

## Success with ACCESS: A Student-Led Initiative

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32<sup>nd</sup> Conference of AHEAD  
July 24, 2009

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### Overview

- Context for implementing ACCESS and involving students as project leaders
- Strategies utilized to enhance survey response rate
- Lessons learned from a community-based research perspective

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### Context of ACCESS Implementation

- Skidmore College: Private, small liberal arts institution in upstate New York
- New Disabilities Coordinator and gift from alum's family
- Course offering: Social Work 324 – Research in the Community
- Serendipity!

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Community-Based Research (CBR), Engaged Pedagogy, and ACCESS Implementation

- CBR
  - Research process and products as vehicles to promote positive social change
  - Members of the target community are trained in CBR methods and become equal members of the research team
- Use of bel hooks' engaged pedagogy
- ACCESS as a vehicle to increase awareness regarding disability issues and promote change

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Student Team

- Multidisciplinary
- Two students with disabilities, two students without
- Issues with leadership and role definition

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Student-Initiated Implementation Strategies

- Development of flyer and post card
- Individual discussions with campus leaders of four constituencies
- Announcement at campus faculty meeting
- Announcement on SkidmoreUnofficial.com (student-ran blog)
- Computer kiosks
- Word of mouth
- Use of incentives (hot beverage for all!)

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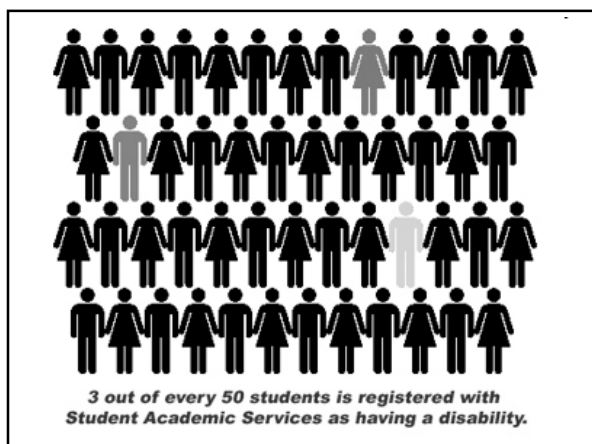
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### Response Rates

- Faculty:  $123/316 = 39\%$
- Staff/Admin:  $151/595 = 26\%$
- Students with Disabilities:  
 $83/185 = 45\%$
- Students without Disabilities:  
 $485/2128 = 23\%$
- Total Participants:  $842/3224 = 26\%$

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### Outcomes of Project

- Presentation made to Dean of Students staff (approximately 75 people)
- Development of Executive Summary
- Manuscript co-authored with students to be submitted to *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*
- Momentum gained to address disability issues in-depth during next academic year

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### Recommendations Students Made as a Result of Project

- Survey results indicate that Skidmore needs to develop a greater awareness of students with disabilities and the process of accommodation
- Data reveals a stronger relationship is needed between the faculty and the Office of Disability Services
- Advisory board comprised of students, faculty, administration and staff to further interpret this data

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### Lessons Learned from a CBR Perspective

- Need for consistent contact with research team
- Group dynamics
- Issues of evaluation and grading
- Response rate enhanced due to methodology

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### Conclusion

- ACCESS can be used not only to assess campus climate but can be a tool to promote awareness of disability issues
- Promotion of student empowerment
- Be mindful of team dynamics and importance of defining roles

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