

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

JUSTIN DART, JR. STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)

FY2024 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**

Mission

The mission of the Dart Accessibility Center is to equalize students who have disabilities with learning, discovery, engagement, encouraging self-advocacy, inclusion, and success.

Vision

The vision of the Dart Accessibility Center is to provide acclaimed customer service to our students that results in a valuable impact on their education experience.

Values

The Dart Accessibility Center is one of six departments in the Health and Well-Being portfolio within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services. We strive to be the **home for students** with disabilities on campus by providing advocacy services, accommodation recommendations and other support services to ensure equity in the educational opportunities here at the University of Houston.

- We are also focused on **outreach and partnerships with key stake holders**. This includes reaching out to students at University fairs, orientations, and other events, who may not be aware of the vital role our services could play in their success. We also conduct outreach to students who haven't chosen the University of Houston at high schools and other organizations that serve people with disabilities through social media and the department website.
- We put a strong emphasis on **education and training**, not just in the form of continuing education for our staff, but also serving as a resource to our faculty, staff, and the

community on topics regarding accessibility, disability education, and accommodation implementation.

- We strive to take a creative **solution focused approach** to every question for resources that come up by making referrals both within and outside the University for our students and the faculty and staff who support them.

The Dart Center this past year has prioritized that students, staff, enhanced services, collaboration, and new programming were critical in our strategic goals and initiatives. This Center is a home and safe space for students with disabilities to receive barrier removing services in by providing accommodations, assistive technology, physical access, and advocacy for accessibility concerns on campus.

Collaboration and Outreach are some of the critical cornerstones of the Dart Accessibility Center. This allows for students, departments, faculty, staff, and the community to learn about best practices of how to best create an inclusive atmosphere that is better designed to support diverse needs.

Services for students:

Our office provides students with disabilities accommodations that support both online and on campus courses. This also extends to events, workshops, and other experiences on campus. We take great pride in providing our students with disabilities an interactive approach to helping them define what access means to them and how to overcome their barriers. Accommodations may include but are not limited to; extended time for testing, note taking assistance, CART or communication access real-time, sign language interpreters, audio recording lectures, physical access, assistive technology, accessible textbooks, alternative format, housing accommodations, study abroad access, and any other University sponsored event in which a student is having an accessibility barrier.

Our team meets with students one on one to have an interactive conversation about access, listen, and collect documentation to help build a holistic plan for accommodating a student's unique challenge in interacting with their academic environment.

By providing options and creative solutions to students, we work to empower them with knowledge and choice. This critical work helps University of Houston's students with disabilities achieve their academic goals, improve retention, connect with resources, improve academic success, and live better lives of opportunity just as any student attending the University of Houston.

Educational Opportunities:

The Dart Center provides students a one-on-one orientation with an Access Coordinator to better understand available services, share their personal experience with disability, gain an understanding of their accommodation needs, and connect them with accommodations, including implementation. **Educational trainings** are valued due to the essential disability education in a variety of topics that address different aspects of accessibility. These opportunities are focused to assist staff, faculty, students, high schools, community organizations, and other University stakeholders to better support our students. Topics for available workshops can include but are

not limited to; service animal/emotional support animal education, referrals, available services, advocacy, social justice, physical access, digital access for online courses and content, assistive technology, communication access, social media, document formats, and other requested challenges faced by our disability community.

Resource and referral:

The Dart Center recognizes the challenges our students with disabilities face in interacting with their environment, accessibility barriers, personal challenges, and the need for outside support. Our goal is to empower the individual by connecting them with either a service we provide or an outside entity that will address their barrier to independence. To achieve this, we focus on collaboration, building positive relationships with students, faculty, staff, student organizations, community organizations on a local, state, and national level. The Director and the Dart Center stay actively involved on campus by serving on campus boards, and committees both on and off campus.

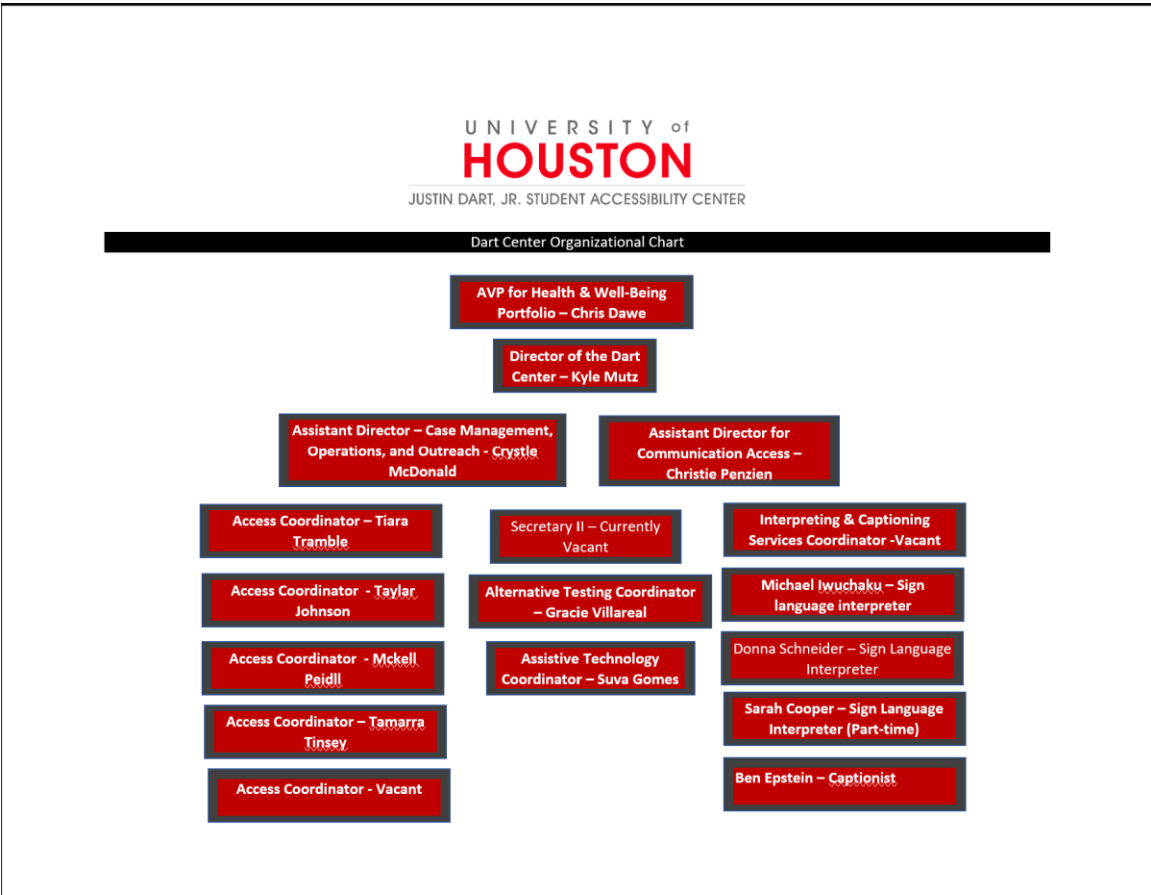
Student fee allocation justification:

The Dart Center provides critical services to part of one of the most important diverse student populations at the University of Houston. These services ensure students with disabilities are provided an inclusive and equitable experiences on campus. Our services extend to all parts of the University experience and help it to maintain its tier one status and support the Chancellors goal of being a top 50 University. Staff salaries and benefits, supplies, technology, items for our facility, and equipment are fundamentally critical to provide timely, effective, and meaningful services. We work diligently to be mindful of our budget and creative to ensure these funds are used to their potential. Because the demands on our department continue to grow and change, we continue to explore and obtain outside funding sources including foundations, grants, corporations, state agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Programming has previously not been a part of the opportunities provided on campus by the Dart Center. With a rich history of taking ownership of Justin Dart Jr. name, it is vital that our department be one of the critical advocates for change through educational events that are centered around different aspects of disability awareness. The Dart Center takes great pride in bringing the disability community on campus into the Diversity Equity and Inclusion discussion by providing these new opportunities for all students, staff, faculty, and campus community to engage in different aspects of disability. Our team is very appreciative of SFAC's commitment, financial support, and student success. We have the same commitment and drive to students with disabilities and those without to make the Dart Center a department that works with everyone and serves this amazing campus community with a commitment to be the best for the University of Houston. It truly takes a village approach to creating true access.

- 2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in**

the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.



3. List your unit’s strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2021-2022 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any

new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

DSA Plan: (<http://uh.edu/dsa/about/strategic-planning/>)

UH Goals: (<http://uh.edu/about/mission>)

The Dart Accessibility Center's goals and action items all work to support the UH Goal of Student Success in addition to the noted Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Strategic Initiative.

Student success – Learning & Engagement - Dart Accessibility Center works to provide innovative opportunities for student engagement, support services, effective accommodations, accessible environments and creative technology to all registered students to remove access barriers.

Department Goal

1 GOAL # 1 Student Success

Description:

Student Accessibility Center will provide streamlined, seamless accommodations and services to all registered students.

Goal Status:

Accomplished

Status Narrative:

The Dart Center this past academic year has successfully implemented the **AIM or Access Information Management system** to better support all students with disabilities. AIM was implemented in Fall 2021 replacing a previous paper and file-based system. This investment in technology streamlined accommodation services for students with disabilities allowing them to have customized accommodation profiles, schedule exams for testing, request alternative format or e-text (allows students to listen to their textbooks), coordinate note taking services, and interpreting/captioning services. Disability documentation is also stored in the student's profile along with any supporting notes securely.

This has also streamlined and supported faculty as well. Accommodation letters are now delivered electronically through AIM, allowing for more detailed accommodation letters and hyperlinks for different accommodations to learn more about implementation. A **faculty portal** is also being implemented for AIM that will allow faculty to have a centralized place to view courses currently being taught and accommodation request for each class to be viewed. Through this portal faculty can assign a course note taker, view accommodation request, and schedule mid-term exams/finals. It is a one stop place for accommodation information.

Students with disabilities are also now able to **apply and submit documentation** through the database streamlining the application process. Applications can then be viewed by an Access

Coordinator who helps access and connect students with disabilities to accommodations, including any corresponding information needed for services.

Alternative exam scheduling. Since implementation AIM has allowed Dart Center staff to create new testing agreements for faculty and students to work collectively to create. **Testing agreements** allow a faculty to indicate how much time is allotted for an exam/quiz, what a student is allowed to use, detailed course information, accommodations approved, and upload exams electronically to a secure portal.

Improved messaging and communication. AIM allows for Dart Center staff to send mass messages to students regarding changes in policy, upcoming events, semester reminders, and other email campaigns to make sure students are informed.

Wait time improvements for students applying for services

<i>Before AIM Implementation</i>	<i>After AIM Implementation</i>
2 to 3 weeks wait time for students	2 to 7 Business days

Progress:

2 GOAL # 2 Resource Development

Description:

Exploring potential options for reaching Student Accessibility Center's interpreting/captioning services budget deficit. Implementing train to hire captionist program, if feasible.

Goal Status:

Accomplished

Status Narrative:

1. Student Accessibility Center will know this has been achieved through a check and balance system.
2. As evidenced by the implementation of the train-to-hire program.

To enhance the Communication Access Services the Dart Center provides for Deaf/hard of hearing students, we have hired and or promoted the following staff and implemented the following budgetary supports.

Staff Support Improvements -

Christie Penzien - Assistant Director for Communication Access. This position was established and hired this past academic year to oversee communication access services which include interpreting, CART or Communication-Access-Real-Time, reviewing vendor contracts,

overseeing budget funding, outreach to the campus community, and providing educational training for staff, students, and the university community.

In addition, any billing from university-approved vendors that provide interpreting or captioning services is now reviewed weekly as received. This is a cost-saving measure and allows for better retention of funds and accurate billing for services. Additionally the following staff were also hired to better support students, have greater consistency, and quality of services.

Sarah Cooper - sign language interpreter, to support Deaf students through providing sign language communication.

Benjamin Epstein - the University of Houston's first full-time captionist was hired to support students who are hard of hearing and do not utilize sign language interpreting. Students who are hard of hearing can now get staff support and course access. In addition to course support, Ben's position can also help to caption videos or other forms of media in which captioning is necessary.

Donna Schneider – sign language interpreter, to support Deaf students through providing sign language communication.

Budgetary Improvements -

The SAC system has successfully implemented a checks and balances system for the Communication Access budget is staying within the allocated budgeted amount which can be verified through DSAES business services. Bi-weekly meetings have also been established with business services to update budgetary expenses and ensure communication is ongoing.

Progress:

3 GOAL # 3 Strategic Partnership Development

Description:

Enhance networking with other disability services office (DSO) experts.

Goal Status:

Accomplished

Status Narrative:

Student Accessibility Center will know this is complete when regular meetings have been scheduled with UH system DSO offices.

The SART or Student Action Response Team meetings were established successfully.

The Dart Center Director Kyle Mutz, Assistant Director Crystle McDonald and 4 Access Coordinators meet weekly every Wednesday from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm via the ZOOM platform. These SART meetings involve University of Houston Clear Lake, Downtown, and Victoria campuses. It gives each campus an opportunity to discuss difficult student cases,

provide creative solutions and feedback in how to best support students with disabilities at the University of Houston. Professional development discussions are also ongoing as new webinars, conferences, and other information impacting accessibility in higher education comes out to make sure the University of Houston stays current with best practices.

Progress:

4 GOAL # 4 Cohesion Within Well-being

Description:

Explore additional collaborative opportunities with staff from other Health and Wellbeing departments.

Goal Status:

Accomplished

Status Narrative:

The Dart Center successfully held the University of Houston's **1st annual 2022 Transition Symposium for high school students with disabilities on April 20th, 2022**. This event invited area high school students with disabilities, transition teachers, parents, and campus partners to help educate young people with disabilities about what is available to them on a college campus. The Dart Center invited the following Health and Wellbeing departments to be a part of this event by participating in the resource fair of the symposium:

- Campus Recreation
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Cougars in Recovery
- UH Wellness
- Student Health Center

The following workshops and events were provided to attendees.

Workshops and experiences provided:

- **Accommodations Access and Services in Higher Education** - gave students information about what accommodations, services, resources, and
- **Assistive Technology demonstration** and presentation - gave attendees a chance to learn about screen readers, magnification, document accessibility, testing services, alternative format
- The difference between high school and college, **504 vs Americans with Disabilities Act**
- **Resource Fair** - students got a chance to meet disability service representatives from all campuses
- **Campus Tour/dining experience** - The Dart Center provided lunch at the Cougar Woods dining facility to Symposium attendees to get a feel for campus

dining. In addition, a campus tour was provided by a DART Center student with a disability to showcase different parts of campus.

- **Texas Workforce Commission** - provided an in-depth presentation on the funding opportunities that are available for students wanting to attend college.

Assessment - Received 12 evaluations from attendees (please see attachment below for questions

- - 11 out of 12 people that attended the event felt the event was very good and beneficial
 - 42 people overall attended the event

Dart Center Grand Opening, Art Redesign Project - In the summer and fall of 2021 the Dart Center received feedback from students with disabilities that they were ready for change. The Center first changed its name from the Center for Students with disABILITIES to the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center. Naming the center in honor of University of Houston Alumni Justin Dart Jr. gave the change students were looking for, as he played a critical role in the signing of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA. In addition, further comments regarding the feel of the interior of the Dart Center did not represent the shift and desired environment staff envisioned. With the new director and staff came a vision to re-design the space to celebrate Justin Dart, give students images they could relate to, highlight diversity, and make the center feel more like a home for students.

The following collaborations, details, and pictures (attachments below) highlight this event:

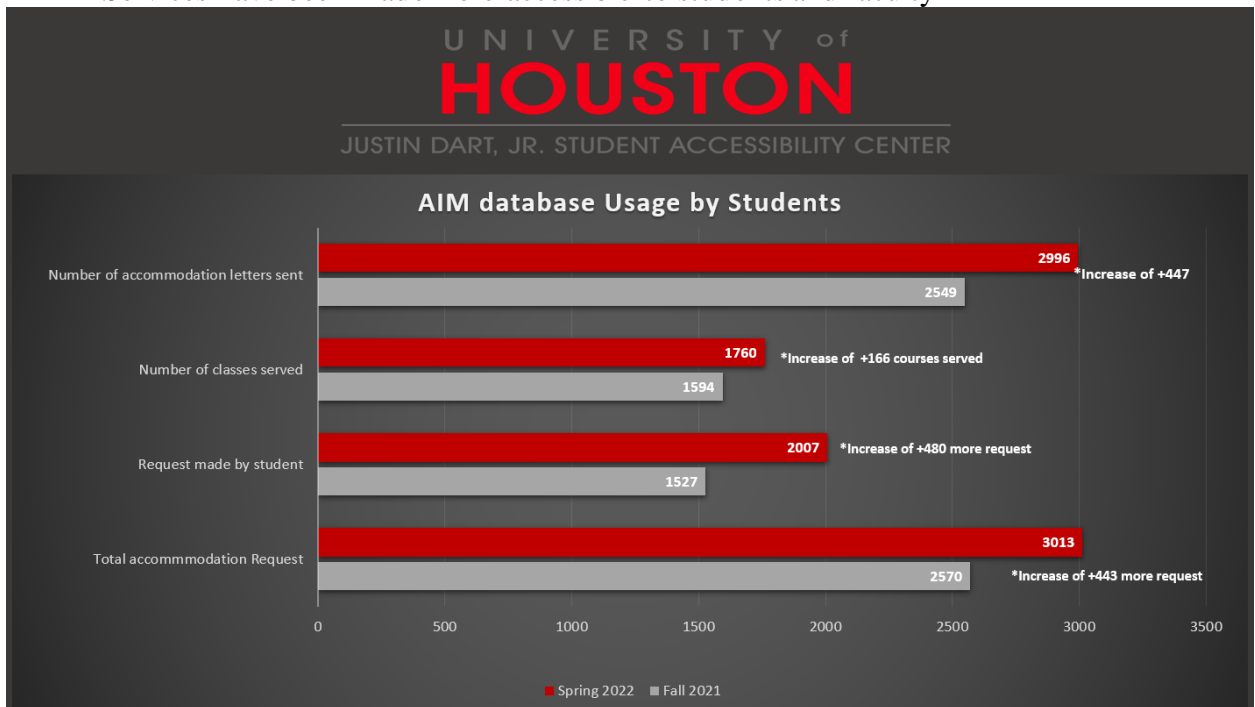
- Collaborated with Architecture student to create vinyls that celebrate the disability advocacy efforts of alum Justin Dart Jr. and his passion for the disability community and diversity on campus
- Over 100 people attended our opening including Dr. Dan Maxwell and many around the university
- People and students from the disability community were also in attendance, some traveling from Austin, Texas.
- Food and beverages were offered to guest
- **Assistive Technology Lab** also received a new logo and branding
- Newly established **Multipurpose Room** branding was completed and put in use to support students. Students can use the multipurpose room for studying, events, meetings, and other academic needs.

4. **Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning**

outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

**Below is a break down of the utilization of the Dart Centers recently implemented AIM database that started in Fall 2021. The data below shows a significant increase for Spring 2022 in the number of accommodation letters sent to faculty, classes served, request made by students, and overall accommodation request made by students. (data obtained through AIM database reports)*

- Students are using AIM more effectively
- The Dart Center is serving more courses
- Services have been made more accessible to students and faculty



Student Affiliations - Below is the reported number of Dart Center students obtained through our AIM database that are taking part or are currently using the services. *This is new data that was started in Spring 2022. It is aimed at providing further detail of what Dart Center students are utilizing on campus to give departments data.

- Caps - 15 total - Male 4 and Female 11
- Cougars in Recovery - 3 total - male 2 and female 1

- Recreational Sports - 2 total - Male 1 and Female 2
- Student Athlete - 27 total - 13 male and 14 females
- Student Health Center - 5 female
- UH Wellness - 2 female

Application for Services Information:

- Total number of applications submitted 414
- Total number of applications transferred 210

Appointment Information:

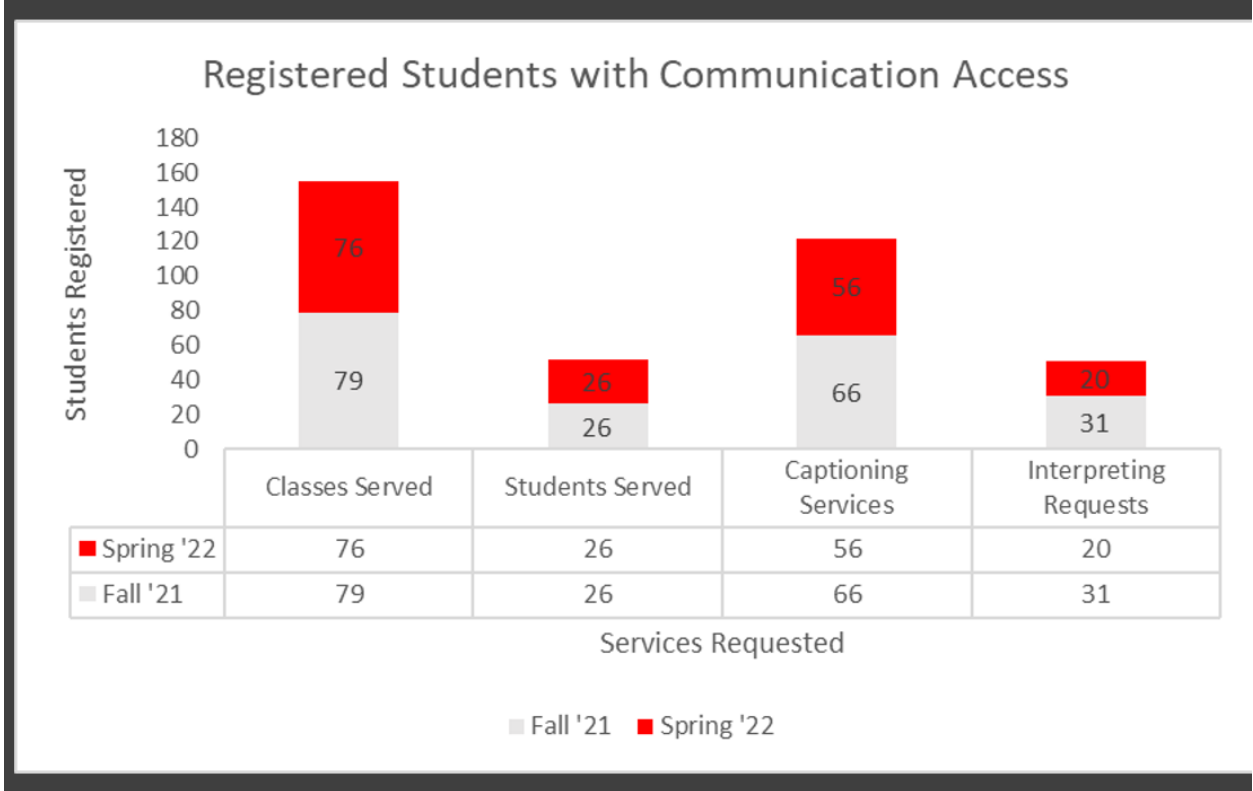
- Total number of appointment request 243
- Number of students 199
- Appointment duration 13,975 minutes
- Number of appointments in-person 30
- Virtual appointments (skype, zoom, nexus, teams) 203
- Assistive technology training: Dragon dictation 120
- Group assistive technology training: text-to-speech software training 240
- Referred to counseling center 3
- Referred to tutoring center 180
- ADA Housing accommodations 360

Alternative Testing Stats: For students needing distraction reduced testing space, testing accommodations, and assistive technology to access exam/quiz materials, the Dart Center supports this for students with different disabilities.

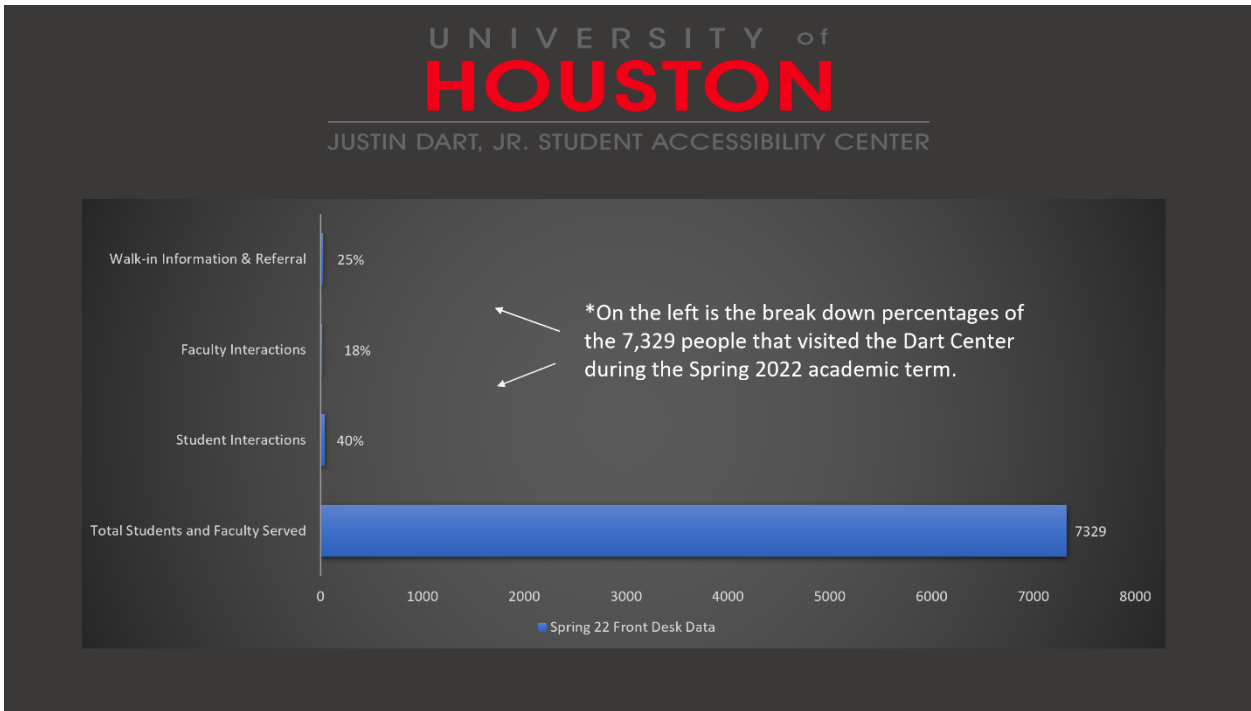
*The data reported for Spring 2022 shows a noticeable increase in our testing services being utilized by our students compared to the Fall 2021 semester.

- Total alternative request - Fall 21- 1922 vs Spring 22- 2752
- Number of classes served - Fall 21 - 1265 vs Spring 22 - 1634
- Number of students - Fall 21 - 480 vs Spring 22 - 679
- Final exams proctored - 316
- Standard exams proctored - 726
- Quiz Exams - 77
- Total length of exams proctored (in minutes) - Fall 21- 88,261 vs Spring 22 - 120051
- Number of returned exam method for professor can pick up - 94 (not measured in Fall)
- Number of returned exam method for scanned and emailed - Fall 21- 1 vs Spring 22 - 871
- Number of returned exam methods for uploaded for instructor portal - fall 21- 0 vs Spring 22 - 221

Communication Access for Deaf/Hard of hearing students: This data shows the overall impact for sign language interpreting and captioning that was provided to students and the University community who are Deaf or Hard of hearing.



Front Desk Support - In the Spring 2022 semester the DART center implemented for the first time a 2-laptop check-in system to help provide more detail and data concerning how many students and people are being served by our staff and more information on why they were visiting our center.



5. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2023) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.**

Previously SFAC did greatly support our department with critical funding to hire new staff, upgrade existing facilities, purchase new assistive technology, furniture, and put many critical pieces in place to enhance opportunities for students with disabilities on campus. With these new positions now in place and new systems to help increase our effectiveness to serve students, our team has turned attention to creating meaningful programming opportunities that give students with disabilities a sense of pride and bring the campus community together for inclusive events. The Dart Center is confident with continued support from SFAC it can continue the positive momentum to make our department the best it can be for serving the University of Houston.

SFAC Q, p.2.

6. **If your unit concluded FY2022 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).**

The Dart Center did have an excess of \$49,859.00 which consisted of salary/wage/fringe, M&O, administrative charges. These funds were left over from vacant positions, and facility improvements including accessible door openers, outside building repairs, and upgrades for academic proctoring services that were not able to be completed before the end of the fiscal year.

7. **Please list your 2023-2024 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Values and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.**

GOAL 1) Student Success (Ongoing)

The Student Accessibility Center will support students with disabilities by connecting students with accommodations, assistive technology, outreach, professional development for staff, educational workshops, and services to all registered students.

The Center will accomplish this goal by successfully implementing accommodations, alternative testing, alternative format, communication access, assistive technology and meeting other access needs for students with disabilities during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

- Data supporting each of these areas will demonstrate the usage and effectiveness of services provided.
- Evaluation of each service will be measured through email campaigns done through the AIM database

GOAL 2) Resource and Data Development (Ongoing)

The Dart Center will work to identify opportunities and evaluate resources to improve efficiency, resource management, and utilization of resources that support access for students with disabilities to help better tell the story and impact of the Dart Center.

- Information and data will be collected to help determine the impact of resources
- Data will be used to improve services and shape department goals/objectives

GOAL 3) Strategic Partnership Development (Ongoing)

The Dart Center will continue to extend its outreach to key university stakeholders by conducting outreach activities, collaborating with at least 4 different departments in DSA, exploring funding opportunities, collaboration with other UH disability service offices and working with community partners to support students with disabilities.

- Through participating in different opportunities in DSAES, the Dart Center will work to measure, collect data, and identify student populations that have been positively impacted
- Impact of any additional funding obtained will be documented and assessed
- Evaluations will also be provided to gauge the level of impact as well.

GOAL 4) Division Cohesion, Signature Department Events, and Collaboration

The Dart Center will host or support at least 4 events that involve collaborating with one of the 6 Health & Wellbeing departments, Division of Student Affairs, or other University departments to strengthen staff connections, and professional development that work to support a healthy work/life balance and increase some aspect of disability educational awareness.

- Through participating in these events, The Dart Center will work to measure, collect data, and identify student populations that have been positively impacted.
- Evaluations will be conducted as well to help determine whether the event was successful and what could be improved|

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2024 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. **Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 3.5, 5.0 or 7.5% in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made. A spreadsheet has been created to assist in this process. Please include a copy of the spreadsheet with your questionnaire submission.**

Below is a breakdown of how the Dart Center would adjust its operating budget should the following cuts be requested. For the 3.5%, 5.0%, and 7.5% reductions the Dart would reduce its temporary staffing and some travel cost to account for the reduced funding. Since the Dart Center has been able to hire more permanent staff, the need to depend on temporary staffing has been reduced.

STUDENT SERVICE FEE Questionnaire				
Name of Unit: Student Accessibility Center				
Dept#: H0216				
	FY 2024	FY 2024	FY 2024	FY 2024
Funding Sources	Base Budget	Amount of 3.5% Reduction	Amount of 5.0% Reduction	Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Student Service Fees- Base Budget	399,475	13,982	19,974	29,961
Expenses		Amount of 3.5% Reduction	Amount of 5.0% Reduction	Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Salaries and Wages				
Full-time Employee Salaries				
Student Workers Wages				
Graduate (GA/IA) Students Wages				
Fringes		-	-	-
Salaries/Fringes Total		0	0	0
Other Expenses				
Temporary Staffing		13,191	18,843	25,000
Travel				3,265
Admin Charge	Enter % 6%	791	1,131	1,696
Other Expenses Total		13,982	19,974	29,961
TOTAL EXPENSE		13,982	19,974	29,961

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts

are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? **If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

The Dart Center is actively working to build partnerships and encourage on campus and outside entities to financially support the department, to help increase the types of programming opportunities for the campus community. Currently we do have some companies that have donated but these sometimes are specific to the topic or event they wish to support.

Advancement Opportunities:

- Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center received a total of **\$15,000 from Enbridge**. \$5,000 can be used each year in collaboration with a campus partner to support students with disabilities. This funding will help our center support awareness and educational events for students with disabilities.
 - This Academic year the Dart Center is using \$5,000 of its first-year funding to support the 2022 Disability Employment Symposium which will take place at the University of Houston's Student Center South Houston Room in partnership with the UH Career Services Center. This event will support both students with disabilities and those without to learn about employment opportunities, resources, learn about accommodations in the workplace, connect with employers, and learn from a diverse panel of speakers.
 - **Shell** – Gifted the Dart Center \$1000.00. This has been an on-going annual gift.

10. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Dart Center is the primary department at the University of Houston's main campus that is tasked with ADA compliance, accommodations, support services related to access, equitable learning environments, and events for students with disabilities. However, our center takes a collaborative approach to working with our entire campus community to work together to ensure everyone has an inclusive experience.