



Disability Resources

Overview

The Disability Resources Department (DRD) supports equitable access, persistence, and completion for disabled students across all SRJC instructional sites and modalities. Guided by its mission to promote Access, Advocacy, and Achievement, DRD provides legally compliant accommodations, individualized counseling, and coordinated supports that empower students to fully participate in the college experience. This update highlights current service trends, student needs, and outcomes and reflects a continued increase in the number of students who identify as disabled—particularly in mental health. DRD’s work directly advances SRJC’s Strategic Plan priorities related to student equity and access, persistence and completion and workforce preparation and career pathways. By responding to rising mental health needs, advocating for inclusive academic practices, and maintaining strong completion outcomes, DRD contributes to closing equity gaps and ensuring that disabled students have equitable opportunities to achieve their educational and career goals.

Growing Student Need and Service Demand

The number of SRJC students who identify as disabled continues to increase each year, with mental health-related disabilities representing the fastest-growing area of need.

ACADEMIC YEAR	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
SHC	2243	2461	2545	3016	3277

Students are engaging with DRD earlier in their college journey and requesting accommodations more frequently. They are also increasingly seeking support related to anxiety, depression, trauma-related experiences, and neurodiversity. These trends align with statewide California Community College data and national higher education patterns, reflecting greater awareness of mental health and a growing willingness among students to access services since the pandemic.

Importantly, this increased engagement reflects higher utilization and a more holistic approach to student support. Many students benefit from coordinated care that brings together faculty, mental health services, instructional support programs, and community partners—strengthening collaboration across campus and enhancing our collective ability to support student success.

Service Quality, Outcomes, and Impact

Despite record caseloads and rising complexity, DRD continues to deliver high-quality, responsive, and student-centered services. Students supported by DRD demonstrate course completion rates comparable to the overall SRJC student population, an important indicator that accommodations and counseling supports are effectively mitigating access barriers.



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These outcomes are driven by Disabled students Programs & Services (DSPS) counseling, academic and accommodation planning, ongoing faculty consultation and collaboration, timely implementation of accommodations across instructional modalities, and an emphasis on self-advocacy and student skill-building. DRD's results reinforce a key institutional message: when access and advocacy are embedded into academic systems, disabled students succeed at rates comparable to their peers.

Student Experiences: Impact in Action

Behind the data are student experiences that illustrate the real-world impact of DRD services:

- Maria, a first-generation student with anxiety and depression, shared that working with a DRD counselor helped them remain enrolled during a particularly difficult semester. Through coordinated accommodations, academic planning, and regular check-ins, the student successfully completed all courses and remained on track toward transfer.
- Aiden, a neurodivergent student in a STEM pathway, reported that DRD's collaboration with faculty around testing accommodations and classroom structure made the difference between withdrawing from a course and earning a passing grade. The student later returned to serve as a peer mentor, encouraging others to access support early.

These stories reflect a consistent theme: access paired with advocacy and sustained support changes academic trajectories.

College to Career Program (C2C)

The College to Career (C2C) program is a 3-year vocational program for disabled students with autism or intellectual disabilities. For the 2024–25 academic year, SRJC's C2C program continued to produce strong outcomes in alignment with statewide benchmarks for C2C programs — including high rates of successful program completion and placement in competitive, paid employment connected to students' individualized career goals. These outcomes are consistent with the program's long-standing performance as one of the highest-achieving C2C programs in California. Students in the three-year program maintain high persistence through each cohort year while completing Career and Technical Education coursework and supported work experiences that contribute to readiness for community employment.

Disability Cultural Center (DCC)

"Santa Rosa Junior College is the first California Community College to establish a Disability Cultural Center—demonstrating leadership in disability equity, belonging, and student engagement."

Rachel Stewart: Disabled Activist

SRJC is home to the first Disability Cultural Center (DCC) in the California Community College system, advancing disability equity and inclusion. Moving beyond a compliance-based model, the DCC affirms disability as an important part of campus culture and identity. Complementing DRD's accommodation and counseling services, the center fosters community, leadership, belonging, and self-advocacy—strengthening connection and persistence while positioning SRJC as a statewide leader in inclusive, equity-centered practice.



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DRD Mission and New Icon

DRD's mission centers on advancing Access, Advocacy, and Achievement for disabled students. Updated branding represents an intentional shift from the previous message, "*Access starts here,*" to a more holistic and student-centered framework. While access remains foundational, the new icon emphasizes DRD's broader role in advocating with and for students and supporting their academic progress, persistence, and completion. This evolution reflects both the increasing complexity of student needs and DRD's commitment to equity, dignity, and shared responsibility for student success across the institution.



DISABILITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
ACCESS. ADVOCACY. ACHIEVEMENT.
Empowering every student, every step of the way

Closing

The demand for disability services continues to grow, particularly as mental health-related needs play an increasingly central role in student success. Despite ongoing constraints, DRD outcomes demonstrate strong institutional effectiveness, and continued investment is essential to protecting access, equity, and completion across the system.

Contact Information

For additional information about the Disability Resources Department, College to Career Program, or the Disability Cultural Center, please contact the Dean of Disabled student Programs & Services, Kimberly Starke Ph.D., at kstarke@santarosa.edu.