

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

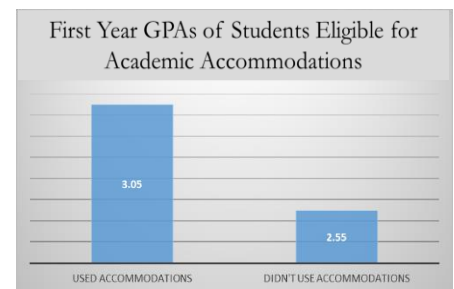
Spring, 2019

Memo to the Faculty from Marni Jones, Dean and Director of Access and Disability Services (ADS)
and SOAR: Strategies, Organization, and Achievement Resources

I have been asked to share information about the growing number of students who have disclosed a disability, the goals that ADS has established, and the contributions we've made toward being a more inclusive campus. The following includes: (1) a preview of my presentation, (2) a special message from an alumna, (3) ADS data, and (4) a draft of some of the slides I'll be showing, if you'd like to take them in before the faculty meeting.

I. WHY IS AWARENESS REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IMPORTANT?

- **We are all required by law** (under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) **to provide** students with disabilities **reasonable accommodations** that ensure equitable access to programs, services, and facilities on a non-discriminatory basis.
- **Nearly 20% of students have disclosed a disability**, and nearly 15% have academic accommodations. (*Our growing trend of increased disclosures is in line with what peer schools like us are seeing.*)
- Traditionally, students with disabilities have shown a **reluctance to disclose**, preferring not to self-identify as "disabled."
- Collaborative research with IE revealed that when students who are eligible for accommodations *use them*, they earn significantly higher GPAs.



II. WHAT GOALS HAS ADS ESTABLISHED? (Ordered as addressed here)

1. Raise awareness regarding students with disabilities and promote inclusive practices
2. Remove disability documentation and other barriers for students with high financial needs
3. Increase the percentage of students that had accommodations in high school who disclose their disability to ADS before or during their first semester
4. Address increasing demands for test proctoring
5. Increase the percentage of students who arrange their accommodations early in the semester

The enclosed data and my presentation will convey answers to the following questions:

HOW have we fared in addressing these goals?

HOW MANY students have disclosed to ADS (and when)?

HOW EARLY are students with academic accommodations setting them up?

HOW does ADS aim to improve the process for everyone?

III. WHERE CAN FACULTY FIND ADS-RELATED RESOURCES?

Go to www.dickinson.edu/ADS-faculty to find such treasures as:

- Current Syllabus Statement on "Accommodating Students with Disabilities" (new in SP19)
- Tips on creating inclusive syllabi and implementing Universal Design
- Accommodation guidance related to tests, note-taking, and more
- FAQs, such as "**WHEN** can a student request an accommodation (is the day before a test okay)?"
- And (this month) a chance to sign up for a session on [How to Accommodate Concussed Students](#)

A TESTIMONIAL FROM JANEL PINEDA

At the suggestion of students, as well as members of the Advisory Council for Access and Disability Services, I've been collecting testimonials from students with the following ultimate goals:

1. **Raise awareness** of the many smart and talented “barrier hurlers” among us;
2. **Help demystify** the experiences of students with disabilities for faculty, staff, and students; and
3. **Encourage students** who have disabilities and may need accommodations (but who are afraid to disclose) **to contact ADS.**

I intend to create new section on our website where I can post this story and others like it:



My name is Janel Pineda. I'm an alumna and Posse Scholar from Los Angeles. While at Dickinson, I studied English and Creative Writing, led the Exiled Poetry Society, facilitated the Latina Discussion Group, worked in the Writing Center, and served as editor-in-chief of The Dickinson Review. I studied abroad in Brazil and Chile, and spent my junior year at the University of Oxford. Last year, I became the first Dickinsonian to earn a prestigious Marshall Scholarship since 1974, and I have a disability.

I have anxiety and panic attacks and that means it's often difficult to manage stress and heavy workloads, while making sure my symptoms are kept at bay. Sometimes, my anxiety becomes so debilitating that I'm unable to concentrate, motivate myself, or continue completing daily tasks and responsibilities. Panic attacks can be unpredictable and take a heavy toll on my health, making it harder for me to recover and get back on track.

Because of this, I received academic accommodations. Without accommodations, I know there's no way I would have been able to be half as successful and engaged as I was in my time at Dickinson. Accommodations gave me the support I needed in order to prioritize my well-being and take care of my health, while working with my professors to determine the best academic plan to ensure I could still attain a great education. Using this resource taught me to self-advocate and strengthen my communication skills with my professors; this ultimately resulted in a positive educational experience in which I felt supported and valued as a student.

If you have (or think you may have) a disability, I highly recommend reaching out to Access and Disability Services to discuss potential options for support on campus. As a Latina growing up in an immigrant household, discussing mental health care was often stigmatized or avoided altogether. Culturally, the expectation that I needed to “do it all on my own” made it hard to ask for help, but working with the Access and Disability Services office helped me realize why accommodations matter.

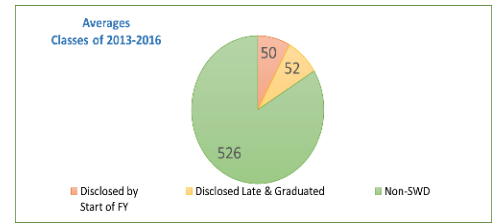
The guilt and shame I felt about asking for help in order to receive accommodations is a trend I've noticed particularly among many students of color. To you, I say: I see you, I validate you, and I want you to have the best academic experience possible at Dickinson—if you believe you might need support from Access and Disability Services, I encourage you to take the first step today by reaching out to their office. There is no shame in having a disability or receiving accommodations; rather, accommodations are one way to help ensure there is a structure in place to support you if and when you may need it.

DATA ON DICKINSON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

OVERVIEW

From 2012-2016, the percent of students disclosing a disability and requesting accommodations was relatively consistent at around 15%.

But in 2016, we made several discoveries. We found that, on average, about 10% of students in an incoming class were disclosing a disability (around 50 students), but by graduation, that rose to about 20% of the class (around 100 students). **Many students who had been diagnosed with disabilities in high school were opting not to reveal that status.**



We also discovered that students who were eligible for accommodations and used them had an average GPA that was 0.5 higher than those who didn't. We realize that we had a "reluctance to disclose" problem and established goals to increase the percentage of students with disabilities who disclose before or by the end of their first semester. We collaborated with campus partners to:

- Post the disability disclosure and accommodation request deadline first among all FY due dates
- Include information about ADS in the Orientation FAQs
- Offer open hours at ADS for accepted students and an info session for parents
- Have college deans and FY mentors direct students with disabilities to ADS

We also facilitated access to psychoeducational evaluations for students of high financial needs who were referred by faculty for disability testing. This resulted in 17 new disability disclosures since 2016.

INCREASED RATES OF DISCLOSURES

The following charts show the results of our successful efforts to promote early disclosures:

FY SWD (Student with Disability) DISCLOSURES	FALL 2016		FALL 2017		FALL 2018	
	#	% of 610 in the class	#	% of 609 in the class	#	% of 635 in the class
All FY SWDs who disclosed over the summer	57	9.3%	69	11.3%	85	13.4%
All FY SWDs who disclosed during the Fall Semester	6	1%	29	4.7%	50	8%
Total FY disclosures btw the end of the Spring and End of Fall Sem.	63	10.3%	98	16%	135	21.3%

As you can see, over the past three years, the number of FY students who disclosed before their start at Dickinson rose from 57 to 85, and those who disclosed by the end of their first semester **rose from 63 to 135 students (or from 10% to 21% of the class)**. The following chart shows FYs + upperclass data:

ALL SWD DISCLOSURES	FALL 2016		FALL 2017		FALL 2018	
	#	% of 2370 Dickinsonians	#	% of 2339 Dickinsonians	#	% of 2353 Dickinsonians
All SWDs who disclosed over the summer	57	2%	78	3%	104	4.4%
All SWDs who disclosed during the Fall Semester	27	1%	71	3%	107	4.5%
Total disclosures btw the end of the Spring and End of Fall Semester	84	3%	149	6.3%	211	9%
Total eligible for Academic Accommodations	278	12%	309	13%	345	14.7%
Total disclosures to ADS	357	15%	395	17%	468	20%

Fall disability disclosures more than tripled from FA16 to FA18, rising from 27 to 107. By the end of FA18, **20% of the student body** had disclosed a disability and requested accommodations through ADS.

CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES DISCLOSED

Types of Disabilities	FA18
AD/HD Only	48
AD/HD along with another diagnosis	188
Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Non-Verbal LD, or PDD	15
Learning Disability or other Communication Disorder	158
Medical Condition or Physical Disability	148
Mental Health / Psychological Disorder	169

Note that it is not uncommon for students with disabilities to have comorbid diagnoses. The most common diagnostic profile for a student receiving academic accommodations is an individual with a learning disability who also has a mental health and/or ADHD diagnosis, followed by those who also have a chronic medical condition.

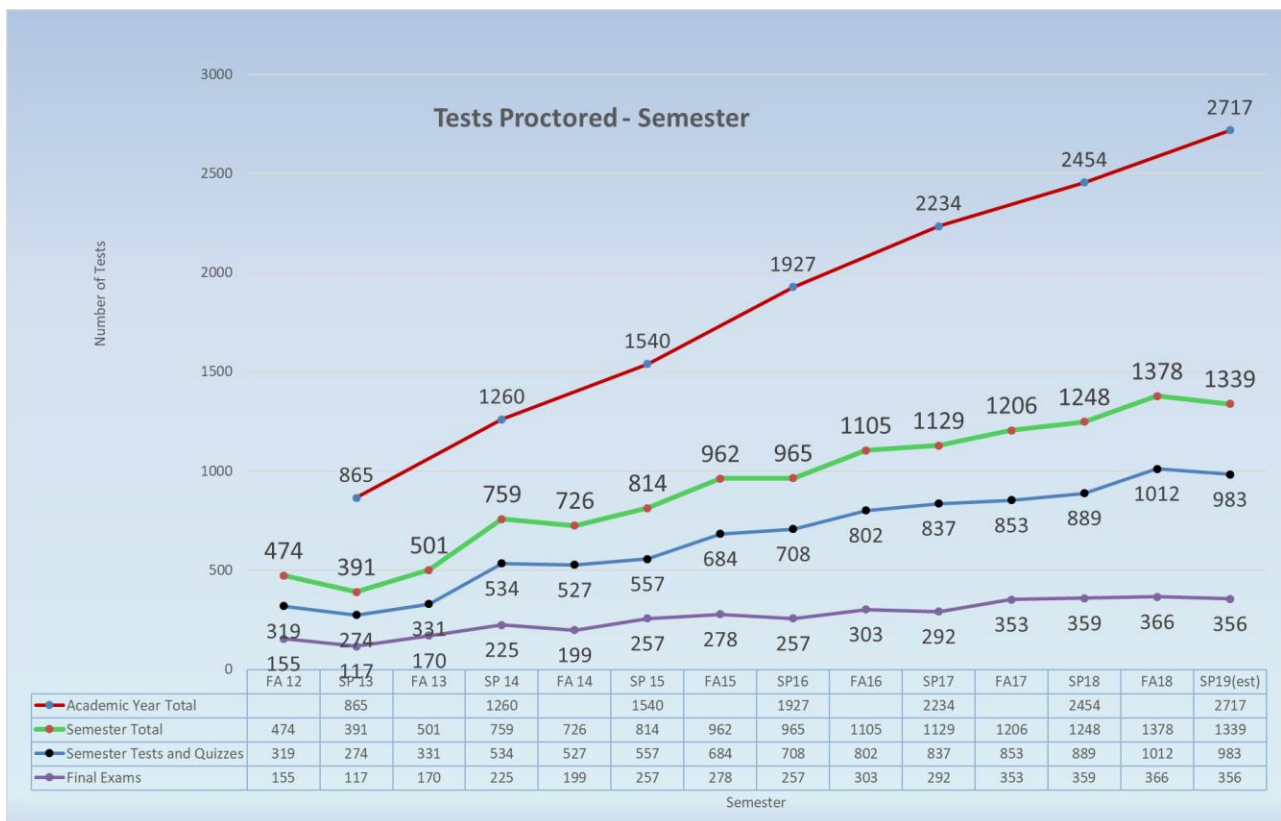
TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS GRANTED

Categories of Students with Disabilities (SWDs)	FA18
SWDs Eligible for Academic Accommodations	345
% of Dickinsonians Eligible for Academic Accommodations	15%
SWDs On Campus Who Didn't Use These Accommodations	50
SWDs Studying Off Campus	40
SWDs with Dietary Accommodations	33
SWDs with Housing Accommodations	149*
Notifications Received Regarding Concussions (23) and other Injuries/Surgeries (impacting mobility or the ability to write)	32
Total ADS Disclosures	468

Types of Academic Accommodations (Students on campus only)	FA18
Extended time for exams/quizzes (236 with time-and-a-half; 24 double time)	260
Testing in a distraction-reduced setting (25 in a private space)	196
Eligible to have note-takers, or to use a smart pen to record classes while taking notes	191
Books and texts in digital format (so they can be converted to audio)	103
Use of a computer for essay tests	84
Faculty notification of a medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, sleep apnea, frequent bathroom needs)	22

*Housing accommodation requests rose dramatically once all students were required to live on campus.

STEADY RISE IN THE VOLUME OF EXAMS PROCTORED BY ADS



EXAM PROCTORING, CONT.

Test proctoring demands have risen each year since 2012. **ADS proctored 1,378 exams in FA18**, and the number of **exams proctored annually has more than tripled** in the past 5 years – from 865 to a projected 2717, and from 117 final exams to 356 this semester (a number that will likely rise). ADS has relocated, and **we're very pleased with our new space and new Proctoring Center**, located in Old West's Lower Level (aka "the OWLL"). Using dividers and cameras, we've had sufficient space in the OWLL to meet all test proctoring needs on most days this semester. Given the trendline, however, ADS is actively working to address how best to manage those occurrences when the number of seats needed will surpass our Proctoring Center's capacity.

RESULTS OF ADS' EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SET UP THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS EARLY IN THE SEMESTER

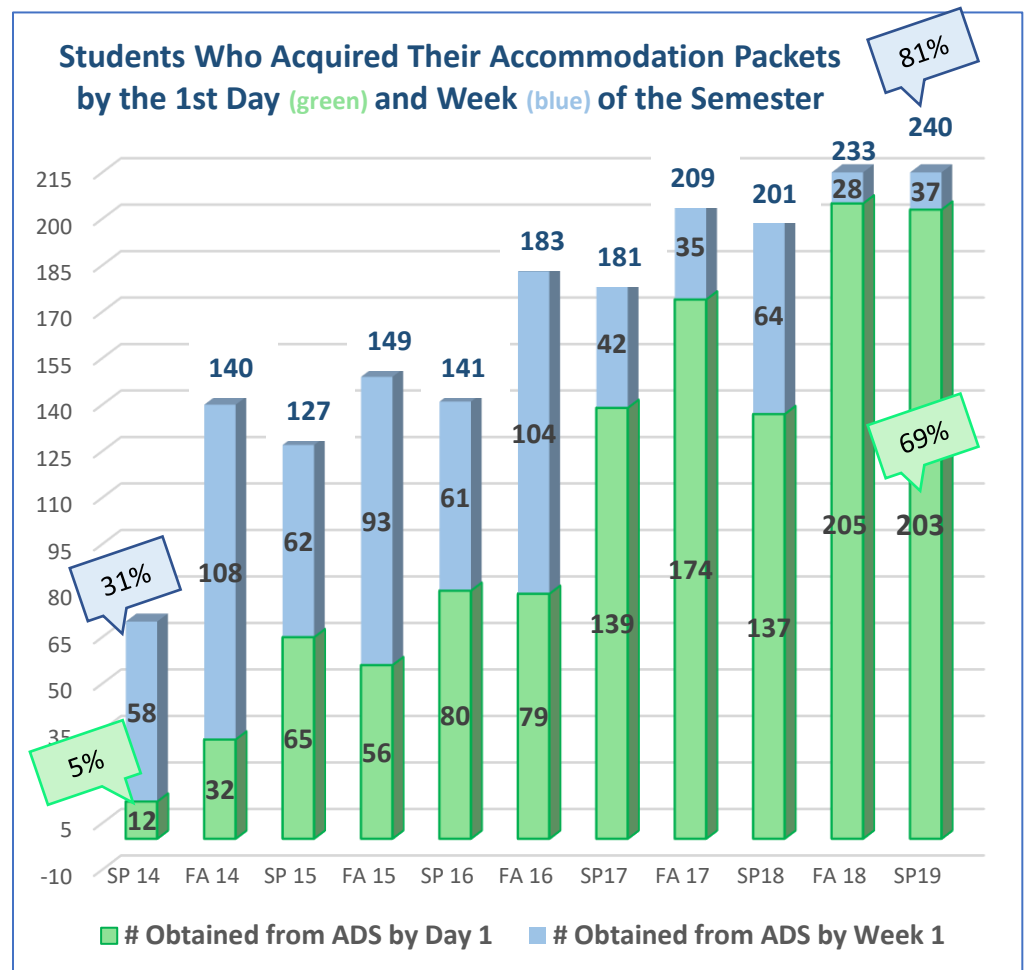
Disability law requires that eligible students have reasonable and timely access to implementing their accommodations, so ADS made several protocol changes over the years to meet this important objective.

Starting in SP17 we embarked on a campaign called "Get It Done on Day One" to entice students to pick up their accommodation packets (letters and forms) on the first day of classes. In FA18, we began the process the Sunday before classes, further increasing participation.

This chart shows the progress we've made since SP14 when only 5% of students had their packets by "Day One." By SP19 that rose to 69%, and **by the end of the first week, 81% of eligible students had their forms and accommodation letters** to take to their professors, thus achieving our goal of increasing "early packet pick-up."

The final steps in the process are for students to meet with their professors to formalize their accommodations on Blue Forms, schedule any needed proctoring, and return their Forms to ADS.

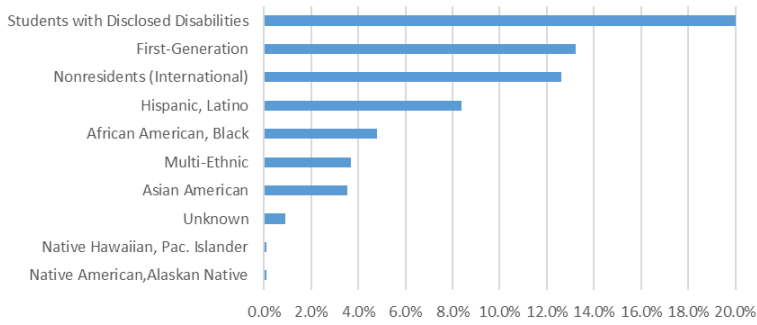
Although **500 Blue Forms were returned by the end of week 2 in FA18**, that only represented 50% of those distributed.



This prompted an important question: Is there a better way to have students and faculty document accommodations and proctoring needed than through Blue Forms? ADS will explore this by beta testing a paperless "Access Plan" where students would convey their accommodation needs directly to their professors through CLIQ, meet to discuss them, and have their accommodations (and any proctoring needed) acknowledged by the faculty with the click of a mouse -- instantaneously notifying ADS. We hope to pilot this new system with the intent of improving the process for all concerned. If you'd like to be one of our Access Plan beta testers (and you haven't already let us know), please do. Stay tuned!

PRESENTATION SLIDES

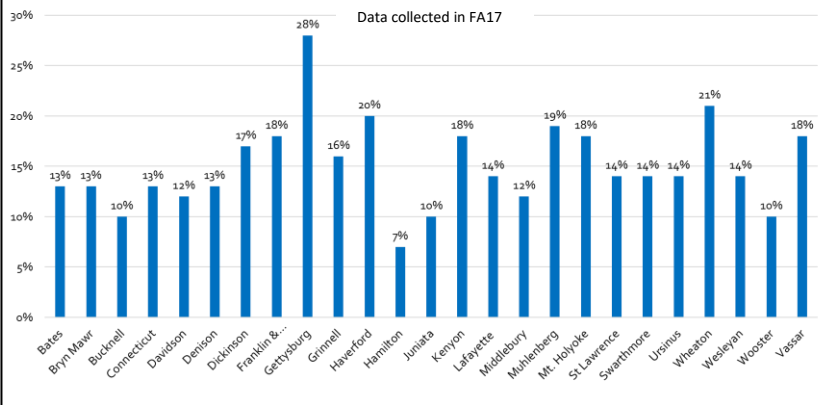
(Known) Minority Populations at Dickinson



25 SURVEY RESPONDANTS



Percentage of Students Who Have Disclosed a Disability



PEER SCHOOLS' DS OFFICES:



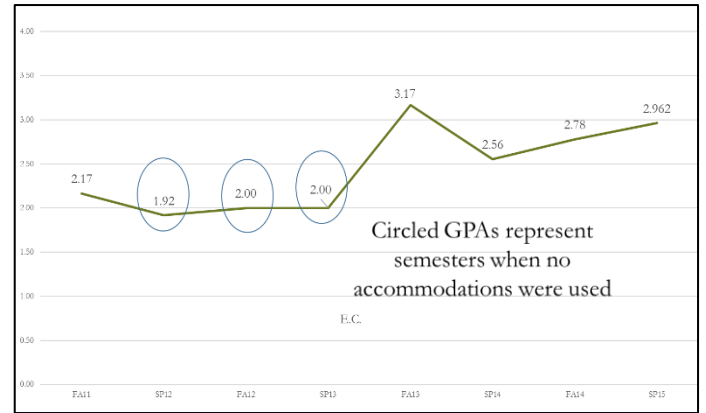
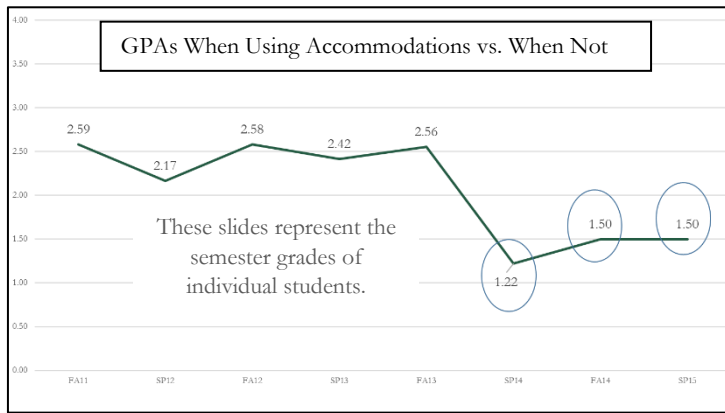
Across the board increases in the # of students disclosing and requesting accommodations

Why are we and other schools seeing increases in disclosures?

- Increased identification at the K-12 level
- More students being guided to disclose at the post-secondary level
- More accommodating faculty and/or better services, which prompts students who use them to encourage their impaired peers to do so
- More "normalizing" of having a disability and accommodations
- The more who disclose, the more who may share with others that they have, compelling others to do the same.

Not Every DS Office Does All That We Do

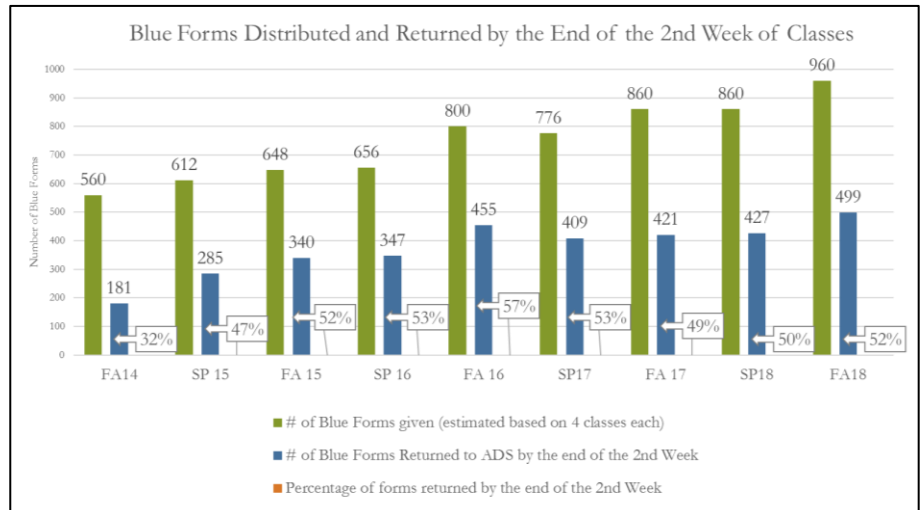
- **Handles no dietary accommodations:**
Bates, Bryn Mawr, Connecticut, Denison, Haverford, Hamilton, Juniata, Gettysburg, Middlebury, Washington and Jefferson, Wheaton
- **Handles few or no housing accommodations:**
Juniata, Ursinus, Washington and Jefferson (Mostly AC: Haverford, Gettysburg)
- **Doesn't facilitate the electronic sharing of notes**
G-burg, Hamilton, Juniata, Kenyon, St. Lawrence, Swarthmore, Wesleyan, Wooster
- **Has no Proctoring Center/ Handles few or no testing accommodations:**
Bryn Mawr, Connecticut, Davidson, Haverford, Hamilton, Gettysburg, Lafayette Middlebury, Mt. Holyoke, Swarthmore, Ursinus, Wheaton, Wesleyan, Wooster



The USE of BLUE FORMS Question

Students with Test-Taking Accommodations: Complete the chart below

Class Meeting Time	Test Date	Test Day	Scheduled Test Start Time for the Class	Time Allotted for students without accommodations	Time Allotted for this student (use conversion chart below)	Extended Test End Time	Does this conflict with another class?	If yes, range of times when you could take the exam
	10/23	Tues	10:30	20 min			Yes	8:30-10:30 2/1hr 12
				30 min				
				40 min				
				50 min				
				1hr				



NEW ACCESS PLAN: Mollie's sample student disclosure to each professor indicating which accommodations will be needed for that class

Note: ADS received permission from Mollie Montague and Sarah Niebler to use these

POSC 290-03 (MR)
Polarization in American Politics
Sarah Niebler

Max of one final exam per day	Will Use
Use of a calculator	Will Not Use
Test question clarification	Unsure of Need
Computer for essay tests	Will Use
Distraction reduced testing	Will Use
Extended time for tests (1.5X)	Will Use
Leniency re spelling + grammar	Will Use

[EDIT ACCESS PLAN](#) [PROCTORING SETUP](#)

Course accommodations have been disclosed to faculty

Mollie Montague
900830360
Polarization in American Politics
POSC 290 - 03

✓ All accommodations have been acknowledged.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Max of one final exam per day (MR)	Will Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of a calculator (MR)	Will Not Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test question clarification (MR)	Unsure of Need
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Computer for essay tests (MR)	Will Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distraction reduced testing (MR)	Will Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended time for tests (1.5X) (MR)	Will Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leniency re spelling + grammar (MR)	Will Use

Sample faculty acknowledgement