A resolution of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) calling for a culture of support for Students with Disabilities at Duke

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Whereas, 11-19% of college students in the US have disabilities but only 6.5% of students at Duke have registered with the SDAO, indicating a discrepancy between students who have disabilities and students with disabilities who have registered with the SDAO [i]

Whereas, numerous Chronicle articles have discussed the difficulties students with disabilities face at Duke.[ii]

Recognizing, some students are not aware of SDAO's existence, as well as the resources they provide.[ii]

Recognizing, faculty have been known to dismiss the validity of needing accommodations, even though accommodations are a measure of ensuring equity for students with disabilities.[ii]

Recognizing, the culture at Duke must change so that students, programs, departments, schools, and the university view academic accommodations as a method of ensuring equity and inclusivity.[ii]

Now, therefore be it resolved by the GPSG that the graduate and professional student body of Duke University:

To empower the SDAO:

Supports the Student Disability Access Office's effort to rename themselves the Student Accessibility Service, and their commensurate refocusing on *Accessibility* instead of *Disability.*

Calls for the inclusion of SDAO programming during general graduate and professional student orientations and all departmental and programmatic orientations.

Calls for the SDAO to be empowered to work with faculty, advisors, DGSs, DGSAs, and any other relevant stakeholders to design and implement individualized curricular changes to ensure all students with disabilities are treated equitably, inclusively, and honorably.

To build a culture of support for students with disabilities:

Supports the normalization of disability, and students with disabilities, within all graduate and professional programs.

Calls for mandatory training for all faculty advisors, DGSs, DGSAs, and departmental staff on how to properly advise and support students with disabilities.

Calls, for the SDAO, programs, departments, schools, and the university to unequivocally maintain the confidentiality, and right to confidentiality, of students with disabilities.

Calls, for the SDAO, programs, departments, schools, and the university to stop pressuring students with disabilities into revealing their confidential health information in order to get the academic accommodations they need.

Calls, for the SDAO, programs, departments, schools, and the university to be required to implement all academic accommodations requested by students' medical providers.

Calls for all students with disabilities to be provided, at no additional cost to themselves, with a professional, third-party whistleblowing service to address any accessibility and accommodation related concerns they may have.

To conduct reviews towards building a culture of support for students with disabilities:

Calls for all program, department, school, and university reviews, committees, and task forces related to efforts for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Duke to specifically include the voices of students, faculty, and/or staff with disabilities and/or their advocates.

Calls for the publication of the dropout/expulsion rates of graduate students with disabilities, relative to their peers, over at least the past 20 years, in all programs, departments, and schools.

Calls for a professional, third-party review of all department, school, and university-level policies which may harm, deter, and/or target students with disabilities and appropriate department, school, and university-level response to the findings.

i https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60; https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2021/04/duke-university-student-disability-resources-access
ii https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2019/12/duke-university-college-accesibility-disability-justice-rights-equity-deaf-duke-do-you-hear-me-accessibility-for-the-deaf; https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2019/10/duke-university-scooter-transport-e-scooters-the-adas-worst-nightmare; https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2018/12/duke-university-learning-accommodations-culture