodations from primarily peer-assisted to a more independent, technology-assisted method.

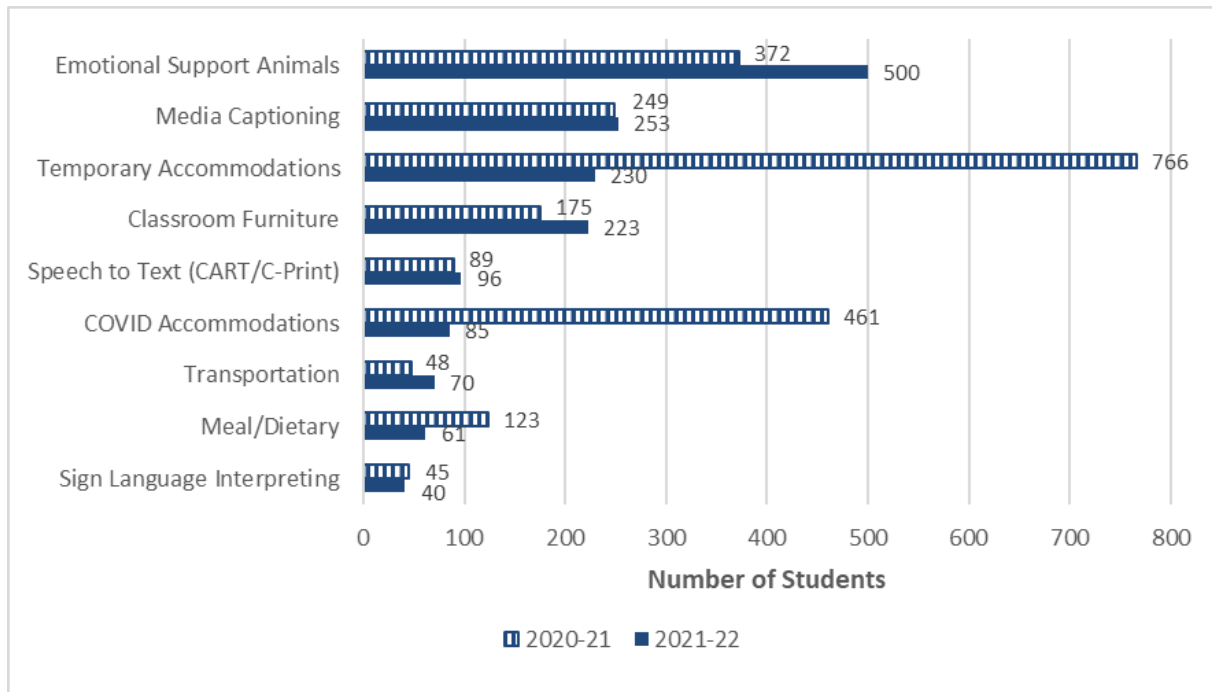
With increasing numbers of students identifying with health and psychological disabilities, disability services offices are experiencing greater requests for flexibility with class attendance and extensions on due dates because of the fluctuating and often unpredictable nature of symptoms for these conditions. Twenty-five percent (25%) of disabled students were approved for flexible attendance and/or due dates in 2021-22, a 3 percentage-point increase compared to the year before. The flexibility granted to all students, with and without disabilities, regarding attendance and due dates during the pandemic may be a contributing factor for increasing requests for academic flexibility. Evaluating and coordinating these accommodation requests entails an ongoing interactive process between a disability services office, instructors, and students to determine whether options for flexibility exist in each course, and to assess whether those options constitute a fundamental alteration of the essential course requirements. When these accommodations are deemed reasonable, the coordination for each course in which a student is enrolled can be quite time-intensive at the beginning of each semester.

Housing accommodations are another increasing area of accommodation request requiring a complex process of consideration. Housing accommodations, which were approved for 10% of students in 2021-22, include housing contract exemptions, ADA accessible rooms, restrooms in proximity to room, accessible furnishings, emotional support animals (ESAs), and single rooms. For housing-related accommodations, disability services staff often participate as a member of a committee and collaborate with residence life staff and other campus partners to determine eligibility and assist with implementation. Particularly noteworthy in the category of housing accommodations is an increasing number of student requests for single rooms, with students reporting a need for privacy without a roommate, a place to decompress from mental health

concerns, a room where they may experience less anxiety, and a distraction-reduced study location. Most often, students report never having shared a bedroom with a sibling or other person, and therefore they feel anxiety over the idea of sharing space with another student they do not know. One reason for the recent increase in single room requests may be the increased amount of time students spent at home in a bedroom during the pandemic, when bedrooms were used not only for sleeping, but also for privacy, study time, and online class time. Like all accommodation decisions, single room requests are only approved if they are determined to be reasonable and appropriate for a student to achieve equitable access due to their disability.

For the group of accommodations displayed in Figure 6, the number of students receiving the accommodation are shown rather than percentages, since the accommodations apply to a smaller proportion of students with disabilities. As shown in Figure 6, requests for emotional support animals (ESAs) are a continually increasing category of housing accommodations that were approved for 500 students this year, representing a 34% increase in requests over last year. The requests for specific animals have included common household animals like dogs, cats, and rabbits, and also requests for more unique animals. Because the presence of animals also impacts others in the living environment, these requests usually involve collaboration among campus partners to carefully evaluate the reasonable and appropriate nature of the request in the housing community.

**Figure 6: Common Accommodations (2)**



**Figure 6 Description:** Bar graph identifying the number of students approved for the following accommodation types in 2020-21 and 2021-22. Table includes data shown in Figure 6.

	2020-21	2021-22
Emotional Support Animals	372	500
Media Captioning	249	253
Temporary Accommodations	766	230
Classroom Furniture	175	223
Speech to Text (CART/C-Print)	89	96
COVID-19 Accommodations	461	85

Transportation	48	70
Meal/Dietary	123	61
Sign Language Interpreting	45	40

Finally, it is also notable that three areas of accommodations—temporary, COVID-related, and meal/dietary, showed sharp declines in 2021-22, which can be attributed to the evolution of pandemic impacts and a relaxation of pandemic-related campus restrictions over time.

## COVID-19 Impact on Services

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved through the 2021-22 academic year, campuses adjusted to both new and continuing concerns in the living and learning environments. With UW campuses moving back to primarily face-to-face, in-person instruction, one new challenge for disability services professionals was managing more requests for remote access accommodations, as noted previously. To appropriately review and determine the reasonableness of these requests, significant collaboration between students, access coordinators, and instructors is required to determine if a request would fundamentally alter the essential elements of each course. Campuses that continued with more universal offerings of online courses experienced diminished need for these types of accommodations.

With masking requirements lifted in March 2022, disability services offices had little time to assess what reasonable accommodations were possible for students who remained at high-risk if infected with COVID-19. The removal of COVID-19 safety precautions such as masking, physical distancing, and mandatory testing for unvaccinated students, created additional anxiety for some high-risk students and staff and put them in a difficult position. Disability services staff helped these students consider their options, manage their anxiety, and in some cases determine whether to continue their classes after spring break. Another impact of relaxing COVID-19 restrictions and returning to more normal routines was that more students started resuming their in-person therapy appointments, got connected with their doctors after delaying medical care and/or treatment, and in some cases sought evaluation for a possible new diagnosis. This has been a positive development but has also resulted in wait-times as long as six to eight months in some geographic areas for evaluations like autism, ADHD, and learning disabilities.

Finally, a post-pandemic trend that is not reflected in the data is the limited availability of sign language interpreters. Nearly all disability services offices experienced a decline in the availability of local sign language interpreters, which led to an increased use of technology and video remote interpreting services. Not all learning environments are conducive to remote interpreting services and technology adds a layer of complexity when facilitating communication access for students who use sign language. Several factors are contributing to the limited availability of sign language interpreters, including more remote employment opportunities for interpreters, the inflated cost of travel, and increased gas prices nationwide. This has created new logistical challenges for both students and disability services providers.

As we have seen over the last 2.5 years, COVID-19 is resilient and, with ongoing development of more transmissible variants, we can expect more students to connect with disability services providers due to the illness itself and its consequences, including long COVID and mental health issues.

## Personnel/Staffing

Disability services offices rely on all their staff to successfully coordinate and implement accommodations and manage their overall scope of services. Both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 annual reports noted that disability services staffing levels have not kept pace with the growth in students affiliated with disability services offices, resulting in increasing caseloads for staff. While both overall staffing levels and access coordinator staffing levels increased modestly this year (total FTE increase: 83 to 94; access coordinator FTE increase: 31 to 35), average caseloads still rose slightly (from 368 to 372) due to an even greater increase in disabled students seeking services. Staffing and caseload levels are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Disability Services Staffing and Caseload**

Academic Year	Total Staff FTE*	Access Coordinator FTE	Average Access Coordinator Caseload	Range of Average Caseload
2019-20	79	32	310	132 to 795
2020-21	83	31	368	148 to 896
2021-22	94	35	372	192 to 555

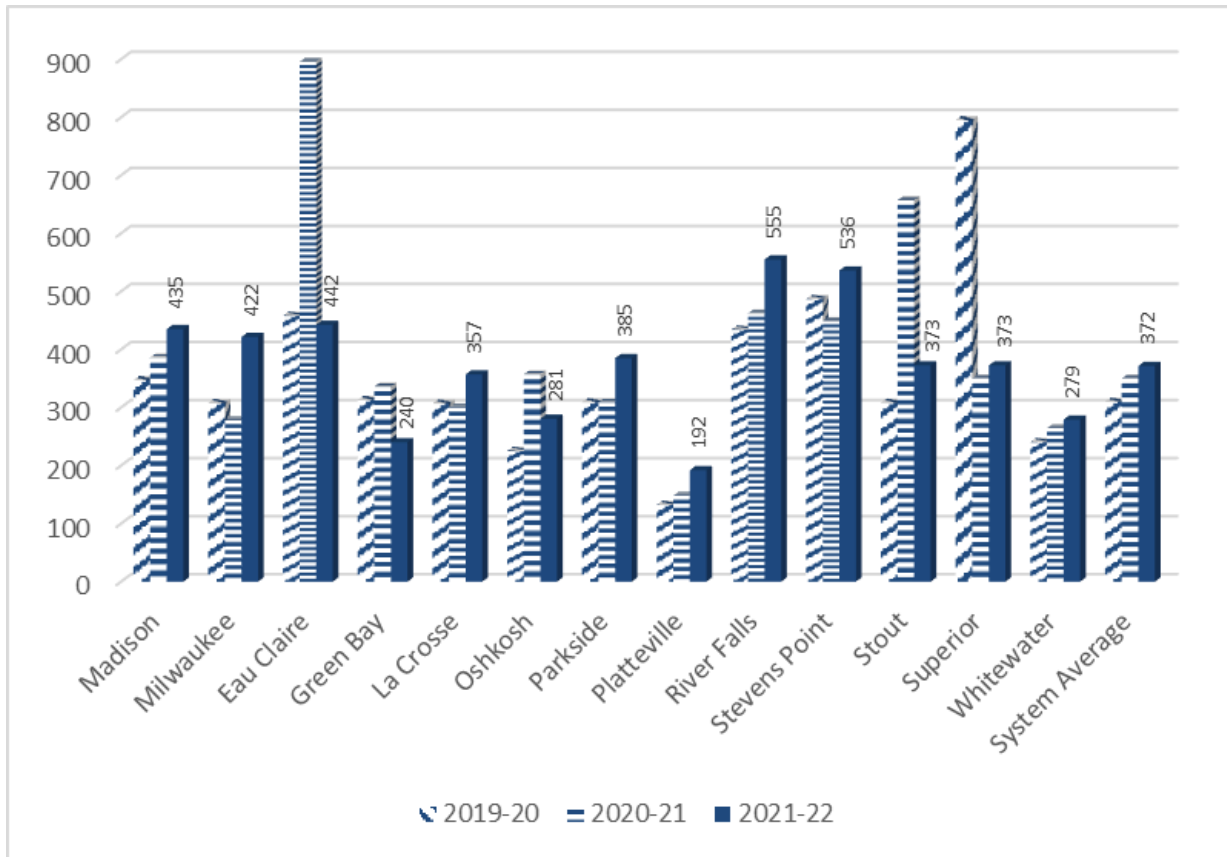
\*Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

The access coordinator position is highlighted because it is the staff member who typically works with a dedicated caseload, or roster, of students. This position plays a leading role in facilitating overall coordination of services for students, including reviewing eligibility, identifying barriers to access, developing and implementing accommodation plans, and ensuring an ongoing interactive dialogue with students, instructors, and other university staff. Figure 7 shows the campus-by-campus breakdown of access coordinator caseloads, ranging from 192 to 555 students in 2021-22. This is a narrower range than in the previous two years, thanks to some campuses receiving new positions; however, the upper limit remains far too high to provide adequate service levels.

Determining the precise FTE dedicated to access coordinator duties can be difficult, given that in smaller offices, access coordinator positions often include other responsibilities such as staff supervision; coordination of assistive technology, furniture, interpreting, and captioning services; and management of other programs to support students, such as specialized tutoring, summer bridge, and peer-mentor programs. In larger offices, these duties are performed by additional staff members with specialized expertise. On smaller campuses, access coordinators even have responsibilities unrelated to the direct service of disabled students and may have split duties within schools, colleges, or other departments. This situation puts a lot of demand on staff members and can impact the level of service available to disabled students. Well-staffed offices are able to not only better distribute tasks among staff but also offer supplemental programs that contribute to student success. Research shows that disabled students receiving specialized coaching and support services by trained staff show greater success as measured by grades, retention, and graduation (Safer, Farmer, & Song, 2020). Access coordinators are uniquely qualified to provide this support and oversee programming for this purpose when time allows.



**Figure 7: Access Coordinator Caseload, Three-Year Trend**



**Figure 7 Description:** Bar graph identifying the average caseload for access coordinators in 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. Table includes data displayed in Figure 7.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Madison	347	386	435
Milwaukee	308	278	422
Eau Claire	458	896	442
Green Bay	313	336	240
La Crosse	307	300	357
Oshkosh	225	357	281
Parkside	309	309	385
Platteville	132	148	192
River Falls	434	462	555
Stevens Point	487	449	536
Stout	308	657	373
Superior	795	350	373
Whitewater	240	265	279
System Average	310	350	372

One specialized area of expertise that has become increasingly necessary for serving disabled students is assistive technology. Many staff in disability services offices are trained as counselors, social workers, learning specialists, or other social service-related professionals. This is essential to coordinating and supporting the overall accommodation needs of students but does not address the more technical aspects involved in providing accommodations. Recruiting and retaining assistive

technology staff with the necessary technical qualifications and skills is a significant challenge due to titling and budgeting issues, resulting in many offices not being able to pay comparable salaries to information technology professionals in other settings.

The pandemic's impact on staffing showed up in many of the same ways it presented across other areas in higher education, including staff turnover, accelerated retirements, difficulty hiring professional and student employees, increased demand for higher pay rates, and increased absences related to individual illness or childcare needs. Staff turnover puts a particular strain on remaining staff members to recruit and train younger professionals, adding to the risk of burnout and fatigue from the increased workload on top of stress related to the pandemic's impact on personal and work lives. At a time when both the number and complexity of student needs has increased, it is critical that campuses continually review and adjust the resources dedicated to serving students with disabilities to not only ensure compliance with laws and policies but also provide the levels of support necessary to enhance student success and retention.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

We believe this report provides a useful snapshot of our work in 2021-22—the students we served, the ways in which we go about meeting student needs, the challenges we face, and how this year compared to the few years preceding it. The work of disability services offices across the UW System is essential, and the professionals involved continue to show resilience in providing high-quality service amid increased service utilization, the rising complexity of student needs, and evolving changes as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With staffing resources stretched even more thinly than last year, disability services offices are often strained to provide the level of service required to achieve equitable access for disabled students, which is essential to their success, retention, and graduation. As noted last year, we have become creative in using technology to establish greater efficiencies and in modifying practices to ensure essential service levels are maintained. Yet, with caseloads continuing to rise and accommodation needs becoming more complex, relief in the form of additional resources would help many campuses better meet demands.

In future annual reports, we hope to provide further insight into the importance of accessibility and inclusion for students with disabilities and to expand our discussion of the ways we help them achieve success. Areas of focus being considered include:

- Students with intersecting marginalized identities (such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color [BIPOC] and disability, LGBTQ+ and disability) and the ways in which that impacts office service models;
- Creative ways to partner with students and other services on campus to address anxiety and other mental health issues that are contributing to single room and other housing accommodation requests;
- More detail on the supports some disability services offices provide disabled students, in addition to accommodations, such as support groups, disability cultural centers, student organizations, etc.; and
- Continued advocacy for the importance of staffing, with examples of the ways in which staffing levels are linked to student success, retention, and graduation.

We hope this annual report will continue to inform discussions between disability services professionals and administrators, at both the campus and System levels, as they assess the services currently being provided to students with disabilities and consider what additional resources might allow them to better meet existing needs. Doing so will not only help campuses remain compliant with disability laws and regulations but, more importantly, will be a great investment in both academic and personal success for this important demographic of students.

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## Appendix 1: Students with Disabilities by Campus, Five-Year Trends

Institution	Total Students					
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	% Change
Madison	2,220	2,622	2,932	3,667	4,524	104%
Milwaukee	627	971	1,230	1,372	1,370	119%
Eau Claire	576	662	664	806	730	27%
Green Bay	300	323	344	336	384	28%
La Crosse	644	721	748	732	871	35%
Oshkosh <sup>1</sup>	491	517	225	357	842	71%
Parkside	256	368	309	309	385	50%
Platteville	377	409	423	445	480	27%
River Falls	362	402	434	462	555	53%
Stevens Point	638	756	730	673	804	26%
Stout	564	682	616	657	745	32%
Superior	176	131	159	140	149	-15%
Whitewater	1,069	1,134	1,201	1,270	1,256	17%
UW Colleges <sup>2</sup>	437	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,737</b>	<b>9,698</b>	<b>10,015</b>	<b>11,226</b>	<b>13,095</b>	<b>50%</b>

<sup>1</sup>For UW Oshkosh, total students reported from 2017-18 to 2020-21 were from the Accessibility Center only. Beginning in 2021-22, totals also include students served by Project Success.

<sup>2</sup>UW Colleges totals subsumed into associated four-year campuses beginning 2018-19.

## Appendix 2: Disability Categories by Campus, 2021-22

All Disabilities											
Institution	ADD/ ADHD	Autism	Brain Injury	Health Condition	Hearing	Learning	Mobility	Psychological	Temporary	Visual	Other
Madison	1,574	108	166	1,427	118	693	193	3,885	314	108	91
Milwaukee	601	87	45	364	57	221	73	1,017	9	47	50
Eau Claire	251	36	19	141	27	100	14	276	10	13	7
Green Bay	165	27	25	96	16	93	22	220	0	19	22
La Crosse	285	17	43	358	21	138	65	576	43	19	26
Oshkosh	193	30	15	189	10	305	56	285	9	9	23
Parkside	79	17	5	102	0	55	5	87	54	0	27
Platteville	212	42	13	186	18	130	21	275	6	18	0
River Falls	181	47	14	179	8	160	26	465	12	17	0
Stevens Point	245	41	19	199	33	141	20	422	75	13	0
Stout	274	61	15	122	14	167	22	271	8	9	2
Superior	50	11	13	20	6	36	9	80	10	7	4
Whitewater	421	133	24	311	46	274	61	460	13	29	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,531</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>3,694</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>8,319</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>37.4%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

### Appendix 3: Primary Disability Categories, Five-Year Trends

Primary Disability	Total Students					Total Change	Percent Change
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22		
ADD/ADHD	2,102	2,278	2,335	2,497	3,268	1,166	55%
Autism Spectrum	358	442	448	455	549	191	53%
Brain Injury	242	259	219	229	271	29	12%
Health Condition	1,237	1,560	1,606	1,721	2,021	784	63%
Hearing	223	247	254	282	255	32	14%
Learning	1,321	1,429	1,348	1,324	1,682	361	27%
Mobility	298	308	284	280	342	44	15%
Psychological	2,436	3,034	3,138	3,327	4,173	1,737	71%
Temporary	149	159	189	353	422	273	183%
Visual	153	164	158	150	172	19	12%
Other	293	255	102	116	134	-159	-54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,812</b>	<b>10,135</b>	<b>10,081</b>	<b>10,734</b>	<b>13,289</b>	<b>4,477</b>	<b>51%</b>

## Appendix 4: Accommodation Data by Campus, 2021-22

Institution	Total Students by Accommodation Type													
	Testing	Note-taking	Flex Attend/ Due Dates	Alt. Formats	Housing	Temp.	COVID	Support Animals (ESAs)	Media Captions	Class Furniture	Meal/Diet	Speech to Text	Transportation	Sign Lang. Interp.
Madison	3,445	1,437	1,505	805	464	0	7	105	77	114	0	43	0	5
Milwaukee	1,162	559	422	358	120	0	0	49	46	21	0	25	0	16
Eau Claire	417	248	109	154	54	10	29	50	21	1	3	0	8	1
Green Bay	342	168	126	37	29	1	2	16	9	1	0	1	0	0
La Crosse	413	221	4	120	61	12	1	21	6	1	16	0	5	1
Oshkosh	1,057	351	156	158	35	0	0	16	0	18	3	1	15	2
Parkside	243	47	113	20	16	54	1	11	0	2	0	0	0	0
Platteville	403	311	60	140	118	8	6	32	5	15	0	1	3	0
River Falls	422	230	295	159	58	11	6	65	5	6	0	4	20	0
Stevens Point	668	300	264	185	0	72	14	39	24	8	0	9	5	0
Stout	557	255	15	115	83	0	0	18	8	0	1	1	0	3
Superior	113	41	21	22	18	52	0	28	5	0	0	1	0	1
Whitewater	962	824	168	405	223	10	19	50	47	36	38	10	14	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,204</b>	<b>4,992</b>	<b>3,258</b>	<b>2,678</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>40</b>

## Appendix 5: Enrollment and Staffing Data by Campus, 2021-22

Institution	Enrollment	Percentage of Students with Registered Disabilities	Total Staff FTE	Access Coordinator FTE <sup>1</sup>	Average Caseload <sup>2</sup>
Madison	47,824	9.5%	27.0	10.4	435
Milwaukee	24,019	5.7%	16.0	3.3	422
Eau Claire	10,559	6.9%	3.5	1.7	442
Green Bay	9,799	3.9%	3.0	1.6	240
La Crosse	10,330	8.4%	5.6	2.4	357
Oshkosh	8,708	9.7%	7.5	3.0	281
Parkside	4,143	9.3%	2.0	1.0	385
Platteville	6,777	7.1%	5.0	2.5	192
River Falls	5,410	10.3%	1.8	1.0	555
Stevens Point	8,206	9.8%	4.5	1.5	536
Stout	7,692	9.7%	4.8	2.0	373
Superior	2,609	5.7%	0.4	0.4	373
Whitewater	11,460	11.0%	13.0	4.5	279
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,536</b>		<b>94.0</b>	<b>35.2</b>	
<b>System Average</b>		<b>8.3%</b>			<b>372</b>

<sup>1</sup>Amount of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff devoted to access coordinator duties

<sup>2</sup>Students with disabilities served/Access coordinator FTE