

Disability Center Working Group Report

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Executive Summary

Disabled students, faculty and staff navigate institutions that perpetuate ableist policies, practices, and curriculums (Dolmage, 2017). This often leads to feelings of disconnection, marginalization, and a general lack of belonging (Evans et al., 2017). Disability scholars have highlighted the impact of promoting a disability-positive campus culture and including disability in all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (Kulshan, 2023). Disability Identity/Cultural Centers have been emerging in higher education spaces all over the country, with the first center established in 1991 at the University of Minnesota, Twin Hills (Appendix G). Today, 31 universities have either an established center or have centers in development. Much like other identity and cultural centers, Disability Identity/Cultural Centers have been serving as a central hub to engage in work outside of 504/ADA compliance, and promoting disabled community connections, resource sharing, and education about disability (Chiang, 2019; Landin, 2022). Since 2018, there have been several grassroots efforts at University of Massachusetts, led by the Disability+ Community¹, to demonstrate the need and establish the precedence for a Disability Identity/Cultural Center. In response to these efforts, in February of 2024, Dr. Cheryl Ponder, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advocacy, Inclusion and Support Programs, convened the Disability Center Working Group, a cross-campus initiative dedicated to better understanding how and in what form a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would be most beneficial at University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The following report reflects the work and findings of the Working Group, since March of 2024. The Working Group was charged with continuing the work and research done by the various disability grassroots organizations, further examining existing Disability Identity/Cultural Centers,

¹ Disability+ Community acknowledges the intersecting identities people have which mediate their experience of disability.

and engaging UMass students, staff, and faculty to understand how and in what form a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would be most beneficial at UMass. The report outlines the data collected from faculty, staff, and students through multiple modalities in addition to current literature created by disability scholars, internal reviews, and campus climate data. The report includes recommendations for a physical center, staffing and resources, and programming that will serve the campus community.

Students

In short, disabled students continue to feel marginalized and report feeling less connection and belonging on campus than their peers (Evans et al., 2017; Lombardi & Laylor, 2017; UMass Climate Survey, 2021). Disabled students are less likely to persist, leaving universities at higher rates than their non-disabled peers (Evans et al., 2017; O'Neill et al, 2012). Navigating often ableist procedures, policies and practices, disabled students face additional barriers that their non-disabled peers do not (Dolmage, 2017; Kulshan, 2023, Abes & Wallace, 2018; Pena, 2014). Often operating under a medical model of disability, campus environments focus on disability as a deficit, something in need of fixing (Doyle, 2021; Abes & Wallace, 2018). With compliance as the goal, for faculty, staff and students, post-secondary institutions view disability as something to be accommodated rather than something to be celebrated (Abes & Wallace, 2018). It is therefore not surprising that disabled students are less likely to report a sense of belonging, have lower academic and self-concepts, and experience additional hurdles than their nondisabled peers (Vaccaro et al., 2015, Adams & Proctor, 2010; Evans et al., 2017). In their most recent review at UMass, the Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) echoed the issues identified by disability scholars, noting that a Disability Identity/Cultural Center could serve the campus as a hub for connecting students, staff, and faculty within the Disability+ Community (Appendix D).

A growing population on college campuses, disabled students would benefit from a Disability Identity/Cultural Center on campus.

Faculty & Staff

Like the disabled student population, disabled faculty and staff have a lower sense of belonging and connection than their nondisabled peers, reporting feelings of isolation and marginalization while navigating an environment where they encounter negative attitudes from colleagues (Campus Climate Survey, 2021). While UMass Accessible Workplace data indicates that several faculty and staff have requested workplace accommodations, a survey conducted by the Disability Center Working Group in Spring of 2024 indicated that only 13 percent of those surveyed who identified as disabled were comfortable disclosing a disability in the workplace (Appendix E). Many faculty and staff remain unaware of the support systems on campus. Disabled faculty and staff would benefit from a Disability Identity/Cultural Center. Such a center would aid in building connections with peers in the Disability+ Community, increasing their senses of belonging. For employees interacting with students, a center would also provide an opportunity for increased training and education around inclusive teaching practices—something faculty have indicated a desire for, and which would serve to improve the learning environment for all students (Bettencourt et al., 2018; De Los Santos et al., 2019; Gibbons et al., 2015).

Benefits of a Disability Identity/ Cultural Center at UMass

Conceptualization of disability across college campuses has significantly shifted since the passing of the ADA. There are growing numbers of students, staff, and faculty within the Disability+ Community who locate disability beyond compliance-driven frameworks. The creation of a center would first signal to the community at large that UMass prioritizes disability

as an identity to be celebrated and better understood on our campus. Currently, UMass is not resourced and structured in a way that allows for adequate outreach, education, and training. As the most intersectional identity, the trainings and workshops provided by a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would be relevant to our entire campus. The presence of a center, through training and education, can raise disability awareness around best practices in the workplace and classroom. It can also serve to destigmatize disability, which for many staff, faculty, and students, is a barrier for disability disclosure, requesting accommodations, and cultivating community connection, inclusion and belonging. Recent campus assessments indicate that disability correlates with significant disparities in inclusion and belonging, which speaks directly to the need for a Disability Identity/Cultural Center that is intentionally and openly dedicated to serving the entire campus community: our staff, faculty, and students. Furthermore, a Disability Identity/Cultural Center can support greater community connection, promote positive disability identity development, provide physical space for belonging, connections to support resources, and fun and social activities that build community. The very presence of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center signals the University's priorities and affirms institutional commitment to supporting access and inclusion for the Disability+ Community.

Programing & Services

Overwhelmingly, students, staff and faculty expressed the need for more programming in the form of campus education and training about disability (Appendix E). Reasons included a desire for language and etiquette training around how to be more respectful and inclusive of disability, assistance for instructors around disability accommodations and inclusion for students in their classes, and a desire for supervisors and instructors to learn more about ways in which they can implement approaches and practices beyond ADA compliance to recognize disability as part

of DEI initiatives. Survey and listening group session findings also highlighted a desire for support with navigating systems within the University and career/workplace development support. More specifically, students, staff, and faculty indicated they wanted more dedicated support in understanding how the accommodation process works, navigating disability disclosure, developing skills on how to effectively advocate for workplace accommodations, help with strategies for managing disability in the workplace, and having a centralized hub with information and resources to help increase access and address ableism in the work/classroom environment. Students indicated they are seeking career development support to navigate entering the disability advocacy career field, as there is currently a gap in guidance for these career opportunities within academic departments. Other findings from data collection indicated a desire for services including mentoring/mentorship opportunities (both peer-to-peer and faculty/staff-to-student) to connect with members of the Disability+ Community, and for programming events such as guest speakers, book clubs, and movies screenings to address ableism, destigmatize disability, and celebrate disability as diversity to help foster a sense of pride and connection. Finally, an important consideration identified through the surveys and group sessions is the need for Disability+ Community for the Disability Identity/Cultural Center's programming and services to incorporate inclusive, hybrid events where folks had the option to attend/participate either remotely or in person.

Recommendations for Physical Features, Staffing and Funding

Respondents, including faculty and staff, emphasized preferences for the center's location to be on or near the ground level of a building, close to an entryway or elevator, and in proximity to accessible bathrooms. They highlighted the need for the space to facilitate both community-building and private consultations. Faculty and staff suggested creating versatile community areas

suitable for formal and informal interactions, equipped with technology for remote participation. Many student, staff and faculty respondents echoed the sentiments of wanting the space to be conscious of individuals who are immunocompromised so they can fully participate in events either remotely, and to have HEPA filters and other necessary protective measures put in place for in-person visits. They also expressed interest in having amenities for testing the effectiveness of assistive tools and setups for personal use, and for supporting teaching/learning, holding movie screenings, a disability resource lending library, and communal dining areas with disability-friendly features. Across surveys and focus groups, there was consensus among students, faculty, and staff on the importance of storage for medication, equipment, and food supplies. They also expressed a desire for spaces designed for relaxation, featuring adjustable lighting, access to fresh air and natural light, and comfortable furniture conducive self-regulation to help mitigate physical symptoms such as flare ups. Qualitative data collected from the students, staff and faculty underscored the need for centralized resting spaces on campus to support the well-being of individuals with physical and mental disabilities.

Staffing recommendations underscore the Disability Identity/Cultural Center's role in serving the entire community and establishing local partnerships. Throughout data collection and analysis, a consistent theme emerged: faculty, staff, and students advocated for dedicated staffing, including a full-time director who openly identifies as disabled, full-time clerical support, and a grant writer to secure supplementary funding. Additionally, there was mention of the need for part-time graduate and undergraduate assistantships to provide peer support tailored to each user group of the center. Respondents also proposed hiring diverse staff with specialized knowledge in various disabilities, in recognition of the diverse, intersectional needs, experiences, and perspectives within

the Disability+ Community. This approach aims to foster the creation and implementation of holistically inclusive programs and events that best serve the Disability+ Community.

Timeline

A suggested timeline for creation and development could be as follows:

Fall 2024

- Announce the creation of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center.
- Establish a staff member who will be responsible for the development and oversight of the center.
- Begin development of position descriptions for a Director/Coordinator of the Center and Graduate Student Assistant.

Spring 2025

- Recruit for Director/Coordinator and Graduate Assistant.
- Begin to establish partnerships with campus colleagues and student organizations, brainstorming ways to work collaboratively.
- Conduct outreach to establish the types of trainings and education that would best serve the community.

Summer 2025

- Launch website and establish social media presence.
- Develop positions descriptions for student employees.
- Work on Fall Kick Off/Welcome Celebration

Fall 2025

- Center formally opens.
- Staffing recommendations: Director/Coordinator, 2 graduate assistants, one focused on students and one on faculty and staff, Cadre of student employees to staff center and welcome community members.

Spring 2025

- Develop position description and begin recruitment for an Assistant Director who will possess grant writing skills among other necessary skills and education.

Full Report

The following report created by the disability working group outlines in full detail the historical overview, benefits of a center, programming, and services the center could offer, intersectional considerations, and recommendations for programming and services, staffing, physical features, and timeline for implementation.

Brief Historical Overview

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst is host to several cultural and identity centers, including the Latinx American Cultural Center, Yuri Kochiyama Cultural Center, Malcom X Cultural Center, and Josephine White Eagle Cultural Center, Student Veterans Resource Center, Center for Women and Community, and the Stonewall Center, each aimed at creating a sense of belonging for diverse populations. Unlike the cultural and identity groups represented by the cultural centers, the Disability+ Community² currently lacks a community-oriented physical space that can offer resources, foster connection, and provide sensory relief and support. What follows is a brief history of events that culminated in this working group's formation.

In 2018, students began forming what is now known as the Disability Culture Club (a registered student organization (RSO)) while another group of students, faculty and staff laid the groundwork to for the grassroots group, the Alliance Against Ableism. The Alliance has since been the recipient of several Campus Climate Improvement grants to advocate for the formation of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center and has worked closely with the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Disability Services, and the UMass Allies for Illness and Disability Access (UMAIDA).

In 2019, Dr. Ezekiel Kimball, disability studies scholar and former faculty member in the Higher Education department at UMass, along with Jeff Edelstein, former PhD student in the

² Disability+ Community acknowledges the intersecting identities people have which mediate their experience of disability.

Higher Education department, surveyed Disability Services to collect data about the office's functions, identifying the need for increased capacity-building around disability identity and inclusion beyond compliance (Appendix 1).

In 2020, the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) was contracted to conduct a review (Appendix B) for UMass, led by Dr. Amanda Kraus, current president of AHEAD and scholar, who presented on inclusive disability practices. Between 2020 and 2021 the grassroots student-led group, Access UMass was formed as an avenue of demonstrating the desire to make UMass more accessible and inclusive for disabled community members; among several demands, Access UMass advocated for a Disability Identity/Cultural Center.

In 2022 another grassroots group the Karuth-Silver effort, spearheaded by Griffin Leisting, former UMass graduate student in the Public Policy department and Lecturer for the Disability Studies Certificate Program in the Psychological & Brain Sciences department, in attempt to establish a UMass Disability Identity/Cultural Center (Appendix 3).

Dr. Ponder began her tenure as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advocacy, Inclusion and Support Programs in May of 2022. In 2023, in response to the demands put forward by Access UMass, she along with Kerri Tillett, Associate Vice Chancellor for Equal Opportunity and Access and Ruth Yanka, Executive Director for Administration and Finance Operations commissioned a second AHEAD review in the fall of 2023 (Appendix 4). Among the top recommendations, the reviewers noted that "UMass Amherst executive leaders should continue to devote energies to elevating disability accessibility and inclusion campus-wide" and to "increase disability inclusion and belonging throughout campus," noting the lack of a disability cultural center (AHEAD Review, 2023, pp.5-6). Furthermore, they note that a Disability Identity/Cultural Center can "serve

as a hub for connections for disabled students, faculty and staff, increasing the sense of belonging and connectedness on campus” (p.31).

The Formation of the Disability Center Working Group & Charge

In February of 2024, Dr. Cheryl Ponder, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advocacy, Support and Inclusion Programs (AISP) began forming the Disability Center Working Group to formally begin the process of creating a Disability Identity/Cultural Center in some form at UMass, assigning Emmanuel Adero, Deputy Chief Officer for the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Rachel Adams, PhD candidate in the Higher Education department and Associate Director for Disability Services, and Kerri Jarzabski, PhD candidate in the Higher Education department and Graduate Assistant within Student Affairs to lead the working group. Dr. Ponder and the leadership team then identified cross-campus key stakeholders of students, staff, and faculty to serve on the center work group to carry out Dr. Ponder’s charge.

The charge for this working group was to continue the work/research done by the various different disability grassroots organizations, and further examine existing Disability Identity/Cultural Centers; engage UMass students, staff, and faculty to understand how and in what form a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would be most beneficial at UMass; and to provide recommendations to campus leadership and the Accessibility Advisory Council.

The Working Group was divided into sub-committees, where each group took on a specific data collection focus:

1. Existing Centers: gathering data on existing centers including already established centers at UMass as well as existing disability centers at other comparable institutions

2. Students: gathering and soliciting data from students via survey and listening sessions about how they would benefit from a center and reviewing relevant existing internal data.
3. Faculty and Staff: gathering via survey and listening session about how they would benefit from a center and reviewing relevant existing internal data.

Subcommittees met throughout March, April, and May to review and gather data providing recommendations in reports submitted to the leadership team on May 31, 2024. The following information and recommendations reflect the work of the subcommittees. Their full reports can be found in the Appendix.

Statement of the Problem

The most recent campus climate survey at UMass Amherst found that disabled students, staff, and faculty report some of the lowest levels of sense of belonging and connection. Students with disabilities also report they are less likely to have a good support network, and when disaggregated by disability type, students with mobility related disabilities report feeling the least sense of belonging, with 22% reporting “to no extent” regarding their sense of belonging or having a good support network. Compared to their nondisabled peers, where only 10% of students reported that they are feeling like they belong to no extent and only 14% reported not having a good support network, it is evident that disabled students are more likely to feel disconnected and fail to have someone to go to for support. In fact, disabled students are less comfortable than their non-disabled peers on college campuses, reporting hostile and exclusionary environments (Harbour & Greenberg, 2017; Evans et al., 2017).

Lack of support resources are another problematic issue for disabled students. Although Disability Services exist on university campuses such as UMass, they are often understaffed and

do not provide holistic resources to meet students' needs. In a survey conducted by the Disability Center Working Group in May of 2024, 217 undergraduate and graduate students responded to a series of questions. Of the respondents, 77% reported being registered with Disability Services. Respondents identified the need for more disability advocacy and support resources and indicated that resources for disabled students at UMass are inadequate (Appendix B). Finally, students encounter numerous ableist barriers—both physical and social—that impede their full participation in campus life. The social model of disability highlights how these barriers, rather than the individual's disability, are the primary source of inaccessibility. For example, 56% of surveyed students who were not registered with Disability Services indicated administrative issues to be the main barrier for registering.

It is important to note that nationally 19% of undergraduates report having a disability (The U.S. Department of Education the National Center on Education Statistic [Fast Facts: Students with disabilities \(60\) \(ed.gov\)](#)). Currently, there are 4,566 students actively registered³ with Disability Services. College Consensus (2023) reports that only one out of 20 students actually disclose their disability status in college for fear of being ostracized” (n.p.). This was reflected in survey data as well where nearly a quarter of students who identified as disabled were not registered with Disability Services. There are several key issues identified: 1) lack of connection and community, 2) lack of support resources, and 3) ableist barriers, all which impact overall experience and even can impact retention rates (Belch, 2005; Getzel, 2008; Landin, 2022).

A growing population, disabled students at UMass report not feeling connected to a Disability+ Community on campus. Despite the presence of several cultural and identity centers at the UMass, there is a notable absence of a dedicated space and support for the disabled

³ Students who are actively registered are those who have interfaced with the Disability Services Office within the past two years while enrolled at the university.

community, which contributes to disabled students' feelings of isolation and marginalization: this impacts their overall experience. Historically, the existing cultural and identity centers at UMass were created as a result of student activism and advocacy generated by a lack of inclusion and belonging on our campus, incidents of discrimination and bias, and a lack of diversity in the recruitment and retention of students of color (UMass Plural Histories of Cultural Centers Project, 2024). A Disability Identity/Cultural Center is an opportunity for UMass Amherst to be a leader among our peers and be a destination for disabled students and those studying disability. The AHEAD (2023) report on the UMass Amherst campus states,

Students indicated that many other marginalized communities are celebrated on campus while disability is seen as a burden. A disability cultural center can serve as the hub for connections for disabled students, faculty, and staff, increasing the sense of belonging and connectedness on campus (p.31).

Reliable demographics on the number of disabled and chronically ill faculty/staff on campus are not available, which could be a metric of the potential impact of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center for staff/faculty. However, at the time of the Fall 2023 AHEAD report, the UMass Accessible Workplace office indicated over 650 workplace accommodations (AHEAD Review, 2023, p. 46). Campus climate data indicates that staff and faculty with disability have low sense of belonging, which is correlated to resilience and retention. For example, 25% of faculty who identify as disabled in the 2021 campus climate survey reported having 'to no extent' a sense of belonging on campus compared with 6% of non-disabled faculty. The campus climate data show similar trends of question of ability to share your point of view and connectedness.

A survey was developed by the Disability Center Working Group in Spring 2024, to further understand faculty and staff workplace comfort (Appendix E). Respondents were solicited via

disability groups on campus and Accessible Workplace. Of the 106 staff and faculty respondents, 72 identified as having a disability. Only 13% of the latter group were very comfortable disclosing their disability in the workplace while 27% were somewhat uncomfortable and 17% were very uncomfortable. Furthermore, the survey reported that 34% of disabled and non-disabled identifying faculty and staff were either somewhat or very uncomfortable with discussing disability in the workplace. Faculty and staff are largely unaware of advocacy and support systems on campus. For example, 66% of survey respondents were very unfamiliar with UMAIDA, which serves in part as peer mentoring network for staff and faculty.

Increasing sense of belonging and comfort discussing disability within the workplace are key for retaining disabled faculty/staff. Within the 12 years of the Disabled Academics Study (Price, 2024), 16% of participants had left academia since their initial interviews. Survey and listening session data collected from the Working Group indicate a strong desire faculty/staff have for increasing opportunities to connect with their peers within the Disability+ Community. Participants and respondents reported feelings of isolation both in terms of their lived experience as a person with a disability, and professionally as being misunderstood—and for some, having colleagues/supervisors who held negative attitudes about disability and accommodation needs within the workplace. Such experiences make for unwelcoming and unsupportive work environments for disabled faculty/staff.

Furthermore, there are several studies that indicate faculty/staff who instruct classes have a lack of understanding/training about how to best implement classroom inclusive practices for disabled students (Bettencourt et al., 2018; De Los Santos et al., 2019; Gibbons et al., 2015). The finding from the survey and listening group data corroborate with these research studies which also demonstrated that faculty/staff are seeking more supports on how to be more inclusive in their

practices to better accommodate and support the learning of disabled students in their classes. This is noteworthy as it impacts the student experience in and out of the classroom thus highlighting the need for a center that serves the entire campus community, providing not only an opportunity for connection and community but also an important space for resource acquisition and training.

It is also important to note that a Disability Identity/Cultural Center could also benefit parents, supporters, and allies. Often students, faculty, and staff, while they themselves might not identify as disabled, are supporting and advocating for friends, family members and colleagues who are disabled. This population on campus would greatly benefit from having a space to connect with other allies and supporters while learning about and accessing community resources.

Creating a Disability Cultural/Identity Center: A Necessary Solution

Our campus is served by the creation of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center. The creation of a center would first signal to the community at large that UMass prioritizes disability as an identity to be celebrated and better understood on our campus. Currently, UMass is not resourced and structured in a way that allows for outreach, education, and training. This was clear in the AHEAD 2023 review where reviewers noted,

Disability Services does not have the infrastructure to conduct various outreach efforts effectively. Stakeholders expressed an interest in receiving and discussing information related to accessibility but realized the weight of the challenges currently consuming Disability Services. Virtually all college campuses struggle with the need for campus education about disability and accessibility (p. 31).

Furthermore, the Accessible Workplace Office, much like Disability Services provides mandated accommodation services and any additional support is provided by other, ad hoc groups. These groups, though passionate, are transitory and unsupported by a reliable funding stream. As the

most intersectional identity, the trainings and workshops provided by a Disability Identity/Cultural Center are relevant to our entire campus. As we move to a social justice model of disability, our community can learn the value of their disabled peers and UMass will become a destination for those often excluded from higher education. A distinct center will bridge the gap between the federal- and state-mandated accommodations disabled students, faculty and staff receive, and reflect a deeper commitment to their needs as valued members of the university community by providing a safe and accessible space for disabled students, staff and faculty and their allies to come together in a supportive, flexible environment.

Secondly, the presence of a center, through training and education, can raise disability awareness and destigmatize disability, which may result in more staff, faculty and students disclosing their disability and requesting accommodations. The fear of disclosure is the primary reason that 61% of disabled employees do not disclose their disability to supervisor (Jain-Link & Kennedy, 2019). This is also true for students, who also face microaggressions from peers and negative faculty perceptions while frequently working with ill-informed faculty, advisors, and staff (Saia, 2002; Hong, 2015). Barber (2012) finds that students with disabilities may have faced negative experiences in high school and take those experiences with them to college, failing to seek the needed support. If the Disability+ Community remains siloed and difficult to find on our campus, we miss the chance to erode ableist perspectives.

Finally, of the many needs that community members have identified a Disability Identity/Cultural Center could meet, inclusion and belonging, which correlate well with both resilience and retention, were prominent. Recent campus assessments indicate that disability correlates with significant disparities in inclusion and belonging. As UMass strives to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students, a Disability Identity/Cultural Center can foster sense of

belonging within our campus community and grow resilience for Disabled+ staff and faculty. Additionally, it can function as a safe space to work and build community without fear of ableism. Our existing cultural centers have long been a place for students whose identities are underrepresented on campus to find community and feel a deeper sense of belonging, remediating some of the disparities described above. While staff and faculty have technically been welcomed in current and previous UMass cultural centers, almost half of staff and faculty surveyed by the Disability Center Working Group in 2024 report seldom or never having interactions with the existing cultural centers on campus. Reasons include logistics (not having enough time in their work schedules, and not having enough programming offered after work hours), and a general feeling that these are supposed to be student-only spaces. Many did not feel comfortable seeking out connecting with the centers because they did not want to encroach into student spaces due to power dynamics, while others indicated that they felt the programming was not relevant to a staff/faculty role. Nonetheless, over 75% of surveyed respondents report that they wanted more engagement either professionally or personally with cultural centers on campus, and many respondents stated they would like to participate more with the centers if they knew their programming was also inclusive of faculty/staff, and/or had programming that was specifically targeted to this population. While these responses speak to ways in which our *existing* Cultural Centers could serve our staff and faculty, they speak directly to the need for a Disability Identity/Cultural Center to be developed not as a space primarily for students--in the vein of our existing Cultural Centers--but as an Center intentionally and openly dedicated to serving the entire campus community: for our staff, faculty, and students.

Benefits to Students

To support disabled students, colleges and universities across the country have been establishing Disability Identity/Cultural Centers. Currently on our campus, the Assistive Technology Center (ATC) informally serves as a location where students come to work because they know they can stim, have ticks, sit in unusual body positions, and move freely in and out of wheelchairs, without being judged or asked to leave. Most of these students are not using the space for any of the technology specific to the space, but because the ATC serves as a supportive and non-judgmental place where everyone is free to just be themselves.

While such informal spaces and grassroots efforts have been utilized as informal locations for the Disability+ Community, these ad hoc efforts are unsustainable and do not adequately meet the needs for the growing student community. A Disability Identity/Cultural Center is necessary as being a formally established, dedicated space. Findings from survey and focus group data support the center being multifaceted in that it can 1) serve as a connecting point for community, education, and advocacy, 2) work to normalize and promote awareness of disability and disability identities, and 3) support students of all disability identities by providing physical space for belonging, connections to support resources, and fun and social activities that build community.

1) Community and Connections

A Disability Identity/Cultural Center at UMass would serve as a vital hub for fostering community and building meaningful connections among disabled students. The center would provide a dedicated space where students can meet, share experiences, and find support in each other and those who run the center. This sense of community is crucial in alleviating the isolation and feeling of exclusion as highlighted by the following excerpts taken from student survey and focus group participants (See Appendix Eb),

I think that it would be a great asset to UMass to have a disability identity/cultural center, and it would definitely be a great tool that I would utilize if there was a place. Also, I would really like it because I think it would also be a great space to meet others with disabilities and foster more of a community with others who have disabilities.

Perhaps if, during my 2nd or 3rd year, I had meetings with a group of peers with ADHD and/or depression comorbidity (which so often follows ADHD that is not managed effectively), I would have (sooner in my college experience) begun to formulate a more accurate and positive identity around my disability, for which (at one point) I subconsciously wanted to deny even existed. It wasn't until I was willing and able to connect with other students who were also struggling, that I started to realize that I could actually be this successful gay engineer if I wanted to be and find ways to work within the limitations of my disability. That is one reason why I feel creating these opportunities for students with disabilities to connect when they are facing significant adversity is so important.

2) Normalizing and Promoting Awareness of Disability and Disability Identities

The center would also play a key role in educating, normalizing, and raising awareness about disability and disability identities. By hosting events, workshops, and discussion series, the center can educate the broader campus community about the challenges and contributions of disabled individuals. This will promote the understanding and acceptance and empower disabled students to embrace and celebrate their identity confidently. We believe education to the broader campus would also enhance other experiences for disabled students in areas such as the classroom as teachings would be tailored to certain groups such as faculty and staff. The center can also serve as a point of advocacy to the broader campus through education and awareness which could bring about change on campus for disabled students. The following excerpts taken from student survey and focus group participants note (See Appendix Eb) showcase these needs.

I think having a disability identity/cultural center at UMass would vastly improve the attitudes around disability at UMass. Providing education and support for disabled students as well as abled students who want to learn more/learn what they can do to support disabled people would be immensely helpful in encouraging a healthy environment for everyone regardless of ability.

The professors here really need to complete mandatory disability awareness training, as they are largely out of touch with reality (common for academia) and do not understand

that some people have slow processing speeds. I am tired of being treated as lazy because I process/learn things slower than others. If working harder was the cure for this, then I would have realized that years ago. This is especially true for the STEM programs, where staff tend to be socially awkward.

I think a space that is well funded and helps to destigmatize and teach disability is important!

I wish there was more advocacy for disabled students when it came to administrative decisions -- for example, if the weather is so bad that PVTAs buses cannot run, classes should be dismissed as it is impossibly inconsiderate in regard to disabled students. When that occurred, I was physically incapable of attending class and felt like there was nothing I could do, and my voice was not heard and actually ignored when I called the Chancellor's office to file a complaint. I wish the Disabilities Service Center would actually advocate for disabled students in those circumstances.

3) Resources

Findings from survey and focus group data reveal that both undergraduate and graduate students would utilize a Disability Identity/Cultural Center and would also recommend the center, its services, and events to their peers. Students are interested in a Disability Identity/Cultural Center that provides access to career development resources, learning activities (i.e., discussion series, workshops), social activities (i.e., movie screenings, support groups), and celebrations festivals and awareness campaigns (See Appendix Eb. iv). Most of these needs are outside the scope of disability services and are not offered in a centralized space or centralized form of information dissemination. Further examples of how students could benefit from Disability Identity/Cultural Center are highlighted by the following excerpts taken from student survey and focus group participants (See Appendix Eb),

It would be nice to have different support groups there for people with specific disabilities.

I think the disability center could have accessible study spaces, one-on-one and group sessions/workshops, and study groups (drop-in times for students to work on assignments together).

Additionally, our students have been eager to learn about the faculty and staff at UMass who identify as disabled. Students have formed deep bonds to faculty because of a shared disability or even just because of shared disability identity. A cultural center will allow students more direct access to these disabled professionals. The opportunity for direct mentorship will serve the entire disabled community and greatly improve a sense of belonging for those who face ableism daily.

Benefits to Faculty and Staff

A Disability Identity/Cultural Center can provide information and resources that guide staff/faculty on negotiating accommodations and navigating campus with a disability or chronic illness that can increase sense of belonging. Data from both the survey and listening sessions demonstrated that faculty/staff are seeking resources and information about how to navigate University systems regarding accommodations and holistic supports beyond ADA compliance (Appendix E). Currently, the only places on campus that faculty and staff can go to for support are Accessible Workplace and (for those who know about it) UMAIDA. While these resources are helpful, their functions are both limited in scope and capacity due to adherence to the system and processes of ADA accommodations, and volunteer work, respectively. Respondents discussed the desire to have opportunities to consult with dedicated staff in a Disability Identity/Cultural Center whose knowledge and expertise can support disability beyond compliance. They also indicated that they have a strong desire for community connections as a means of crowdsourcing information to develop tools and strategies for managing their disability/ chronic illness. The Disability Identity/Cultural Center could provide ways to help close these gaps that staff/faculty identified experiencing in terms of feeling uncertain about the accommodations process and disconnected from others who have similar/shared lived experiences in an affirming, welcoming environment.

A Disability Identity/Cultural Center can provide connection with other ill and disabled people on campus that can increase sense of belonging. Data from the survey and listening sessions indicated they experience isolation and disconnect from the campus community. Many respondents who identified as being immunocompromised or who worked remotely expressed that they felt excluded from programming and community events on campus. A Disability Identity/Cultural Center could help to address this by offering more opportunities for disabled/chronically ill faculty and staff to meet with others in the community for programming and events that can be offered both in physical and remote spaces. By offering hybrid events, this would demonstrate a commitment to more holistic inclusion and access for those faculty/staff in the Disability+ Community. The Disability Identity/Cultural Center could model these practices for the campus community to learn from and adopt.

Disabled faculty and staff indicated that they would utilize a Disability Identity/Cultural Center to build community and a sense of belonging at UMass. Currently UMAIDA serves as the virtual space for our disabled employees to build relationships and tools to better understand their disabled identity. Providing book clubs, events and community support has been invaluable to those it has served, but its reach has been diminished due to lack of physical space. Building a physical community for our disabled employees allows more faculty and staff to be aware of this resource and will improve retention and wellbeing of a community long disenfranchised at our university.

It should be noted that in addition to the benefits the Disability Identity/Cultural Center would provide for students, staff, and faculty individually, it would also serve as one of the relatively rare places for community building across these roles. This broader design would

provide natural and sustained opportunities for students to connect with staff for mentorship and role modeling, factors of belonging that students with disability have disproportionately lacked.

Benefits to the Community At large

The services, resources, and connection that a Disability Identity/Cultural Center can provide to students, staff, and faculty in the Disability+ Community are profound. Of similarly great importance is what a Disability Identity/Cultural Center can mean to the broader University community. The very presence of the Center signals the University's priorities, and affirms institutional understanding that Disability is an identity to celebrated--and better understood in our campus community. The educational resources described in this report, particularly when utilized by instructors and supervisors, would help to normalize and promote awareness of the Disability+ Community, ideally impacting experiences in the classroom and the workplace.

Programming and Services

The following sections are themes found from data collected from students, staff, and faculty regarding the types of programming and services they would like for the center to offer.

Students

Based on both quantitative and qualitative data analyses from the Disability Identity & Cultural Center survey and focus groups, several areas in which the current UMass programming and resources for disabled students are lacking were identified (Appendix E). Of those surveyed, 65% of students somewhat or strongly agreed that existing resources for students with disabilities at UMass are inadequate. These gaps include 1) peer support and mentorship, 2) career development, and 3) education/training activities.

1) Peer Support and Mentorship

Of those surveyed, 47% of students named peer support and mentorship opportunities as resources that would be helpful in navigating life at UMass as a disabled student. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected from both the survey and two focus groups, identified a strong need for accessible, approachable guidance opportunities – either student-to-student and/or student-to-staff – to help students navigate both existing disability resources on campus and the registration process with Disability Services. Of those surveyed, 56% of students not registered with Disability Services named administrative barriers had prevented them from registering.

2) Career Development

A majority (69%) of students who took the survey reported the desire for career development resources as an offering that would make them more likely to use a Disability Identity/Cultural Center. Based on focus group feedback and anecdotal evidence within and across the subcommittees, students are seeking career development support with how to navigate entering the disability advocacy career field as there is a current gap in guidance for these career opportunities within academic departments; additionally, students want more support with how to navigate disability in the workplace including when/if to disclose, how to ask for accommodations, and strategies for advocacy in the workplace.

3) Education & Training Activities

Several survey respondents named learning activities – such as workshops, trainings, lectures, and discussion series – as specific activities that would make them more likely to use a Disability Identity/Cultural Center. Within the focus groups, students identified the need for academic and non-academic staff trainings to better understand, and advocate for the experiences of disabled students on campus. While Disability Services is providing training opportunities like this, they

are limited in their ability to facilitate training and follow up with faculty and staff who directly impact student experience. Based on the qualitative data gathered, we believe that staff training and workshops need to be aimed at the folks with the highest impact for the experience of students with disabilities.

A Disability Identity/Cultural center can build bridges between existing resources within and outside of Academic Affairs, including pathways centers, University Health Services, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health, and Disability Services. This model would both effectively create a hub for disabled students to access a wide range of support resources and combat the siloing effect resulting from departments and services with specific, narrow focuses for students. This model would also alleviate strain on university resources like UHS and Disability Services which do not currently have capacity to offer the resources disabled students are seeking.

Faculty and Staff

When coded for themes, both listening session and survey data indicated that there were several ways a Disability Identity/Cultural Center could function to offer programming for faculty/staff (Appendix E). Several participants indicated that they felt the significance of the Disability Identity/Cultural Center would serve as a symbolic commitment on behalf of the campus to support the access and inclusion of the Disability+ Community on campus. Faculty and staff specified that they are seeking a Disability Identity/Cultural Center to be a centralized hub that would offer opportunities for education and training, mutual mentoring, and a space for community to come together and share their lived experiences in a safe, inclusive space that recognizes disability as a facet of diversity.

1) Centralized Hub of Support and Resources

Both survey and listening session data indicated that faculty/staff felt the campus was siloed in terms of where they would go to find information and support about disability inclusion practices (Appendix E). Many respondents noted that they desired programming and services that would be a safe, welcoming place for faculty and staff to consult with colleagues and share information/resources on how to navigate systems within the University. More specifically, respondents mentioned wanting more dedicated support in understanding how the accommodation process works, developing skills on how to effectively advocate for workplace accommodations, strategies for managing disability in the workplace, and having a centralized hub with information and resources to help increase access in the work environment. Another finding that emerged from this data was that several faculty/staff members are seeking support with not only navigating gray areas within institutional support systems, but also navigating barriers to disability inclusion. More specifically, these barriers included how to have conversations with supervisors/colleagues who do not understand disability, addressing ableism, stigma and lack of empathy, and support with navigating disability discrimination in the workplace.

2) Campus Education and Training

Faculty and staff who participated in the listening session and survey spoke of a strong need for more programming in the form of campus education and training about disability (Appendix E). Respondents indicated a lack of understanding around how supervisors can better support disability accommodations and inclusion more holistically in the workplace. Faculty and staff stated that a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would serve them by having a place to learn more about how to be inclusive and supportive supervisors/colleagues, or to have these types of opportunities to help them navigate how to have conversations with unsupportive

supervisors/colleagues. Additionally, faculty/staff also identified that this type of support within the Disability Identity/Cultural Center can assist instructors around disability accommodations and inclusion for students in their classes. Also, included within education and training, faculty/staff expressed a desire to have more opportunities to learn more about ways in which they can implement approaches and practices that go beyond ADA compliance and reconceptualize disability as part of DEI initiatives.

Some suggestions offered included having language and etiquette training, having training around including mental health and learning disabilities, and training/education to provide more guidance and support for supervisors, colleagues, and administration on inclusive practices. While many of the respondents desired to have education and training which are often communal learning practices, some respondents indicated that they wanted a confidential space for consultation, especially for private conversations where they were seeking support about topics of sensitive, personal nature. Therefore, it is suggested that the center have both broad-based, community programming to educate and train the campus on disability access, identity, and inclusion, as well as education and training in more private, confidential settings.

3. Beyond Compliance: Diverse Disability Community, Connection, and Belonging

When discussing how a Disability Identity/Cultural Center would serve the staff/faculty population, an underlying theme that emerged from the collected data was that faculty/staff are seeking a space where they can feel safe and welcomed to bring their whole selves. Within this space, respondents described connecting with members of this Disability+ Community to openly discuss their lived experiences, have opportunities and space for collective healing from stigma, discrimination, and negative perceptions, to promote community wellbeing, have the capacity to re-claim disability and celebrate it as diversity.

Several respondents expressed a desire for increased community connections to help decrease the feelings of isolation. Within this theme, faculty and staff mentioned wanting to have more opportunities for mentoring, both peer-to-peer and faculty/staff-to-student. This finding indicates that for many faculty and staff there is a gap on campus in terms of finding an affirming space and environment for the Disability+ Community to meet with others who have similar lived experiences and exchange resources, information, and help one another develop tools and strategies for managing disability/chronic illness at work.

Listening session and survey data indicated how faculty and staff are seeking more events and programming to address ableism, destigmatize disability, and reconceptualize it within the framework of diversity (Appendix E). Many respondents identified that the compliance view of disability is not enough to mitigate disability bias, and that more programming is needed to help promote a more inclusive culture around disability identity. Survey data indicated that faculty and staff desire to have more opportunities for celebrating disability as diversity to help foster a sense of pride and connection with others in the Disability+ Community.

Additionally, respondents mentioned considerations for different types of events and programming they desired to have within the center. Many indicated that considerations be made for inclusive, hybrid events where folks had the option to attend/participate either remotely or in person. Some respondents mentioned support with different tools and assistive technologies that could help increase access for their workplace and their research. Others suggested having broad-based programming with community input, guest speaker events, book clubs, movie screenings, workshops, affinity spaces centered around disability experiences, healing circles, contemplative practices, and opportunities for creative outlets.

Physical Features

The following sections demonstrate themes for how students, staff and faculty would like to physically interact with the Disability Identity/Cultural Center and the features they would want in terms of its physical space and location.

Location

In terms of location, students, staff, and faculty indicated mixed feelings about where the center should be. Some staff/faculty felt they wanted it to be in a more modern location than Goodell while others wanted it to be near the other identity/cultural centers and the Accessible Workplace Office. Students indicated that they wanted the center to be in a centralized location with easy access, some noting they wanted it close to the resident halls or directly on a bus route, so travel is not too difficult.

Accessibility

In terms of space and physical features of the center, faculty and staff respondents expressed they wanted the center to be at or close to the ground level of a building near an entryway/elevator, and in proximity to accessible bathrooms/washrooms. Students who participated in the survey (See Appendix Eb) echoed these sentiments in which one student illustrated, “It’s important to me that this be in a convenient area, as I can see this being somewhere I go between classes. It’s important to me that it’s wheelchair accessible, and that multiple wheelchairs can be there at once.”

Versatile Spaces for Community and Private Functions

Students, faculty, and staff indicated they wanted to have the space function to serve both connection/community-building and private conversations/consultation. One anonymous student noted in their open response to the survey that, “Ideally this would be a space where students can

do schoolwork together and gather, rather than just being a spot to put disabled students, but there would also be spaces where students can go individually” (Appendix Eb). For the community spaces, faculty and staff suggested having a versatile space for both formal and informal interaction, and the technology for remote/hybrid participation. Faculty and staff also indicated a desire for the center to have the capacity for hosting movie screenings, a disability resource lending library, and people suppers in proximity to eat-in kitchen areas with disability friendly/accessible features.

Storage Spaces

Many spaces on campus have kitchen areas where people can store and prepare food. The kitchen not only could support programming like people suppers, but it also can help to make the campus more accessible for folks who need access to cold storage for food and medical supplies. Across the surveys and focus groups, students, staff, and faculty indicated that they wanted to have the storage capacity for medication, equipment, and food supplies. An anecdote shared by a student in a focus group demonstrated the need for resting places with storage spaces. This student lives off campus with many food restrictions and requires a lot of medical supplies. Providing this student with basic kitchen supplies and storage lockers in the Disability Identity/ Cultural Center would both eliminate the need for trips to and from campus to prepare food safe for their dietary restrictions and decrease physical fatigue associated with lugging medical supplies around campus each day.

Sensory Stimuli Considerations

There was an underlying theme of how the center should be a non-marginalizing, welcoming space and considerations should be made to include how not only staff/office culture influences this but also how physical space influences the overall feel of a place. Students, faculty,

and staff wanted features to accommodate the ability to decompress in controlled sensory environments with adjustable/lowered/controllable light levels, access to openable windows, fresh air, and natural lighting, and furniture and floor areas to support comfort and self-regulation. Nearly all students who participated in focus groups identified the harmful effects of overstimulation on a campus as large and as busy as UMass Amherst. Providing a space where disabled students, staff and faculty can de-stimulate and better regulate will work to foster preparedness for work, class, and campus life. Qualitative data from the survey and focus groups support the need for centralized resting spaces on campus to support the well-being of students with physical and mental disabilities.

Additionally, data from both the student survey and focus group discussions found the need for furniture, such as sensory chairs⁴, to support the comfort and regulation, giving disabled students a space to physically regulate flare-ups and work or rest in relative comfort. More specifically, students in the focus groups lamented the lack of comfortable furniture for student and work on campus, and how that lack has had a direct negative impact on both their ability to perform academically and to prevent flare-ups in chronic pain conditions.

COVID Precautions

Many respondents across students, staff and faculty echoed the sentiments of wanting the space to be conscious of individuals who are immunocompromised so they can fully participate in events either remotely, and to have HEPA filters and other necessary protective measures put in place for in-person visits. Two notable quotes explain these sentiments (See Appendix Eb),

Accessibility includes Covid precautions such as masked spaces, and clean, safe air through updated ventilation and air purifiers.

⁴ A sensory chair provides sensory input for individuals who require movement or sensory to stay focused, regulated and comfortable.

You need to be thinking about immunocompromised people as part of the disability community. Covid is still a serious health risk for those with compromised immune systems (and for everyone, honestly), and the insistence on going "back to normal" has only exacerbated these risks. If you're not thinking about this group, you're going to make your space inaccessible for people who are already excluded from most shared spaces.

Assistive Technology

From qualitative responses we learned that the Assistive Technology Center is a great resource for students, but serves a narrow, specific purpose and is not multi-functional. Across the students, staff, and faculty who participated in survey and focus group discussions, another finding was that there was a desire for the center to have a space to test out the effectiveness of assistive tools and setups for personal use and to support teaching/learning. Having a wide range of basic assistive learning tools in a Disability Identity/Cultural center (including screen readers, speech recognition software, and augmentative and alternative communication devices) will allow students, staff and faculty to use needed software in a supportive and sensory-friendly environment that connects them with others in the Disability+ Community and support staff.

Intersectional Considerations

In establishing a Disability Identity/Cultural Center at UMass, it is crucial to consider the diverse and intersectional identities of disabled students, staff, and faculty. Many disabled individuals belong to other marginalized groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other social categories. Acknowledging and directly addressing the needs of these intersectional identities is essential so the center is truly inclusive and representative of all students. For instance, Disabled Black, Brown, and Indigenous people face compounded discrimination in disproportional ways and have unique challenges that differ from those experienced by others. In the development of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center Black, Brown, and Indigenous students need to not merely feel “welcomed” but need cultural sensitivity, empathy, and validation that is

inclusive of their background and experiences (Turner and Zepeda, 2021). In addition, they need to be included and seen in their spaces and so hiring staff for the center and other spaces that support disability need to be individuals who are black, brown, and Indigenous as indicated necessary by participants from the student survey (See Appendix Eb. iii).

This is a predominantly white university (pwi). The staff and faculty here at every level are typically all white, white Hispanic, or Asian. The students are disproportionately white, white Hispanic, and/or Asian. The folks who really benefit the most from these services are white disabled people; there is so little consideration or support given to disabled people who are Black and/or Native or other people of color. We can't utilize and benefit from these systems in the same way white and white adjacent communities can.

Specific support and data driven approaches to support Black, Indigenous people specifically as the least represented and uniquely targeted, but also other people of color who have disabilities. More staff who understand what intersectionality is and isn't; more staff who are Black! It feels like we have been saying and asking for these things even before 2020 and it routinely gets ignored or de-prioritized because culturally white folks have a "top down" approach to their work which benefits the majority even if that majority population is formed through systemic violence against more severely minoritized people.

Similarly, disabled transgender students face unique challenges due to the compounded stigma of their intersectional identities. They often encounter ignorance, lack of awareness, and even hostility from other students, faculty, and staff which is exacerbated by ableist practices within academic spaces (Mizock et al., 2013). Gender neutral bathrooms were noted as being important by many respondents of our survey. Inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms, changing areas, and other facilities must be provided for transgender students (GLAD, 2008). In addition, transgender affirming materials, resources, and posters should be visible in a Disability Identity/Cultural Center to be truly inclusive as noted by a student participant in the focus group discussions (See Appendix Eb),

Additionally, the need for gender-neutral bathrooms in every building is essential. If there were a Disability Center physical space and it wasn't fully accessible with gender-neutral bathrooms, it would be a joke.

Regarding the types of programs and services faculty/staff desired in the Disability Identity/Cultural Center, there were also mentions of intersectional considerations that should be intentionally built into the fabric of these services. These considerations included having a decolonized understanding of disability and inclusive practices and having cross-collaborative programming with other centers to be inclusive of other social identities and having these perspectives be part of the disability discussions on campus. Decolonizing disability would require that the center's programming situate disability outside of dominant conceptions (i.e., legal and medical models) and to look at disability justice as a necessary conversation within DEI initiatives and vice versa. This would also require having a diverse range of perspectives to participate in the creation and implementation of the types of programs and events so that these initiatives are more holistically inclusive.

Timeline and Staffing Recommendations

In reviewing survey data collected in Spring of 2024, several respondents indicated that the need for the center has been long overdue, noting that they would like the center to be functional as soon as possible(Appendix E). Many discussions in the listening groups noted that they would like to see the center grow and expand over time to increase its capacity, collaborate with other centers, and to potentially serve not only the UMass campus but also the greater Hampshire County/Western Massachusetts community. Given the recent Goodell renovation set to be completed in Spring 2025, it seems prudent to locate the center with the existing cultural centers, identity centers, and Disability Services which are scheduled to be located in the newly renovated building.

Staffing recommendations reflect the need for the Disability Identity/Cultural Center to serve the entire community, establishing local partnerships. A recurring theme throughout data

collection and analysis indicated faculty/staff wanted dedicated staffing for the center, including a full-time director, full-time clerical staff, a grant writer to help with acquiring funding sources, as well as part-time graduate and undergraduate staff so that each population utilizing the center could have peer support offerings. Other respondents suggested having staff with specific specializations for different types of disabilities as the Disability+ Community is a heterogeneous group with a myriad of diverse experiences. There was mention of having the director of the center ideally being someone who boldly identifies as disabled and has knowledge and approaches of disability within the social justice model.

A suggested timeline for creation and development could be as follows:

Fall 2024

- Announce the creation of a Disability Identity/Cultural Center.
- Establish a staff member who will be responsible for the development and oversight of the center.
- Begin development of position descriptions for a Director/Coordinator of the Center and Graduate Student Assistant

Spring 2025

- Recruit for Director/Coordinator and Graduate Assistant
- Begin to establish partnerships with campus colleagues and student organization, brainstorming ways to work collaboratively.
- Conduct outreach to establish the types of trainings and education that would best serve the community.

Summer 2025

- Launch website and establish social media presence.
- Develop positions descriptions for student employees.
- Work on Fall Kick Off/Welcome Celebration

Fall 2025

- Center formally opens.
- Staffing recommendations: Director/Coordinator, 2 graduate assistants, one focused on students and one on faculty and staff, Cadre of student employees to staff center and welcome community members.

Spring 2025

- Develop position description and begin recruitment for an Assistant Director with grant writing skills and other necessary education and training.

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Appendix

- A. [Service Blueprinting Zeke & Jeff Report](#)
- B. [AHEAD Report, 2020](#)
- C. [Karuth Silver and Access UMass Documents](#)
- D. [AHEAD Report, 2023](#)
- E. Subcommittee Full Reports
 - a. Existing Centers
 - i. [Existing Centers Final Report](#)
 - b. Students
 - i. [Students Final Report](#)
 - ii. [Disability Cultural Center Student Survey](#)
 - iii. [Open-ended Questions](#)
 - iv. [Disability Cultural Center Student Survey Findings.pdf](#)
 - c. Faculty and Staff
 - i. [Faculty and Staff Final Report.docx](#)
 - ii. [Disability Center Faculty/Staff Listening Session Qualitative Analysis](#)
 - iii. [Disability Center Faculty/Staff Survey Quantitative Analysis](#)
 - iv. [Disability Center Faculty/Staff Survey Qualitative Analysis](#)
- F. [Campus Climate Survey Data \(2021\)](#)
 - d. [Faculty and Staff Connection and Belonging Data](#)
- G. [List of Universities with Disability Centers](#)