ISSUES FACING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES vii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

ABSTRACT ix

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I: DETERMINATION OF ADVANCE BY CHOICE STAKEHOLDER ISSUES 3

CHAPTER ONE: THE ADVANCE BY CHOICE (ABC) PROGRAM 4

Administration 5
Purpose 6
Eligibility 8
The Operation 9
Tutors 11
Additional Services 12

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS 13

Methodology 13
Summary and Findings 27
Question #1 27
Question #2 28
Question #3 29

CHAPTER THREE: TEXT OF INTERVIEWS CATEGORIZED BY STAKEHOLDER AND THEME 31

Question #1 31
Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students . . 31
Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students . 34
Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans . 34
Stakeholder: ABC Staff 35
Stakeholder: Tutor 38
Stakeholder: Instructors (University) . 39

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

	Page
Question #2	41
Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students	41
Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students	42
Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans	42
Stakeholder: ABC Staff	43
Stakeholder: Tutor	44
Stakeholder: Instructors (University)	45
Question #3	46
Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students	46
Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students	48
Stakeholder: Client-Native Americans	48
Stakeholder: ABC Staff	49
Stakeholder: Tutor	51
Stakeholder: Instructors (University)	52
Question #1	53
Stakeholder: Student Support Services	53
Stakeholder: Administration	54
Question #2	56
Stakeholder: Student Support Services	56
Stakeholder: Administration	57
CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PART II STUDY	60
PART II: ISSUES FACING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY	62
CHAPTER FIVE: INTRODUCTION	63
CHAPTER SIX: LITERATURE REVIEW	67
Laws Protecting Students with Disabilities	67
Educating the Educators	71
Discrimination	75
Accommodation	81
Student Support Services	85
Summary	88

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

	Page
CHAPTER SEVEN: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAM .	90
Description of Programs	90
Resource Center	91
Disabled Student Services	91
Affirmative Action	92
Advance By Choice	92
Interviews with Program Administrators . . .	93
Analysis of Administrator Interviews	94
Summary	105
CHAPTER EIGHT: ISSUES AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	106
Student Interviews	106
Interview Questions	106
Profile of Disabled Students Interviewed . .	109
Interviews of Students with Disabilities . .	110
Faculty and Staff Awareness Towards Disabilities and Sensitivity to the Needs of Disabled Students	111
Accommodation Issues	113
Knowledge of Section 504 Requirements . .	118
Advance By Choice - Helpfulness	121
Advance By Choice - Suggestions	123
Analysis of Student Interviews	124
CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS	138
Awareness and Sensitivity Issues	139
Accommodation Issues	140
Section 504	141
Advance By Choice	141
Recommendations	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY	146
APPENDICES	150
APPENDIX A: FACTSHEET	151
APPENDIX B: TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE	153
APPENDIX C: FORMAT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS . . .	155
APPENDIX D: DATA MAPPING	158

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Funding Levels and Number of Clients Served by the Advance By Choice Program, 1978-1989	7
2	Profile of Students Interviewed	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Invisibility Model Inverted Pyramid	77

ABSTRACT

This professional paper is the result of an evaluative study of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program. This study is divided into two parts, utilizing the naturalistic evaluation method of open-ended and indepth, probing interviewing of stakeholding audiences. Part I contains the preliminary findings of open-ended interviews, conducted in conjunction with three other graduate students, in order to determine the perceptions and issues of ABC's stakeholding audiences. Part II of this study is the result of further indepth, probing interviews regarding the major issue areas that emerged in Part I.

The purpose of this study is to identify the issues facing students with disabilities at Montana State University, and to learn how the Advance By Choice program helps to address the issues which have been identified. It was concluded that a lack of awareness and sensitivity by faculty towards students with disabilities often results in resistance by faculty to making academic accommodations for students with disabilities. It was also concluded that the students who were interviewed are not informed about their civil rights as outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Recommendations are made to the Advance by Choice program based on the issues which have been identified in this study. It is recommended that identification of students with disabilities include more involvement from faculty who are aware and sensitive to the issues of students with disabilities. It is recommended that ABC help to develop a handbook outlining the requirements of Section 504. The Section 504 handbook should be distributed to all faculty, staff and students at Montana State University. It is recommended that ABC help to network students with disabilities and help to strengthen the existing student group. Finally, it is recommended that ABC develop a formal ongoing committee of students with disabilities who will help develop a plan to address the issues of students with disabilities at Montana State University.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine the overall effectiveness of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program. The study is divided into two parts. Part I was undertaken jointly by David Kemppainen, Monica Perchaluk Kemppainen, Susanna Trujillo, and Susan Webber for the purpose of determining the perceptions and issues of ABC stakeholding audiences. As a result of the findings uncovered in Part I, each of the above researchers has undertaken a more indepth examination of a particular subject. In this particular professional paper, Susanna Trujillo's exclusive work, Part II, begins on page 62.

The function of the ABC program is to deliver a set of services to targeted groups of high risk students for the purposes of academic retention and graduation. It is important to note at the outset that the findings of this study indicate that overall the ABC program is meeting the needs of its clients very well. The program is clearly an asset to the university. However, there is room for improvement, as is the case in any modern complex environment marked by limited resources, diversity, unknown causes of need, and the necessity for coordinating services amongst differing jurisdictions.

From the beginning this study has been agency oriented. That is, the intent has been to provide information and recommendations to the ABC program that are useful. Consequently, the agency staff has been involved in the project from the beginning. Briefly, Part I of this study is a responsive form of evaluation designed to address the perceived needs and issues of the program as defined by the stakeholding audiences of the ABC agency. Toward this end 66 interviews were conducted for Part I.

Part I of this study is organized as follows: Chapter One contains a description of the ABC program, its purpose, clients, and operation. Chapter Two explains the methodology used, a description of all steps undertaken to complete Part I, and a summary of the interview findings. Chapter Three contains the full text of the 66 interviews categorized by common themes. Chapter Four concludes Part I with a set of recommendations for further examination of the program. These recommendations then become the focus of Part II of this study. In this particular professional paper, the subject of students with disabilities and the issues facing them is the subject of Part II.

PART I

DETERMINATION OF ADVANCE BY CHOICE STAKEHOLDER ISSUES

CHAPTER ONE

THE ADVANCE BY CHOICE (ABC) PROGRAM

The Advance By Choice (ABC) program is funded (100%) by a federal grant through the United States Department of Education for the purpose of improving the retention rate of low income, physically handicapped, and first generation college students. In response to student attrition rates at Montana State University, the Director of the Center for Native American Studies (CNAS) and the Assistant Dean of Students & Services wrote the first federal grant in 1977 for the development of the ABC program. Upon approval of the grant, the program was implemented on September 1, 1978.

While MSU does not specifically track each entering student group, it estimates that 37% of the entering students do not continue at MSU after their first year. Statistics are not available for underprepared students within the applicant pool. According to federal regulations governing the ABC program, the applicant pool consists of first-generation, low-income, and physically/learning handicapped students. Within the applicant pool there are three groups who the ABC program considers to be target:

American Indian, older, and disabled students. Information collected on American Indian students who entered MSU during fall quarter, 1985, shows that 50% left the institution within the first year. Older and disabled students tend to stay in school at a slightly higher rate than American Indian students.

Administration

The Advance By Choice program is under the auspices of the Division of Student Affairs and Services and maintains administrative liaisons with the Departments of English and Mathematical Science, which are within the College of Letters and Sciences. The Grants and Contracts officer reviews the program's fiscal commitments for compliance with university, state, and federal requirements. Personnel appointments are cleared by the Affirmative Action/Human Resources officer and/or MSU Personnel office, dependent upon action to be taken.

The ABC Director is directly responsible to the MSU Assistant Dean of Students and Services, but ultimate authority over the program rests with the office of the United States Department of Education--the program's funding source.

Purpose

As stated in the 1986 grant proposal for federal assistance, the main goal of the ABC program is to "result in an increased retention and graduate rate of identified participants." In addition, the grant proposal states that Advance By Choice is a comprehensive program for the purpose of "(1) identifying and selecting 300 eligible participants; (2) conducting a needs assessment of supportive services for each selected participant; and (3) providing a comprehensive program of counseling, instruction to improve participants' skills, and other activities and services that enhance the cultural and academic experiences of program participants."

It is important to note that the number of clients served is dependent upon the grant award. For example, the program was funded to served 300 participants in 1978 as opposed to 290 in 1989. According to the grant proposal, "multi-year grant periods are commitments from the U.S. Department of Education for MSU to operate the project during the grant period. Each project year is distinct in that yearly allocation levels (funding) are determined by yearly Congressional authorization levels."

A chronology of ABC's funding levels and number of clients served appears in Table 1.

Table 1. Funding Levels and Number of Clients Served by the Advance By Choice Program, 1978-1989.

Year	Grant Award	Number Funded to Serve	Number Served
2-year grant period			
1978	$136,253	300	270
1979	153,571	300	303
4-year grant period			
1980	158,527	300	499
1981	164,868	300	474
1982	158,273	300	360
1983	158,273	300	382
3-year grant period			
1984	163,273	270	302
1985	170,620	270	370
1986	162,283	270	329
3-year grant period			
1987	173,896	290	345
1988	197,208	290	322
1989	205,096	290	300 to date

It is noted that currently the ABC program is funded to serve 290. According to the most recent federal evaluation of the program, ABC participants for 1988-89 were selected from the following categories:

Low income and first generation students	211
Handicapped	19
Low income only	45
First generation only	49
American Indian	54
Asian	3
Black	1
Hispanic	2
White	264

Male	148
Female	176

Eligibility

Program participants are eligible for ABC's support services if they meet one or more of the following criteria, as outlined in the 1986 federal grant proposal. These criteria are:

1. Physically/learning handicapped: a person who, because of a physical and/or learning disability needs specifically designed instructional materials or programs, modified physical facilities, or related services in order to participate fully in the experiences and opportunities offered by postsecondary educational institutions.
2. Low-income: any individual whose family's taxable income did not exceed 150% of the poverty level in the calendar year in which the individual participates in the program.
3. A "first-generation college student" means a person neither of whose parents received a bachelor's degree.

In addition, there are three subgroups within the applicant pool who are targeted by ABC for specific attention: American Indian, older, and disabled students. The ABC Director states that "the program identifies American Indians through a self-disclosure statement by the student

applicant." No other documentation is required of American Indian applicants. According to the 1986 grant proposal, "older students" are those over 25 years of age who are mostly vocational rehabilitation/industrial injury clients, displaced homemakers, or displaced workers. Disabled students, for all intents and purposes of the program, are very similar to "physically/learning handicapped" students.

The 1986 grant proposal states that "students are more likely to leave college due to non-academic reasons than for academic causes, according to national retention studies." Thus, the ABC program developed specialized services for the purpose of addressing the nonacademic needs of the applicant pool. Examples of these needs are facing an unfamiliar environment, distance from extended family, interpersonal conflicts, doubting one's ability, realistic employment goals, and job readiness.

The Operation

What follows is how the Advance By Choice program works for its clients:

1. A prospective participant is informed of ABC program services through the numerous communication networks at MSU. Some of these networks are the Return to Learn program, American Indian orientation, campus newspaper, ABC newsletter, flyers and posters, MSU's

departmental-faculty-staff referrals, word-of-mouth, and the university orientation process.

2. If the student elects to visit the ABC office to obtain information on ABC support services, the program secretary performs the initial screening process. For example, if a student needs tutoring services, the secretary will connect the student with an ABC counselor. However, students do visit the office on a walk-in basis simply to have their questions about MSU answered.

3. After the initial connection is made, the counselors and other ABC staff (Director and/or Learning Skills Coordinator) continue the screening process to determine program eligibility.

4. If the student is declared eligible for the program (based on the aforementioned criteria), a needs assessment is performed by one of the ABC staff persons to determine how the student can best be served by the program.

5. Once the needs assessment is completed, a plan of action is developed by the staff person and the client. For example, if personal or academic counseling is needed, an ABC counselor is assigned to the student. The student and counselor will set up counseling sessions based on their respective time schedules.

Another example might be a student needing either English or Math tutoring assistance. An ABC counselor is assigned to the student, who confirms that the student has taken and passed the necessary prerequisite courses (as outlined in the MSU undergraduate catalog) before tutoring assistance is made available to the student. Moreover, the student is required to visit with the counselor every two weeks for the purpose of discussing the effectiveness of the tutoring services. Once the prerequisite requirement has been confirmed, the student is issued the schedule for group tutoring sessions. Sessions meet two hours per week at various times--both students and tutors set the time schedule for these group sessions. (See Appendices A and B, ABC Factsheet and Tutoring Questionnaire).

Tutors

It is important to note here that tutors of ABC must be approved by the respective MSU department before being employed by the ABC program. In addition, ABC tutors are paid by the program for services rendered only to ABC student participants. However, ABC tutors can also be employed either by ASMSU, the Math Learning Center, or as graduate assistants of a specific university department.

Additional Services

Through the needs assessment process, ABC counselors also connect student participants to other study skills services, which are available in the form of either video tapes, audio cassettes or workshops. However, these materials are also available to any MSU student, not just those enrolled in the ABC program.

In addition to all of the aforementioned services, ABC offers other services related to diagnostic testing in English, math and study skills, test analysis, study groups, and assistance with financial aid forms. The ABC program also coordinates services with MSU's Disabled Student Services office for students in need of either special equipment or assistance. This office is housed within the Resource Center, which also provides services for veteran and older students. Furthermore, ABC staff refer student participants to university and community resources. Some examples of university resources include, but are not limited to, the Women's Resource Center, Career Services, and the Student Health Center. Examples of community resources include, but are not limited to, private practicing therapists or counselors, Alcoholics Anonymous, and adult/community education classes at Bozeman High School.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Methodology

In this chapter the methodology used for Part I will be explained and all steps taken to implement and conclude that methodology will be delineated.

The methodology used for this project is encompassed within a form of program evaluation referred to as responsive (or naturalistic) evaluation (Stake, 1967, 1975; Patton, 1975, 1978; Parlett & Hamilton, 1972; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Responsive evaluation is a departure from the more traditional form of evaluation that is associated with the scientific paradigm where there is an attempt to measure the accomplishment of specific objectives. While this form of evaluation is often useful the findings are frequently not used nor considered useful for the ongoing process of program management (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Responsive evaluation trades off measurement precision for the purpose of increasing the usefulness of findings to those persons responsible for carrying out the program.

An important assumption underlying responsive evaluation is that if the findings are to be used then the

research must respond to the observations of those who have a stake in the program. The research design for responsive evaluation emerges as the evaluation is being conducted where the organizers of the research become the concerns and issues of stakeholding audiences. If the stakeholders think that the specific objectives of the program need to be measured then the evaluator responds with this form of research. Since the design is emergent it is not possible to determine beforehand what each step of the evaluation process will entail.

Another assumption that underlies responsive evaluation is that the stakeholding audiences are in a position to know more about the strengths and weaknesses of the program than is the evaluator/researcher. Consequently, open-ended interviews of the stakeholders are conducted by the researcher in order to uncover any problems that need to be addressed. Further, perhaps more importantly, the interview questions must be open-ended so that the natural biases of the researcher do not lead the response of the stakeholder. In other words, the researcher never begins the interview with a set of structured questions. In effect, the purpose of this form of evaluation is decided by the audiences who have a stake in the program. And if the interview questions are decided by the researcher then the frame of reference does not come from the stakeholders.

Closely paralleling the preceding is the assumption that the responsive evaluator can only get at and learn the perspective of the stakeholder unless he or she is actively engaged with the stakeholder. In other words, the researcher cannot learn about stakeholder perceptions by designing a written survey instrument that is then administered by the evaluator. In such a case the evaluator performs as an external agent with very limited contact with the stakeholder or evaluand. In responsive evaluation, the researcher is actively engaged and stimulated by the responses of the subjects. In other words, there is a great deal of intersubjective communication that occurs between the researcher and subject in responsive evaluation. Naturally, this gives rise to the question of the objectivity of the results. This form of subjectivity can be a very limiting factor on objectivity. Therefore, the interviewing methods used must be carried out in a very specified way designed to eliminate as much bias as possible. The interviewing technique is fully explained below.

Another assumption underlying responsive evaluation is that the values of American culture are pluralistic, while earlier forms of evaluation models assumed a consensual set of values (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This means that the researcher in responsive evaluation can expect that there

will be conflicts among different stakeholders when they hold different value positions. When values differ there will be different information needs and that is accounted for by eliciting the concerns and issues of all stakeholding audiences. Since all stakeholders are deemed important, the information needs of the various stakeholders must be responded to.

The steps that have been taken thus far in the development of this study are given below in the order that they have occurred.

Step 1. The four students involved selected the ABC program as a possible agency for this form of evaluation because of their interest in this program.

Step 2. The director of the agency was contacted by Dr. Carlson for the purposes of probing the interest of the director in this type of project and to explain the research methodology.

Step 3. A joint meeting was held between Dr. Carlson, all four students, the ABC Director and all ABC staff. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the methodology and to seek acceptance of the project. If any significant reservations had been raised at this meeting the project would have been dropped immediately, since it is not possible to conduct any form of meaningful responsive evaluation if a very significant stakeholder, such as the

agency directing the program, is not interested or has grave reservations about the project. The only issue raised at this meeting by the staff concerned confidentiality of interview responses. It was explained that no individual staff persons would be identified in the project, and that all interviewers were bound not to pass on individual comments to any one outside of the research project staff. This joint meeting ended with approval of the project.

Step 4. A total of 70 stakeholders were identified. "Stakeholding audience" is defined below and is followed by an explanation of the process used in determining the stakeholding audiences:

> A stakeholding audience is a group of persons having some common characteristics (for example, administrators, teachers, parents, students, sponsors, clients, and the like) that has some stake in the performance (or outcome or impact) of the evaluand, that is, is somehow involved in or affected by the entity being evaluated (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Following the above definition, the relevant audiences were individuals and/or groups that had some stake in the performance, outcome, or impact in the Advance By Choice (ABC) program.

In answer to the question, "How can an evaluator be certain that he/she has identified all the stakeholding audiences?", nine questions were used which enabled the researcher to determine who the stakeholding audiences were

(Guba & Lincoln, 1981). These nine questions and responses follow.

1. Who developed, conceptualized, invented, planned, designed, built, produced, the Advance by Choice Program?

There were two prime writers who developed, conceptualized, invented, planned, designed, built and produced the Advance by Choice Program. The initiators were the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students. After being funded, Mary Lúkin was hired to implement the Advance By Choice program. She has remained with the program since that time.

2. Who provided the funds and other resources for the development?

The university originally provided the funds and other resources for development of the ABC program. Specifically, the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students, provided the resources for the Advance By Choice program development.

3. Who identified the local need to which the Advance By Choice program is purportedly a response?

Originally, the writers of the first grant proposal (Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students) identified the local need. With the last four grants, however, Mary Lukin has identified the local need to which the Advance By Choice

program is purportedly a response. The local need is identified in each grant proposal under the "requirement" and "regulations" segments. The grant proposal must specifically identify those who can be served by the purported program. For the last four grant proposals, Mary Lukin has gathered quantitative data identifying the MSU population in need of program services.

4. Who decided to apply the Advance By Choice program to the local need?

Initially it was the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students who decided to apply the Advance By Choice program to the local need. Since that time, data has been collected so that the program can attend to specific needs of the community. Initially, the program was less rigid (more flexible), but in the last few years the program has been narrowed so that it attends to the needs of a specifically described population i.e. first-generation college attendance, low income, disabled, etc. (This results from the fact that federal funding has been increasingly difficult to retain since Reagan administration reductions in federally funded programs. A direct result from the aforementioned was the introduction of rigid specifications for qualifying applicants to the program.)

5. Who provided the funds for the local application?

The federal government provides 100 percent of the funds for the local application of the ABC program.

6. Who provided the facilities, supplies, and materials that may be needed?

The university (the Assistant Dean of Students) provided the physical facilities, the student records, and the computer link-up (capital/physical expenditures). The federal government provides project dollars so that the program has all of the operational requirements i.e envelopes, telephones, etc.

7. Who contracted the evaluation?

Dr. Karen Carlson, David Kemppainen, Monica Perchaluk/ Kemppainen, Susanna Trujillo, and Susan Webber initiated the evaluation. The evaluators contracted the evaluation for the purpose of facilitating the completion of their professional papers. It should be noted, of course, that the evaluators are not really a part of the stakeholding audience. In a real world situation, a stakeholder such as the agency itself is the more likely contractor.

8. Who are the presumed direct beneficiaries of the Advance By the Choice program?

The presumed direct beneficiaries of the Advance By Choice program are students that are identified and meet the requirements of this program, i.e. low-income, first-

generation college students, physically handicapped students, Native Americans, and older students.

9. Who are the indirect beneficiaries of the Advance By Choice program?

The indirect beneficiaries of the ABC program are as follows; a) society -- well-educated students capable of supporting themselves, b) MSU faculty -- the affected students become "better consumers" and, as a result, interact with faculty on a higher level, c) financial aid -- the ABC program deals with the problems specific to the identified subgroups, which allows the financial aid office to deal only with the financial difficulties of the identified individuals, d) the staff of the Advance by Choice program, and e) the university, in that there are increased retention rates directly resulting from the ABC program.

Persons or groups identified in answering any of the above questions were automatically included as relevant stakeholders.

The evaluators also used the "ripple" technique, which asks informants in already-identified audiences about other, possibly overlooked, audiences. This was accomplished by asking, at the end of each interview, whether there were any other groups that the individual could think of who would benefit from the Advance By Choice program. Any audiences that were identified in such a manner were

considered for possible inclusion in the study. As a result of the preceding exercise the following six stakeholder audiences were identified. The number interviewed is in parenthesis.

1) Beneficiaries (33 total interviewed)
    * Native Americans (10)
    * Older Students (16)
    * Disabled Students (5)
2) Staff of ABC (5 total interviewed)
    * Director (1)
    * Program Secretary (1)
    * Counselors (2)
    * Learning Skills Coordinator (1)
3) ABC Tutors (8 total interviewed)
4) University Instructors--ABC related (6 total interviewed)
    * English Coordinator (1)
    * English Instructor (2)
    * English Instructor/Tutor (1)
    * Math Instructor (1)
    * TAC Course Coordinator (1)
5. University Administration (8 total interviewed)
    * MSU President (declined interview)
    * Vice President of Academic Affairs (1)
    * Dean, College of Letters & Sciences (1)

* English Department Head (1)
* Mathematical Science Department Head (1)
* Dean, Office of Admissions (1)
* Grants & Contracts Officer (1)
* Dean, Student Affairs & Services (1)
* Assistant Dean, Student Affairs & Services (1)
* Affirmative Action/Human Resource Officer (1)

6. Support Services (6 total interviewed)
   * Director, Student Health Service (declined interview)
   * Student Financial Aid & Employment Officer (1)
   * Director, Student Counseling Services (1)
   * Director, Residence Life & Food Services (declined interview)
   * Director, Career Services (1)
   * Director, Writing Center (1)
   * Director, Women's Resource Center (1)
   * Director, Orientation Services (1)

Step 5. After determining the stakeholding audiences, appointments were made and the open-ended interviews were conducted. A total of 66 persons were interviewed. Thirty-three (33) of these represented beneficiaries. Thirty-seven (37) other stakeholders were identified; of these, four (4) declined an interview. Due to the size of the number of beneficiaries a ten percent sample of the

three target groups (Native Americans, disabled, and older students) was interviewed. These persons were chosen at random from client lists provided by the ABC agency.

Before proceeding with the sixth step in the project process, the interview method will be explained. (The format and ground rules for the interviews may be examined in Appendix C.)

The following three questions were asked:

1. Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are? (University administration and support services received a slightly different question since they are not directly involved in the ABC program. Thus, the following question was asked of them: What do you think is the significance of the ABC program at MSU?).

2. What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here? (Question for university administration and support services was: What is your subjective assessment of the ABC program? In other, words how is it doing in your opinion?).

3. Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?

As noted previously, the open-ended questions are used so that the genuine concerns and issues of the stakeholders

will emerge. Because the very presence of the interviewer provides a subjective dimension to any interview, it is important that the interviewer respond to the stakeholder in as neutral a manner as possible. It is particularly important that the interviewer not lead the stakeholder's response. Consequently, the role of the interviewer in responsive evaluation is to do no more than ask the question and provide feedback in the form of only repeating back the stakeholder's response verbatim. The purpose of repeating the response back verbatim is threefold:

(1) So that the respondent can hear exactly what he/she has said for the purposes of an accuracy check. This gives the respondent an opportunity to change her/his response and provides the respondent with an opportunity to clarify and validate her/his own opinions.

(2) When, in the opinion of the interviewer, a response is unclear, a simple repeat of the comment (ending in a question tone) prompts the respondent to go further into her/his comments adding clarity and depth to the interview.

(3) Frequently, the verbatim repeating back to the respondent triggers additional observations and responses that lend to the depth of the interview material.

It is very important that the interviewer not paraphrase any of the respondent's comments since in paraphrasing the interviewer selects her/his own words and

those words may misconstrue or misinterpret the respondent's view. It is noted that a main reason for the open-ended interview, in contrast to the structured interview, is that the structured interview always requires the respondent to enter the frame of reference of the interviewer. And the interviewer's frame of reference may seriously misinterpret the reality of the respondent. This is a serious problem if one's intent is to develop an evaluation project that is responsive to the needs and reality of the stakeholders.

Step 6. At the conclusion of each interview the interviewer immediately translated her/his notes into data statements and using note cards proceeded to record one thought per card. This facilitates the categorizing and sorting process explained below. (See Appendix D for an explanation of the method of note taking that was used.)

Step 7. After all of the interviews and data cards were completed, the responses were grouped by stakeholding audience in what appear to be common themes. The purpose of this categorization was to facilitate the determination of whether or not there were any troublesome areas that needed further examination. A brief summary of the findings follows and the complete categorization of the responses by stakeholding audience is contained in Chapter Three.

Summary and Findings

Question #1 . . . what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?

The majority of the students interviewed use the ABC program as an academic (class scheduling, registration, etc.) and personal counseling service. Fewer of them utilized the tutorial services, and it appears that only the older students took advantage of the study skills component of the program. In addition, several of the Native American clients mentioned two ABC staff members in particular (both Native Americans) as helping them the most. This may suggest that clients are selective in whom they will go to for advice, counseling, and assistance.

Overall, the service and atmosphere of the ABC office/program, according to the clients, is very efficient and congenial.

The ABC staff was asked the same question as the clients regarding the program. They saw the program as a very valuable service to the students who qualify for it.

The survival and success of the program seems to be attributed to the resourcefulness and leadership of the director and the experience and continuity of the staff. According to the staff responses, there has been little staff turnover since the beginning of the program.

The tutors responded to this question by referring to their particular qualifications and experience in their capacity of tutoring. They had personal preferences regarding the different methods of tutoring, but essentially they did not refer to the general structure of the program as helping them be more effective in their jobs.

The university instructors, in answering this question, generally felt the support and accessibility of the ABC counselors was helpful to them and the students who participated in the program. They liked the autonomy they had with regards to the instruction in their particular subject matter areas. The English and math departments, in particular, were commended for their support in assisting the ABC students, thus the program.

Question #2...what is keeping you from being more effective?

Perceived lack of effectiveness may be grouped in three categories: (1) personal problems and preferences, (2) bureaucratic problems, and (3) insufficient funding. Some of the responses relating to personal problems or preferences were disliking the teaching approach of certain ABC instructors, disliking the focus of the instructor teaching a class, not managing time effectively, discomfort associated with outside problems (lack of day care, spouse abuse, alcoholism and the like), not being a good delegator,

prejudice, and the student's cognitive limitations. Bureaucratic problems noted were problems associated with getting into restricted entry classes and the office being too bureaucratic, since it takes a student two weeks and a lot of paper work to get a tutor through the ABC program. Funding problems noted were lack of numerous teachers, lack of federal "liquid" funds, lack of funding to obtain required capital expenditures such as computers, appropriately sized classrooms, and more private ABC office space.

Question #3...if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation, what would you want to do?

One common theme that came up consistently was directly related to the need to secure more funding for the ABC program. Examples included needing more money for tutors, hiring more ABC staff, having unlimited funding so staff can attend more conferences, and having more money so more MSU students could take the writing sample test upon entering the university.

Another theme addresses the need to expand the ABC program in terms of facilities/space. Some examples here include needing more rooms for tutoring, securing additional computer access time for ABC classes, and having more privacy in the ABC office.

A third common theme involves expansion of ABC program services. A few examples include tutoring services through

ABC during summer classes, hiring tutors who understand Native American students, the need for ABC classes covering subjects in addition to math and English, and providing more one-on-one tutoring for students.

As noted previously, university administrators and support services were asked slightly different questions. In response to the questions "What do you think is the significance of the ABC program at MSU" and "What is your subjective assessment of the program," it is noted that the program received very affirmative responses. However, many of the respondents addressed the program's success in terms of its providing remediation services, efforts toward retention, assisting Native American students, and other ABC program goals without having any real knowledge of the program and its specific efforts. In other words, many of these respondents were actually not very well informed.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXT OF INTERVIEWS CATEGORIZED BY STAKEHOLDER AND THEME

Question #1

Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Services:

ABC assists me with class scheduling and registration.

ABC assisted me in locating the local GRE testing center.

ABC helped me to get into 010, 011, and 012 Math classes.

They've always been there when I've needed help--like in math.

They gave me different math class options.

I have done better in math classes since the ABC program. Previously, I had tried 010 Math by myself, but failed.

ABC helps me to be effective because I have teachers helping me in specific subject areas. In addition, the office atmosphere is one of openness where I can come in and speak with a counselor.
ABC was a big help, especially at the beginning of the school year.

Having to attend the Math Learning Center certain hours during the week forced me to do my work.

Math/Writing/Study Skills:

The Wednesday evening workshops have been helpful for reading, writing, new ways to study, and relaxing before/in exams.

The ABC class in 005 Math makes it easier for me to understand math. The pace/material is slowed down so a student can grasp the material.

ABC offers an 001 Writing class; it helped me with basics.

Their study skills workshops helped me a lot.

The group study skills sessions help to make me more effective.

The study skills sessions on a weekly basis.

ABC Counseling and Other Services:

ABC's counseling service has helped me academically.

ABC helped me to be more effective because they helped me build confidence in an area that I was seriously lacking.

With me, personally, the counselors have helped me to become more aware of who I am and helped me to come out of my shell.

Being able to talk to my counselor regarding how I feel about my curriculum or how things are going for the quarter.

The encouragement of the counselors; they are there to listen to any problem.

I get school-related counseling assistance.

Having an adviser who I can talk to and be open with.

The program helped me to gain confidence in school.

Counselors are aware of the students who come in; they keep up the quality of the inner office.

ABC is exceedingly helpful and willing to assist me.

ABC made me comfortable about the whole university system.

ABC has an atmosphere that has helped me to open up as a person.

ABC has always been there for me both in academia and family situations.

Getting extra instruction; it helped seeing there were more students than myself who were having similar problems.

I needed the extra instruction because I'd been out of school for eight years.

The instructors are real helpful; they don't make me feel bad about asking any type of question.

Tutoring:

The math tutoring helps me.

Math tutoring helps me.

By going to a tutor connected with class helps me. Otherwise, I don't think I could answer the questions right away.

Tutors at ABC are good at what they do. They explain things I don't understand; they cover the material as many times as it takes for me to grasp it.

Other:

The three math tests are helpful to those who are stuck. If you fail the first test on Monday, you can take it again on either
Wednesday or Friday.

The program has helped me; I don't use the tutors, but I do use the advisers.

To me, the program helps me because of my prior lack of education--my parents moved around a lot.

I probably wouldn't be in school if ABC hadn't first helped me.

It was a great place for me to start since I started college for the first time at the age of 30.

I did use it at first, but now I am a graduating senior and don't use it much.

Information put out by ABC, especially that of the Assistant Dean of Students about ABC.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Tutorial:

The fact that I was able to get help in the subject I needed help with. The program met my needs.

Having a tutor.

Other:

I don't know how to answer that.

Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans

Counseling/Advice:

I also go there for academic advice.

They were there to give me help (academically).

The main thing I go there for is to be advised on classes so I don't get into classes I could not take, that I am not prepared for yet.

They don't force me to do anything, they just give me advice.
I went there for advice, but haven't had any tutoring or other services.

The counseling.

I go there for counseling and the use of their computer.

If there are personal problems that are interfering with school, they (ABC) are good at directing me to help.

I get a lot of moral support from ABC.

Don't Use It:

I haven't ever used it, except for 005 Math.

I signed up, but didn't use any services.

When I did use it, it was good because it made me get after it.

ABC Staff:

One person who helped me the most is Kay McAllister in 005 (Math).

Just being able to go over there and talk. When I first started, I had a couple deaths in my family. It was good to go over and talk to Mary (Lukin).

The moral support and advice of Mary Lukin.

Mary Lukin is very helpful. When I make appointments with her, she (usually) tells me how to get around my problems.

Kay McAllister is a big plus for 005 (Math) learning. She's a good teacher.

Mary Lukin.

Other:

Every time I've gone to ABC, I've gotten immediate help from them. It's a good program.

It put me into a more personalized teaching/learning situation.

The tutors.

Stakeholder: ABC Staff

Giving Students Help/Support:

As I see student's needs. I see where I fit into (the program)--be of assistance to students.

I feel good about a very valuable service. We give the students a lot of help.

The program offers a support system for the students it serves.

It (the program) allows those students who might not often be successful, be successful.

Whether or not it's good help or bad help, it does help some.

The program helps a lot of students that qualify for it. I'm not familiar with the qualifications though.

We take up the slack of academic advisors. We pay more attention to the students. They are "at risk" students. We pay more attention to the student's welfare. Advisers, as a rule, just pay attention to the rules of the program.

Politics/Federal Funding:

Funding security -- not getting the axe.

When we were initially interviewed by the "Feds" he said, "This project is presently at a point that you would expect most projects to be in two years!"

When we first started this program I had to: 1) screen the staff, 2) get physical facilities, and 3) get supplies. After doing this, I had to negotiate finding a place. I learned the ins and outs of everything. For example, I learned where to get furniture for free.

We are working with a National Organization -- we work with "Feds". There are guidelines for writing proposals. If you follow this guideline, they know what you are asking for. It also helps you outline a more realistic program.

Overcome barriers with the program.

Previous Training/Experience/Support Courses:

Having been with the program for ten years.

When I was selected for the program (ABC) I had six (6) years experience at UCLA, serving approximately 2600 students. I learned a lot about evaluation (quantitative) -- how well we reached the goals of the program i.e. retention studies, impact of success studies and student feedback. For student feedback, we presented a non-threatening atmosphere so that students would answer our questionnaires. We developed a level of trust with students so that we could find out how our program was doing (positive or negative feedback). The students liked our honesty.

Through the MPA program, coursework, and networking, I learned how to implement projects.

I started the MPA program, but didn't take comps or write my professional paper. The MPA classes that I did take had a lot of stuff that has helped me in understanding the

theories behind management. This helped me in administering our office. The staff has commented on things that I have gained through the MPA coursework.

When I was hired -- approximately August 1 -- I was immediately put in contact with other directors in the state. This way I had someone to call. At the time the "Feds" provided training, so I was able to meet with the project director at the regional conference. They trained us on a lot of things -- since the program used to be under "TRIO" -- they had special training for directors. This training was most helpful because there was not anyone on campus who had to deal with what I do (No one on campus does the things I do). This was troublesome for me.

My past academic training makes me more effective. My background is in counseling. It is nice to know how to handle people in a crisis.

I'm the type of person who makes connections in order to get things done. Now I am able to get the resources we need-- make them available -- so that the program can run well.

I've been in the job learning more about the campus resources, which in turn helps me to be more helpful to my students.

Link to Campus -- Outside ABC:

Through networking, I have access to anyone I want or need on campus.

Through inservice training and networking, I was given help in interpreting regulations and implementing them to run a good program.

ABC Staff/Leadership:

Supportive staff.

We have a great group here. They are innovative, self starters. Everyone worked on their sections -- we were ready to open the first day of school. We still have some of the original staff around, but not many. There is some turnover, but for the most part our staff has longevity.

Specifically, I would like to compliment Kay McAllister on her sensitivity and caring for her students, without allowing herself to be manipulated by them. This rubs of on us (me).

Mary (Lukin) has also done a lot, pointing out areas where I can be of more assistance.

University take ABC seriously because of our consistency and Mary's strong leadership.

Other:

Clear expectations on the job.

Know that there is a need for the ABC program.

Effective prior performance. This eliminates fear of not being around next year.

We still don't have very nice facilities, but we are still operating.

As I am in the program longer, I see how valuable my position is. I am the first person the students meet.First impressions are important. They (the students) make a judgment about the program here.

Appreciative students.

Stakeholder: Tutor

Experience/Qualifications:

The background I have.

It (ABC) helps students get paid for their knowledge. It helps students help other students.

I am very familiar with the courses and tests make me effective.

Tutorial Sessions:

The one-on-one situation with a student.

The methods of tutoring. The meeting/class at the beginning of the school year which added to my former knowledge on how to be an effective tutor.

Doing one subject with 3-4 people assigned to you and the ability to work independently with no set rules.

I think group tutoring sessions help each student because a student can see how somebody else solves a problem.

The emphasis on group tutoring -- if I can't come up with answers others can.

Other:

I have been at three different schools and had tutors at all of them. This is the first program of its kind I've run into.

The tutor room with chalkboard helps a lot.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)

Counselors:

Concerned with students succeeding as human beings. They (counselors) go beyond academic counseling -- holistic.

Counselor contact regarding individual students helps coordinate student needs in English.

The support of the counselors.

Math/English Departments:

The writing center is supportive. They don't have to offer one class per semester because ABC doesn't give them money.

English 001 classes are separate from the English Department regarding assignment of instructors. It's not in the hands of the English Department.

Contact with other English instructors for information and feedback on students to relay to ABC counselors -- act as mediators.

English Department cooperation -- schedule flexibility with students of ABC as well as other MSU students.

Lots of interaction and communication within the English Department and with the ABC program.

The support of the TAC (Math) people.

Autonomy:

Freedom to develop my own classes.
I have autonomy. ABC does not tell me what to do. They don't tell me the goals in composition and reading. They

are open-minded to changing the structure according to the student's needs.

I'm not overloaded; I'm given a lot of freedom with course content.

Small Classes:

As a teacher, I like the small class size.

Working with and teaching small numbers of students.

ABC Staff:

People that I work with in the ABC program.

The holistic evaluation (ABC staff persons) vs. quantifiable pre-and post-test evaluation.

Get support from ABC not the English Department.

I have access to staff in ABC program; quick responses to any question.

Students:

Students can get study skills help.

Students are motivated to accomplish something.

My students who teach me lots of good stuff.

Other:

Availability of Writing Center computers.

We have the advantage that we are not brand new in the program (long-term employment).

The structure. There are four of us who concentrate on developmental education, minus the English Department, who is separate. We rely on each other for feedback.

I've never felt frustrated with the program.

I think I am good at this job.

I work hard.

Question #2

What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Soft Approach:

I don't like the "soft approach" of teaching; the instructor treats us like babies.

I realize that the program is designed with a "soft approach," but it isn't a good enough approach for me.

Study Habits:

Once I developed study habits, I felt ABC was effective.

I didn't have study habits; I wasn't used to being in a classroom.

Nothing:

Nothing to report.

Nothing to say.

Nothing to report at this time.

Nothing.

Nothing.

I have nothing to say.

I don't have a problem with ABC at all.

Other:

What kept me from being effective was having been out of school for so long.

"Restricted Entry" is a pain; if a person isn't one of the first ones in s/he doesn't have a chance of getting in.

In the classroom, the instructor rushed through things that I needed more clarification on and took too long on things I didn't need.

ABC got me boost in math until I didn't need their services any longer. Now, I am doing great in math.

Individual attention is more conducive to my needs.

TAC Math aides are not effective; there are too many people and not enough tutors.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Other:

Managing my time in a way that isn't always effective.

Nothing to do with the program.

Nothing.

Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans

Personal:

Some personal problems, but academically I am doing pretty good.

The only thing is me. I am lazy about some things and over-zealous in other things, especially classes.

All ABC can do is give you advice. Its all up to you.

Other:

My age. I've been out of high school quite awhile. I had to learn everything all over again.

Day care is a big problem.

There have been times when I have gone in and they have been busy. They need help. Mary Lukin, as the Director, has many jobs and can't be expected to see all the students who want to see her.

I don't see anything they do that could hinder anyone.

When I need a tutor, I go to Dan (Voyich). The ABC program wanted you to go through their study skills workshops and i already took a class for that. Because of that I never went over there for a tutor again.

I usually meet with Mary Lukin, but I just haven't needed them recently.

Stakeholder: ABC Staff

Lack of Privacy/Office Space:

We need to fix the physical office! We have no privacy. Students ought not to feel like everyone can hear them! We need real doors and walls, but because money is the issue, there is no way we will get these facilities. The University was generous enough to give us what we have.

Need more privacy with clients.

Budgeting:

Politics. Because the program is federally funded we are required to stay tight within the regulations.

Job needs to be full-time from one funding source.

Personal:

At this time, not having a higher degree within this setting is detrimental. But with my experience and my reputation, I have been able to counteract that.

Another problem is that I am not a good delegator (but I have gotten better). For example, students used to depend on me being a resource person with their housing problems. When they used me as a resource person it interrupted me. So I trained people to answer the common questions so that I wouldn't have to be there. This makes me more effective in other ways. By training others to take responsibility for what I had originally done I am delegating properly. A lot of the time, however, I'll just do it because it is easier for me to just do it, rather than lay out the ground work -- when things have to be responded to quickly.

We have a really good network. I can't do everything, therefore I set priorities of what I can be involved in.

More importantly, I'm not feeling guilty about not doing everything. "Unless you take care of yourself, you can't do anything for anybody else".

Initially I have to deal with: 1) being and Indian women, and 2) the misconception that I was given the position because I was a minority plus a woman. The attitudes

expressed make me seem like I'm proving myself, but I've now been here for a long time. Sometimes I feel that I am an Indian woman, filling quotas for committees. I feel like I'm being called on to be the expert (Indian things, woman's perspective).

According to somebody, I am not as effective as I could be because I am abrasive, sharp, and demanding. On the other hand, through networking I had feedback that states...I deal with a situation, and then move on. I can be this way intentionally.

I have shortcomings too, that I have to deal with.

Other:

More concentration (to retain) into the basic reason why we are here.

Being computer unfriendly, which is difficult when you have to work with people.

Leaving in two weeks -- husband obtained employment elsewhere.

Time, because I have a lot of duties. Some days students take up a lot of my time.

The program makes a big difference. It helps the student work within the system (university) and the student learns how the system works.

The students who are eligible for the program are very successful. At least those I deal with.

More say or give more input into the program to make me more effective.

<u>Stakeholder: Tutor</u>

Bureaucracy:

Not many students seek tutors because some complain that the office is too bureaucratic. It take two weeks to get a tutor and a lot of paper work.

We don't have the funding to help one individual student that's falling behind the group tutoring session.

Students are evaluated for "no shows" or they must visit the tutor's supervisor in order to remain in the program.

Other:

The students not studying or doing their assignments.

The tutor taking advanced courses and knowing more than the level being taught. This leads to inefficiency.

If you tutor more frequently, you learn to tutor better.

I'm inefficient because I'm doing research at the same time.

I have trouble relating with students who struggle with the very basics of Math...my methods don't apply to those students. For example, a student who is having a problem with basic multiplication tables.

I worked there (ABC) last term and started this term. I've only helped a couple of students and they did quite well.

Understanding where the students are in lectures/class or in the book.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)

Budget:

We need more money for computers, for more tutors specially trained in writing in order to help remedial writers.
I wish there was more money to take care of disadvantaged students.

Other:

I don't like my setting (classroom) in Roberts Hall. It limits use of an overhead, the classroom has an echo, and as a small group, we can't fill the space.

I wish all writing classes had access to the computer writing service.

Hard to answer, I think I am being effective.

Lack of time. There is not enough hours in the day for any of us.

There are things I have no control over such as abusive spouses, alcoholism, rotten home life of students.

Question #3

Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Need More Tutors/Instructors/Classes:

There should be at least two instructors per class.

Put alternate times on the weekly meetings for those of us with children who can't meet at the one designated time.

When a group of students from a higher level class needs a tutor, have more access to getting a tutor through ABC rather than being sent to ASMSU and getting the run-around. By the time we visited all people involved, it was too late to even have a tutor.

Have more one-on-one tutors; there aren't enough.

More one-on-one tutors for Students Over Traditional Age (SOTA's).

One-on-one instruction.

For speech, we need an 002 or 003 Speech class; it would alleviate some of our anxiety.

They usually just deal with major subjects; they should diversify.

The only improvement is to have more tutoring for different courses, such as Engineering, Physics, etc.

Have tutoring services through ABC during summer sessions, although I don't believe they have the funding.

Need tutor services available for all classes--not just specific ones--or at least have study group sessions.

Have more money for tutors.

Physical Facilities:

Have more rooms for tutoring.

I'd like to have more privacy when I go to the office.

Make the tutoring room larger or have more rooms available.

Nothing:

Nothing to add.

Nothing.

Other:

Make class sizes smaller.

Have ABC advertise more and let people know of their services.

Give older students a little more time to take ABC class exams.

ABC needs to let me know what my rights are as a student.

When selecting classes, be able to go to ABC for assistance in addition to going to the department advisor.

It's too bad you have to qualify for this program. It needs to be opened up to other students--those who need extra help.

During the week of orientation, allow ABC to spend more time talking about their program.

Since ABC, ASMSU, and other MSU departments are all involved with tutoring services, you'd think they would work together.

Implement other instructors; it's not my fault if I can't identify with a certain instructor. I realize I'm not always going to identify with others, but I'm not progressing as quickly as I wanted.

Separate Older Students:

Have two summer orientation sessions specifically for older students--the one gets filled too quickly and SOTA's get placed in with younger students.

Separate older students in special classes; we have needs separate from those of traditional-aged students.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Other:

Tutors need to be in touch with courses they're teaching. For example, the guy who tutored me was good at math, but not up with the subject area I was in.

I'm not good on these kinds of questions; I don't know.

Nothing, really.

Stakeholder: Client-Native Americans

Don't Use It:

I'm glad its offered. I've just never used it.

I have nothing to base an opinion on, but as far as using the tutors, I pack them around like a trusty sidearm in bear country, as a last resort. I always have them.

I don't have any experience with their tutors or tutorial situation, other than 005 (Math). It was about as effective as they could make it in dealing with the number of students they have.

Budget:

They could provide better support services for single parents especially through finances.

They could get me more money.

Follow-up:

I would like to see if a student goes through a class and still doesn't pass, that ABC takes you in and starts you off with a tutor or works with the instructor, so problems could be worked out the next time around.

I think its important that they do more student follow-up.

Resources:

They should have more space.

The computer should be open to the student or they should provide computer services. Them, being a tutor program, computers would be the way to go, I think.

ABC Staff:

Hire another person. I feel more comfortable with Mary Lukin and Susan (?), than any of the others.

They should have at least one male counselor in there.

Tutor/Cultural:

I think Indians have a translation-type deal (problem) as opposed to a learning disability. If they had a program to correct this or help it, this would be nice.

Better tutors or smarter tutors. The (tutors) don't know how to answer me or they don't understand my questions. I think its something to do with being an Indian and they're not. (Several responses similar to this were made off the record)

Other:

I wish I had a counselor by my side to tell me when I'm going astray. Sometimes I just need a stick to keep me going on the right track.

Don't lose the personalized instruction that they have.

I would not make study workshops a requirement to use their services. I would make it an option.

<u>Stakeholder: ABC Staff</u>

Program Expansion:

I think sometimes we need more classes--Math and English both, (however), more English than Math, but math also.

Like to require (all) students to do some of the things we do in this program i.e. students who need help writing should be required to take a writing class. This would leave us with better prepared students.

The only think I would say is it is quite effective, but too limited. I would like to see these services provided to more students. Other students could benefit from these services.

Financial:

Need unlimited funding to attend more conferences.

There are pros and cons to relying on "soft money" -- federal funding. This does not lead to a feeling of stability. Fiscally we have increased more than other units on this campus since 1982. (Increased in federal funding, where state funded projects have had decreased funding.)

Need a higher salary.

Teaching:

Advising and teaching should be evaluated. Research should not be so stressed at this college.

With the Math Placement Center -- people write a test, then the student is recommended to a certain level. But is not required to start at that level. Students would be required to start at the level recommended. This may lead to some misplacement, but in the long run, it will save the student time and money.

Administrative:

I am completely satisfied with what I am -- being in the position as long as I have, has allowed me to fine-tune things (not mundane things -- we don't allow ourselves to just be complacent). Our jobs are routine in one way, but this allows me (and fellow workers) to branch out and develop skills in other areas. Sometimes I have to push co-workers. But, having contacts expands our resources. In regard to our jobs, they are routine, but we do make changes. It is because of this routine we are allowed to branch out. If we were starting the program over every year, we would not be able to improve. Through the program's longevity we have developed a stronger program, we're not just keeping things going.

I do what I want to do. There are limitations i.e. organization where the program is places some limitations, but through networking I have access to anyone I want or need on campus.

Feel more freedom to add my ideas to the program as they pertain to me.

Other:

Wish for a better memory.

Restrict registration until you have the required English and Math.

Have all the students responsible enough to check in without us tracking them.

Difficult question because I see us doing such a great job.

More training. It is available but never attended. More training is needed to be more effective. Also to allow me to see where our program fits into other programs with similar substance.

Stakeholder: Tutor

Specific Classes/Personal Preference:

I would sure like some help when tutoring students with problems in basic Math, i.e. multiplication tables.

Basically, I'd like to tutor classes that are going to be on the MCAT.

I would like to have a better choice of classes that I would be tutoring.

I'd like to tutor organic chemistry, general chemistry 131, physics 205 and 207, physiology, and general biology.

Resources:

To have, on reference, the textbooks for each class in the library or somewhere.

Personal copy of textbook.

We need more available time in tutoring room that has the chalkboard.

One-to-One Tutoring:

In certain cases, I'd like to see individual one-on-one tutoring sessions.

I would like to have more one-on-one group sessions.

Other:

If I have time, attend lectures to help students more.

As far as I know, its (ABC) successful.

I don't know much about the program.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)

Computers:

We need additional computers and space.

We need to schedule one class to the computer room once per week each for two hours.

We need more computer access time for us as a class/group (each quarter).

We need more computer time and access each quarter.

Prejudice/Cultural Background:

Change the prejudiced view of people: "dumb", "categorize", "elitist".

Recruit some kind of person/program that would help me understand students with physical disabilities or cultural differences better. I felt stupid not knowing these things.

Writing Sample Test:

We need more money so more students could take the Writing Sample test upon entrance at MSU.

I'd like to see every new, incoming student to MSU take the Writing Sample test vs. only certain students.

As a result of the Writing Sample test, all incoming students could see whether or not they were eligible for ABC.

Other:

There are a lot of students who haven't developed (a) writing skills, (b) thinking skills, and (c) living skills--social skills. We need to prepare students for better thinking and impact more students.

If I could, reduce tension in the main office. (ABC office)

Native American Studies (Dan Voyich) is great. He helps the students fill out forms. I call up Dan to isolate problems. He is incredibly supportive.

Just keep growing. (ABC)

I'd like to see college credit for 001 courses applicable toward graduation--the courses would then be more meaningful to students.

Question #1

What do you think is the significance of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program at MSU? **(University Administration and Support Services only)**

Stakeholder: Student Support Services

ABC Director:

I respect the things the Director has done for Indian students.

It is obvious, to me, that the Director loves his/her work and the students speak highly of him/her.

Remedial Services:

The program is significant because it's a gesture towards remedial students.

No other place can a student get remedial help.

To provide opportunities to obtain tutoring in Math and English.

ABC is the primary academic assistance program at MSU.

Targeted Groups:

ABC plays an important role for Native American and SOTA students.

It's a program available to assist first-generation students and those students in need of help.

Other:

It helps MSU's retention rate.

ABC serves a smaller number of students (350-400) than our department. This allows ABC to know the student much better--a closer relationship with the student.

They are effective because of their longevity.

We just provide housing; we don't know which of our students are involved with the ABC program; we have no need to know.

Stakeholder: Administration

Benefits Students:

Assist students in the area of remediation.

It's been instrumental in providing additional resources for students who need them in English and Math.

The impact gets them (students) over the anxiety of learning.

ABC is one of the first contact points that gives students a message that MSU is committed to its academic goals. ABC enables students to learn and instills confidence in them; students learn to learn.

ABC is significant as assistance because of its focus on excellence; they don't coddle students. Instead, they have the attitude that students should not be excused from academic rigor, which gives ABC credibility with the academic community.

ABC also has a student adjustment element to it.

At ABC, students also get cultural identity help in addition to support in mathematics. It's been quite

successful in providing extra support and help for this group of students.

Retention:

It's an excellent program; it offers a service. It's a retention program.

ABC has a tremendous impact on students who would otherwise not succeed at MSU.

ABC is a valuable program because of the attention they give to those students who would not have made it otherwise.

ABC is the first line of retention; far fewer students would be retained and graduated without ABC.

Only comprehensive retention program at MSU to provide comprehensive services to an at-risk population.

Program is good because of what it provides to the less disadvantaged students; it retains students and has an impact on enrollment.

ABC Staff:

Have a close relationship with the staff of ABC; refer students; it's a two-way street. This all helps make us more effective.

ABC provides a warm place for students to come to receive services and information such as counseling and math/ writing tutoring.

Students aren't turned away or turned off by the staff, although there is a qualifying criteria to be met for the federal grant.

Other:

It (ABC) has an impact not only on students, but instructors and tutors as well.

ABC is a good symbol for educational striving.

ABC is significant because of the commitment it has made to EEO.

ABC is a vital and essential program at MSU.

This program is not essential to the functioning of the University; the University could function without this program. If there were no more federal dollars, the University would still provide the services, but the quality of those services would be less.

Did not know much about the program to give an interview.

Question #2

What is your subjective assessment of the ABC program? In other words, how is it doing in your opinion? **(University Administration and Support Services only)**

Stakeholder: Student Support Services

ABC Staff:

ABC has a great staff.

Staff is very responsive to the students.

The staff knows the characteristics of its clientele.

I think the world of ABC's staff.

Their counselors/tutors are skilled.

ABC has problems internally (personality clashes, moodiness, etc.) and some kind of intervention may be necessary.

The Director is a powerful leader and good role model for Indian students. S/he knows some of the dynamics of low-income clients.

Don't Know:

I don't feel I'm informed enough to make a qualitative assessment of the program.

Not really familiar with this program, but I hear it's reasonably successful.

Other:

They are providing a service nobody else on campus provides a specific group of people.

ABC is also connected to the summer math camps; it reaches students at an earlier age in school.

ABC does very well; great!

Expansion of Program:

It would be wonderful if MSU could expand services at ABC for students who don't fit their criterium.

Would like to see institution (MSU) support ABC financially so more students could use services.

Should be more students who would benefit from the program.

Stakeholder: Administration

Benefits Students:

This program meets the students' needs in a very satisfactory manner.

ABC is a well-structured tutoring and study skills program.

It assists Native American students in the non-traditional areas of a Math and English background.

The math, writing and reading components are the only preparatory courses on this campus for students in need of help.

All students who take ABC English gain confidence by conquering their fear of learning and their success rate is high.

Financial:

It's expensive, but doesn't come out of MSU's budget. However, it's money well spent.

If providing these services is successful, then maybe we need to reevaluate the University budget. Money for ABC now comes from federal grants.

Would like to have more money available so the program could be bigger. I would like to see 40% of MSU student population use ABC.

Get more equipment for learning and physically disabled students, i.e., computers.

ABC Staff:

ABC is doing very well; the Director is good at seeking out aspects of the institution where she can make an impact.

ABC seems to have a good mix of employees who care about students, yet don't coddle them, but they don't just throw them in the water, either.

ABC has a great reputation on campus and, partly, that is because it is staffed by different people with different styles and expertise.

Always need more staff.

The Director is very successful in obtaining funds; s/he should be complimented. We are very happy with it!
I know the program is managed efficiently.
Staff is hardworking.

Skilled and caring staff.

Not Informed:

Some faculty at MSU don't necessarily know what other student services exist on campus, in addition to Admissions, Financial Aids, etc.

I'm not sure many of MSU's faculty/staff know who ABC actually helps. They may get the idea that ABC only serves Indian students.

Other:

The English programs are very gratifying for the instructors who watch students conquer their fear of learning.

Do more directive career planning.

ABC has done a good job of qualifying students so they don't waste their time on students who don't have the attitude to be successful.

If it were MSU's money, we'd have better things to spend it on than remedial levels of English and Math.

Bank of volunteers to serve students who cannot afford to pay.

The budgetary work is impeccable.

The Regional Representative had glowing praise for the program.

In my opinion, ABC is doing very well.

ABC is doing a marvelous job.

I am truly thankful that the program exists on campus.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PART II STUDY

The final step to conclude Part I of this study was to decide what aspects of the ABC program needed further examination. After the categorized issue areas were sorted and typed they were passed on to the Director and ABC staff. A meeting was held between the agency staff, Dr. Carlson, and the researchers for the purpose of gathering agency input regarding the remaining research effort for the project and so that the researchers could present their ideas to the staff. As a result of the above meeting and the joint prospectus meeting between the students and all graduate committee members, it was decided that the following issue areas should be further examined by the researchers.

1. Cultural communication problems between Native American clients and ABC staff, tutors, and university instructors.
2. Retention success of the ABC program.
3. Development of a budget proposal that would express the optimum resources needed to improve the effectiveness of the program.

Issues facing students with disabilities are examined at length in Part II of this document.

PART II

ISSUES FACING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to learn what the issues are for students with disabilities at Montana State University and how the Advance By Choice (ABC) program helps to address the issues that have been identified. Disability is a general term used for a functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability, for example, to walk, hear, learn or lift. It may refer to a physical, mental, or sensory condition.

Advance By Choice (ABC) is a Special Services program for disadvantaged students. ABC's mission is to provide a "comprehensive project to identify disadvantaged students, complete individual needs assessment, provide counseling and other services to develop skills which result in an increased retention and graduation rate of identified participants" (U.S. Department of Education, 1986:15).

In developing this study, initial interviews were conducted with identified ABC stakeholders. Upon completion of these initial interviews, the graduate students involved in conducting this study chose an issue that they wished to research and write about. I was

interested in issues of students with disabilities because of a comment made by an ABC 001 Instructor that made me realize how little I knew about the difficulties confronting these students. During the initial interviews, the 001 Instructor commented that sometimes she "felt dumb" because she did not understand the issues of students with disabilities. Indeed, I felt that I could relate to her lack of knowledge about this group of students when I conducted the initial interviews of the students with disabilities.

When I told the ABC staff that I would like to write about the issues of students with disabilities I was told by some staff that it was a good topic, but I would not find very much information for my research. However, it was my feeling that if there wasn't much information regarding the issues of students with disabilities, then it would be especially important to write about them. Furthermore, the information gathered from this study will be shared with the faculty and staff who serve the students with disabilities population at Montana State University.

Chapter Six of this study contains the literature review of students with disabilities in postsecondary education. The purpose of Chapter Six is to compile research data about students with disabilities for the background information and support of this study. The

research data from Chapter Six is also used to compare with the data of the issues that emerged from the follow-up interviews with MSU special services administrators and students with disabilities.

Chapter Seven contains excerpts from the follow-up interviews with special services administrators, and analysis of these follow-up interviews. The purpose of Chapter Seven is to reveal what the special services administrators perceive as the important issues for students with disabilities at Montana State University. It is also an opportunity for administrator respondents to comment upon the effectiveness of the Advance By Choice Program at MSU in addressing the issues of students with disabilities.

In Chapter Eight the students with disabilities follow-up interview responses are presented in their entirety. The purpose of presenting the student interviews in their entirety is to help provide a context for the analysis undertaken at the end of Chapter Eight. The analysis at the end of Chapter Eight entails making a comparison of the data from the student interviews and the administrator interviews.

Chapter Nine contains conclusions that I have drawn from the analysis in Chapter Eight. These conclusions then serve as the basis for the recommendations that I have made

regarding the services provided to students with disabilities by the Advance By Choice program at Montana State University.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERATURE REVIEW

Laws Protecting Students with Disabilities

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed the protection of the civil rights to persons in the "Protected Class Status" (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII). The "Protected Class Status" was limited by the federal government to cover race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not guarantee the protection of civil rights for disabled persons, primarily because they were not considered a minority. In fact, disabled persons were not considered at all. By excluding the disabled population, the 1964 Civil Rights Act discriminated against them. The societal norm at the time was that people with disabilities were considered "handicapped" and "handicapped" persons were generally kept hidden from society.

As recently as the 1960s and 1970s people with disabilities had few choices when it came to education. They were either educated at home, in public schools with the mentally retarded, or at institutions with other disabled persons (Disability Rag, 1990:26). "Handicapped"

persons were not perceived by society as needing civil rights. This perception was due to the societal mindset suggesting that handicapped people were not skilled, were not able to develop skills, and therefore were not employable. Society was blind to the reality that people with disabilities needed the same protection provided for those in the "Protected Class Status" covered in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

It was not until 1973 that people with disabilities gained legal protection from discrimination when Congress barred discrimination against people with disabilities in federally funded programs. As part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112), Congress enacted Section 504, the first federal civil rights law protecting the rights of individuals with handicaps. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, often referred to as the "Civil Rights Act" for the disabled, states in part:

> No otherwise qualified handicapped individual . . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

In order to comply with this mandate, colleges and universities that receive Federal assistance must assure not only admission, but also access to the same educational programs and services offered to other students.

Section 504 also requires that educational institutions adopt and implement procedures to ensure that interested disabled students, including students with impaired vision and hearing, can obtain information regarding the existence and location of federally assisted services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to, and usable by individuals with disabilities. The primary student service programs for disabled students at the Montana State University are the Resource Center and Advance By Choice. The Affirmative Action Officer works closely with the Resource Center and Advance By Choice in assuring that Montana State University stays in compliance with Section 504.

On the state level persons with disabilities are protected under the Montana Human Rights Act. The protected class status group in the Montana Human Rights Act includes not just race, color, religion, sex and national origin, but also includes age, handicap, marital status and political beliefs. Theoretically, the Montana Human Rights Act fills in the gaps of Section 504, but it is rarely enforced (Marks, 1990).

In May of 1990 the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation known as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "The ADA will protect people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, transportation, public

accommodations, activities of state and local government, and communications" (ADA Bill, 1990). All businesses with fifteen or more employees must comply with the laws set forth by the ADA mandates. In essence, the ADA will provide even more protection for people with disabilities and it is comparable to the protection given to those in the Protected Status group of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The ADA will provide access to all areas of society for the estimated one in six Americans - 43 million - people with disabilities in the United States (HEATH, Fall 1989:4). On Thursday, July 26, 1990 President George Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The law bans discrimination against people with disabilities, including AIDS, and defines disabled as anyone with a mental or physical impairment limiting some major life function. The law guarantees equal access to employment, business and services, telecommunications and transportation for the 43 million people with disabilities.

It has been seventeen years since the first law protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities was enacted by Congress. This law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, guarantees equal access by providing reasonable accommodation in our society for people with disabilities, but the changes necessary to provide that access have been slow in coming.

Educating the Educators

Students with disabilities make up a significant portion of students in higher education and must not be ignored by educators who are tied into conventional methods of education, and who, because of their ignorance about disabilities, are unwilling to make academic accommodations for students with disabilities. "Six percent of full-time/first-time college freshmen report having at least one disability, a figure which has more than doubled since data on the subject was first collected a decade ago in 1978" (AHSSPPE, 1979:3). "More than 1.3 million, or 10 percent, of the students enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the fall of 1986 reported having at least one disability" (Department of Education, 1986:151).

A college education for people who have a disability is important for the same reasons as it is for non-disabled people: it helps in fulfilling personal goals, allows for effective competition in the job market, and contributes to independence and financial security. The following data shows that "once people who have a disability enter college, they graduate at approximately the same rate (47%) as do able-bodied students (52%)" (Lonnquist, 1979:24). Lonnquist's study also shows that the employment rate of graduates with a disability (79%) is considerably greater than that of disabled college dropouts (52%). These

figures are similar to employment rates of non-disabled college attendees (i.e., 89% and 63%, respectively) (Lonnquist, 1979:24).

The figures for the number of students with disabilities at Montana State University have increased substantially in the last several years with more students being diagnosed as having learning disabilities (Waters, 1990). Waters also stated that the figure for disabled students at Montana State University is known to be at 350, but in fact may be closer to 1,000.

A learning disability (LD) is an invisible disability and is different for every person. "Unlike the person who uses sign language or walks with crutches, the learning disabled person shows no visible characteristics of the disability" (HEATH, 1990:4). Learning disability refers to perceptual disabilities present at birth or from early childhood due to causes other than physical disabilities or mental retardation. Learning disabled students have difficulty in processing information. "LD adults have normal or above normal intelligence, a factor which helps many devise extraordinary coping mechanisms to hide or overcome their disability" (Stone, 1983:23). Many students with learning disabilities have learned how to compensate for their disability. Those who have not often suffer from low self esteem, and college has not been a consideration

for them. Therefore, the rigors of academic studies can be difficult for many learning disabled students. If academic assistance and accommodations are not made available to students with learning disabilities, many of them eventually drop out of school.

Students with obvious physical disabilities are the easiest students for educators and service providers to identify and accommodate. The disparity in the figures for disabled students at Montana State University is not surprising, because the responsibility of identifying disabilities, especially invisible disabilities, lies with the student. However, many times students with invisible disabilities will not come forward to instructors or students services, because seeking accommodation for their disability makes them feel like they are asking for "special favors" (see Chapter Eight). In addition to the students with invisible disabilities who are reluctant to identify themselves, "College personnel usually make no effort to identify the learning disabled student or offer the same help given to other visibly handicapped students" (Stone, 1983:24).

Educators have difficulty not only with identifying a learning disability, but also in understanding how to accommodate a student with a learning disability. Often an instructor who does not understand an invisible disability

may resist providing accommodation for a student. Some instructors may even question whether a student has a genuine problem, or they "view learning disabilities as a myth" (see Chapter Eight). "Learning disabilities aren't caused by psychological problems, poor environment or laziness. Rather, the circuitry of the brain is somehow interrupted and the brain cannot decode the signals it receives" (News in Engineering, 1982:11).

For example, a student with dyslexia, a learning disability that affects the way a person processes information, sees the world in opposites. "Dyslexics transpose letters, see a 'd' for a 'b', read saw for was, or mix up word order" (News in Engineering, 1982:11). For example a sentence as simple as "I was a student in the library" becomes for a dyslexic reader "saw I a student in the library." The accommodations for students with a learning disability can be as simple as allowing more time for tests, or having someone else read the questions and write the answers.

While the changes have been slow in coming, the momentum is finally starting to swing in the direction of the disabled population. People with disabilities are slowly becoming integrated into all facets of modern society, and future leaders with disabilities will help to assure that those changes remain a permanent part of modern

society. No longer will students with disabilities be hidden in institutions or educated with the mentally retarded, but they will be accommodated by institutions of higher learning in order to have the opportunities given to the non-disabled. Educators can play a key role for persons with disabilities in access to equal educational opportunities. In order to do that, educators must be educated so that they can help to remove, not place, barriers to higher education.

Discrimination

A part of making positive change for students with disabilities is reflected in the way disabilities are portrayed. Changing social attitudes through language was a powerful tool for the civil rights movement. Black became beautiful and women were no longer "chicks."

> The lessons learned during those struggles for full civil rights were not lost on advocates for citizens with disabilities: to improve portrayals of persons with disabilities in the news media, to insist upon terminology that is empowering rather than demeaning is to establish your group as a social and economic force to be considered and respected (Hab News, 1990:10).

The changes have brought a recognition that there is not one group of people known as the handicapped, but that there are people with many different disabilities. "Categorizing people appears to be one of the fundamental ways in which people manage their interpersonal environments"

(Bruner, 1956). As these two authors write, "To be perceived as handicapped is to have been categorized" (Langer & Chanowitz, 1988:68).

Portraying people with disabilities as "crippled" or "handicapped" implies that they are not complete human beings and have no function in our society. There are other, better ways to relate to and describe individuals with disabilities. "Put people first, not their disability. Emphasize abilities not limitations" (Hab News, 1990:10). These things can be done by making simple changes in our use of the language. For example, to say "doctor with disability" or "people with disabilities" is preferable to saying "the disabled," and "uses a wheelchair" is preferable rather than "confined to a wheelchair" or "crippled." "When we do not talk about, recognize, or acknowledge certain differences, we make them "invisible" (Knefelkamp, 1985:4). People tend to rank or order differences according to how comfortable and safe they feel in talking about them and in associating with people who have them. Knefelkamp developed what he calls the Invisibility Model Inverted Pyramid (Figure 1) which shows a "threshold of safety" at the top of the inverted pyramid. The differences above the threshold of safety are those that people generally talk about freely and acknowledge or recognize readily. Below the threshold of safety are those

THE INVISIBILITY MODEL INVERTED PYRAMID

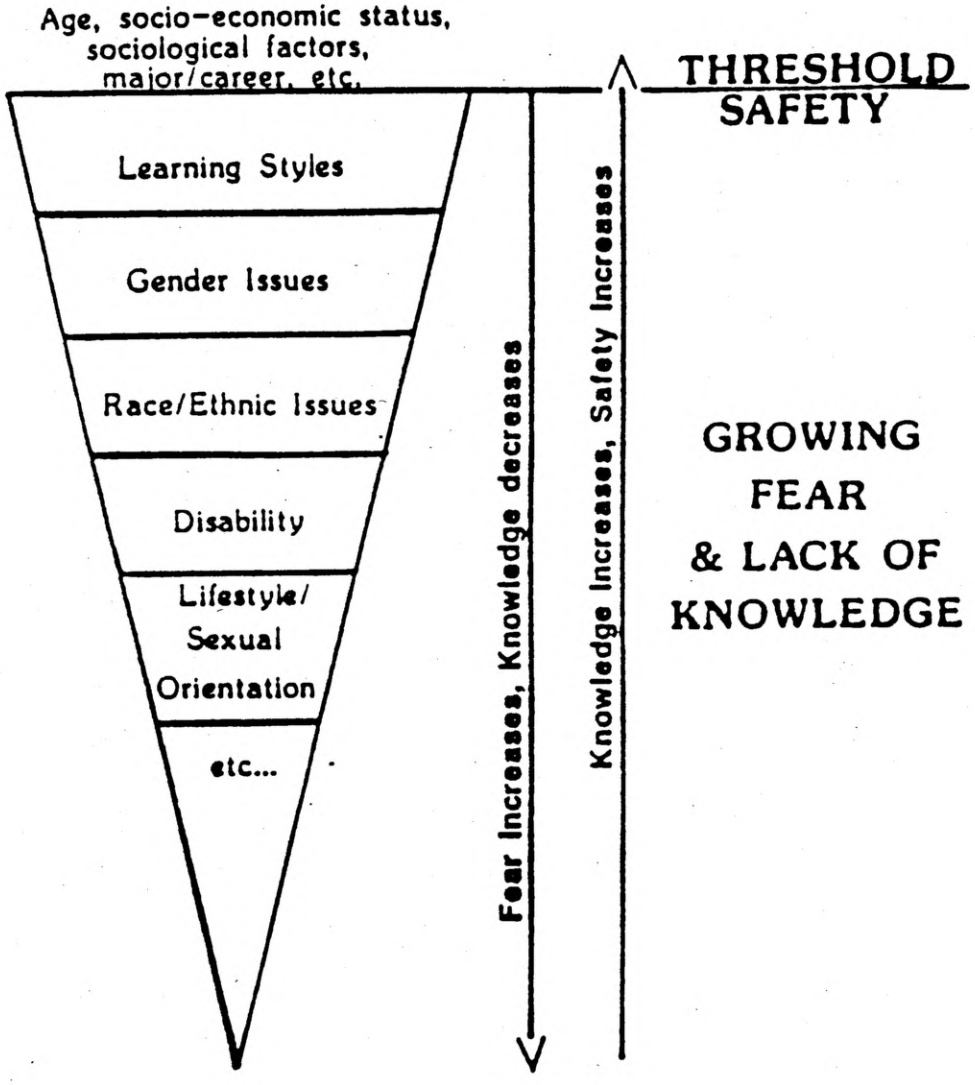


Figure 1. Invisibility Model Inverted Pyramid.

differences that people feel increasingly uncomfortable and feel less safe in talking about.

According to the Invisibility Model, when knowledge about differences decreases, fear increases and we begin to perpetuate invisibility of groups such as people with disabilities. But, when knowledge increases, safety increases, and people are more likely to recognize and talk about their differences.

Discrimination of students with disabilities occurs when they have been ignored. It occurs when they do not have access to higher education, to student services, and to housing. "The human tendency toward being relatively unconscious of other cultures is dysfunctional in our society as it is clear that much hostility is created by ignorance of other cultures" (ACU-I, 1987:2). A large part of discrimination towards students with disabilities can be overcome by educating non-disabled people about the barriers people with disabilities are faced with day in and day out.

In the fall of 1989, the University of Montana in Missoula learned that ignoring the disabled student population can have serious repercussions after a group of students with disabilities filed a discrimination suit with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) against the university for alleged violations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation

Act. University of Montana student activists with disabilities felt that the university had failed to look for alternative funding sources to provide and enhance services for disabled students on campus. Furthermore, students with disabilities felt that the University of Montana not only denies services to them, but UM was also proposing to reduce existing services, such as the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department (CSD). University of Montana is the only university in the state of Montana to provide a CSD bachelor degree. The University of Montana CSD department was instrumental in providing a pool of interpreters for the hearing impaired as well as being a primary support and advocate for students with disabilities. The University of Montana does have a Disabled Students Services program with a part-time director, in a building that is not easily accessible to students with physical disabilities.

The University of Montana has also learned that the federal government does take seriously the enforcement of Section 504. After investigating the charges against the University of Montana, the Office of Civil Rights found that UM was in violation of Section 504. The University of Montana was in violation for failure to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities at the university. The Office of Civil Rights in a letter to UM

President Koch, provided an outline "to assist the University in developing its plan for corrective action to ensure more satisfactory program accessibility in the future" (OCR, 1990:1). Based on this list from OCR, the University of Montana must ensure corrective action in the following areas:

-Scheduling of classes/location
-Housing
-Computer labs
-Parking
-Ramps/Curb cuts
-Recreational Facilities
-Auxiliary Aides & Services
-Full-time Student Services Office

Student leaders at the University of Montana feel that they could find violations of Section 504 among every school in the Montana university system. For example, one student activist with a disability pointed out there is not one university in the state that provides accommodations for deaf students, such as full-time interpreter services. The student activist also stated that students who are deaf have to seek universities with accommodations outside of the state of Montana (Watson, 1990).

Implementation of the requirements of Section 504 has been and continues to be a slow process. However, there are positive steps that can be and are being taken by some universities in Montana and across the country to educate faculty, staff, and non-disabled students about the issues of students with disabilities. Student activists with

disabilities have found that one effective method for educating the non-disabled student population about the students with disabilities population can be through "Awareness Week" activities. Awareness Week provides a forum for students with disabilities, educators and service providers to disseminate information about barriers in higher education unique to students with disabilities.

During the Awareness Week activities, in addition to seminars and panel discussions, one exercise for the non-disabled population is to have them spend one or two days in a wheelchair, or have their eyes bound so that they can't see. In these exercises, the non-disabled student is expected to continue with her/his daily routines. Students who have experienced this type of exercise come away from the experience with a heightened level of awareness of what it's like to be a student with a disability. Most importantly, non-disabled students develop an understanding of the many barriers there are on campus and in the classroom for students with a disability.

Accommodation

As explained earlier in this chapter, colleges and universities that receive any federal funds are mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to provide reasonable accommodation for disabled students. The effort that

Montana State University has put forth in providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students makes it the postsecondary school in Montana that has been most successful in complying with Section 504. Nationally, MSU is ranked number 40 out of 155 colleges that were studied for accommodation of students with disabilities (Waters, 1990).

Even though MSU has the best record of all universities in the state for accommodating students with disabilities, MSU still provides only the very basic services for these students. The basic services include limited physical access and student support services. According to Resource Director Bob Waters, to provide these services, like other universities in Montana, MSU does receive state funds, but these funds are dwindling (Waters, 1990). Although progress has been made in providing basic services, limited resources make it difficult for colleges and universities in Montana and other parts of the United States to provide more than basic services and physical accommodations for students with disabilities.

Authors Marion and Iovacchini found in their study of 155 postsecondary institutions from all areas of the United States that colleges and universities across the country have made an effort to carry out the regulations implementing Section 504 by providing physical accommodation

and student services support programs. "All the responding institutions had a 504 compliance officer; 75% had other staff members with 504 related responsibilities; and 65% had formed a committee to deal with 504 issues" (Marion and Iovacchini, 1983:133). Marion and Iovacchini also found that the variety of other special services offered by the institutions to students with disabilities were funded, in part, by the institutions.

Equally as important as providing physical accommodations for students with disabilities are the academic accommodation which must also be provided. "Academic adjustments may have to be made in the program, including time for completing the degree, substitutions of certain courses, and in the taking of examinations" (Goldman, 1987:77). Instructors who do not understand academic accommodation for a disability often will focus their concern not on the student with a disability, but rather are deterred from providing academic accommodations by the problems that they anticipate in grading all students equitably. An example is when accommodation requires that a student with a disability be allowed additional time to complete an exam. Instructors then question how to grade students with disabilities who have more time to complete an exam, versus the non-disabled students who complete exams in the allotted time. The

instructors do not understand that academic accommodation means making adjustments for the disability, and is not intended to give the student with a disability an advantage over non-disabled students (Watson, 1990).

For students with invisible disabilities, the intimidating and sometimes complex web of identifying themselves for accommodation can become yet another barrier in higher education. When an educator has little or no understanding about barriers in higher education for students with disabilities, the educator can her/himself become the barrier. For example, in the ABC follow-up interviews, a student who is hearing impaired told how her/his hearing impairment was a barrier to successfully completing a class. The hearing impairment made it difficult to hear the information on videos upon which the lab quizzes were based. The student went to the instructor to explain her/his dilemma. Rather than make the arrangements for reasonable accommodation of the student, the instructor simply advised the student to talk to the lab Teaching Assistant. In this case, the student did not go any further than the instructor, and as a result did not perform well in the lab segment of the class (see Chapter Eight). If the instructor had realized her/his legal responsibility towards providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities, or been sensitive to the

disability, she/he would have sought to remedy the situation immediately.

Identification of disabled students is an issue that should be addressed in a way that will decrease the burden for students with disabilities. Perhaps one way this can be achieved is by more involvement of instructors in the identification process. Faculty members who are aware of the different disabilities, and who are sensitive to the student's needs, will be better prepared to identify the student's disability and provide reasonable accommodations accordingly and without resistance.

Student Support Services

Student support services are an essential link for equal access in higher education for students with disabilities.

> Services for disabled students is a new idea for higher education. Before World War II post-secondary education for disabled adults was so rare that only the most highly motivated blind, deaf, or physically impaired individuals gained a college education and then only with extensive long-term assistance from a few dedicated people - physicians, teachers, parents, and volunteers (Tickston, et al, 1981).

Student support services provides the extensive long-term assistance to students with disabilities in various ways. For example, basic support for students with disabilities can be provided in these areas: academic, tutorial,

counseling and advocacy. Through student support services an academic advisor can help students develop an academic schedule. Tutorial services can include personal tutoring or use of proctors for examinations, as well as tape recordings of textbooks. An advocate can help to arrange accommodation or mediation of those problems inherent to students with disabilities. All this assistance can help students with disabilities to be more easily integrated into normal university life.

It is obvious that schools that have more resources available to them are able to provide substantially more services than those basic services described above. For example, in their study titled Services for Handicapped Students in Higher Education, Marion and Iovacchini found that in addition to the basic service provided by colleges and universities,

> 22% of the institutions provided other services. The following services were offered by one or more of the responding institutions: attendant service, specialized van for transportation, adaptive physical education courses, wheelchair loan and repair service, organizations for handicapped students, accessibility maps, tactile signs and maps, priority class registration, and special parking permits and places. Other services included special counseling, provisions for oral test taking, reading machines, braille computer readouts, braille paper, "talking" calculators, braille and large-print reference materials, special projects in the arts, and telephone hookups for homebound students (Marion, 1983:133).

Colleges and universities must have funding sources available in order to provide those additional services described above. In states such as Montana, there are no funding sources available to subsidize services other than basic services to students with disabilities. Recently in Montana a panel appointed by Governor Stan Stephens completed a study on reforms in higher education. The panel released their report which recommended raising higher education funding to "average levels" found at similar campuses in the Northwest. The panel recommended that the Montana University System make a $91 million increase to their budget in order to rise up to the average level of other campuses. The June 25, 1990 Missoulian reported Governor Stephens' reply to the panel report, "More money is not the answer, solely, for the University System." For the already overburdened Special Service programs who serve students with disabilities, future prospects of increased state funding for additional services does not look promising.

One valuable service for students with disabilities that Special Service programs can help to coordinate is student self-help groups. Literature research shows that self-help groups can be a source of social support and empowerment for students with disabilities. Leadership is provided and maintained by members, and the focus of the

group's activities are determined by the members. Authors Chesler and Chesney write that:

> What these groups share in common, despite their variety, is a membership of people experiencing a similar situation and the commitment to meet with one another in an attempt to reduce the stresses or disempowering threats that often accompany their situation (Chesler & Chesney, 1988:237).

The authors list six objectives that can help to provide direction for the group. The six objectives include: networking, sharing experiences, gaining access to information, gaining new coping skills and practical resources, contributing to the welfare of others, mobilizing and acting for change.

In the interviews of students with disabilities, two student respondents mentioned that there is a need for some kind of networking and information sharing among students with disabilities at Montana State University. Facilitating a student self-help group on campus would help the Special Service programs accomplish their goals without requiring additional funding.

Summary

Over the last thirteen years there have been major changes in our society for people with disabilities. Postsecondary institutions who receive federal funding are legally mandated to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. The laws are in place to

assure that people with disabilities will have equal access to higher education.

Access to higher education does not necessarily mean making just physical accommodations for students with disabilities. Equal educational opportunities in higher education also requires academic accommodations. Academic accommodation requires educators who are informed about the different disabilities and who are sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities who are excluded from classes, housing, and other services on campuses, including entertainment, are being discriminated against by the institutions who have a legal requirement to assure access. Student Service programs play a key role in helping to assure that students with disabilities have all the accommodations necessary for equal educational opportunities in postsecondary institutions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAMS

In addition to ABC, there are several other student support service programs at Montana State University. In undertaking this study, the administrators of the other student support service programs were interviewed to provide further perspective on the issues facing students with disabilities at MSU. In this chapter, the student support service programs are described and analysis is undertaken of the data and information obtained from the interviews with administrators of the various Programs.

Description of Programs

Montana State University provides the basic services of academic, tutorial, counseling and advocacy for students with disabilities. At Montana State University, the Resource Center and the Advance By Choice program are two student support services programs working together to provide those services for students with disabilities. The Resource Center employs one full-time coordinator to oversee the Disabled Students Services program, and three support staff. The Disabled Student Services program does

not serve the totally deaf, or provide interpreter services. The Disabled Student Services facilitates a student service group, Wheelchairs, Crutches and People, but there is some question as to whether it is an active student group (see Chapter Eight).

Resource Center

The Resource Center is a student service program within the department of Student Affairs and Services. The Resource Center serves several student populations: Students Over Traditional Age (SOTA), veterans, and students with disabilities. The Resource Center's function is to serve as the primary resource agency for those student populations by providing information, support, advocacy and mediation. In addition, the Resource Center investigates students with disabilities complaints regarding non-compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Disabled Student Services

The Disabled Student Services is a program within the Resource Center and is overseen by one full-time Program Specialist. The Disabled Student Services offers services specifically for the students with disabilities population at MSU. Disabled Student Services provides referrals for evaluations, certification cards, personal counseling, academic counseling, coordination of academic accommodation,

referrals to other student service programs, assistance with admission, pre-registration, and registration.

Affirmative Action

The Affirmative Action pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is available to assure an affirmative environment in higher education at Montana State University for the disabled student population. The Affirmative Action Officer is the Section 504 Compliance officer at Montana State University.

Advance By Choice

The Advance By Choice program is another important academic link to the disabled student population at Montana State University. The services they provide to the disabled population are primarily tutorial, academic counseling, referrals, and classes in remedial math, English and reading. In addition to those services, the Advance By Choice program works closely with the Resource Center and the Disabled Student Services in addressing the needs of the disabled student population.

All four programs coordinate their work closely to the benefit of the disabled student population. For example, as mentioned earlier, should a student encounter a situation that may be a violation of Section 504, the Resource Center will investigate the claim. Should the

claim need further action, it will be taken by the Director of the Resource Center or the Disabled Student Services Coordinator to the Affirmative Action Officer. Robert Waters, Resource Center Director, and Corky Bush, Affirmative Action Officer, share the duties that are required to fulfill Montana State Universities obligation towards providing a Section 504 Compliance Officer (Waters, 1990).

Interviews with Program Administrators

In order to have an in-depth perspective of disabled student issues at Montana State University, follow-up interviews with questions specific to disabled students were conducted. The interviews were conducted with Robert Waters, Resource Center Director; Sandi Mandel, Disabled Student Services Program Specialist; and Corky Bush, Affirmative Action Officer. The administrator respondents were asked the following five questions:

> Question #1: In your opinion, what are the issues for disabled students at MSU? In other words, what are some of the things causing problems for students at MSU?
>
> Question #2: How is MSU responding to these issues?
>
> Question #3: What is your perception of ABC's helpfulness to the disabled student population at MSU?
>
> Question #4: What would you do to improve the services provided for the disabled student population by ABC?

Question #5: Are disabled students at MSU ever discriminated against because of their disabilities?

The goal of the follow-up interviews with program administrators is to identify and compare the data with the information from the previous chapter and data compiled from students with disabilities interviews in Chapter Eight. All data gathered and compared will be used to provide the recommendations to the Advance By Choice Program as described in Chapter Nine.

Analysis of Administrator Interviews

Once the interviews with program administrators were completed, five identifiable issues emerged regarding students with disabilities. The five issues that emerged relate to the teaching-learning relationship of instructors and students with disabilities. The five issues identified are:

1. A lack of awareness from faculty and staff regarding students with disabilities.

2. Faculty and staff sensitivity towards the needs of students with disabilities, especially those with hidden disabilities.

3. Faculty resistance toward academic accommodations for students with disabilities at Montana State University.

4. Financial limitations to accommodation of students with disabilities.

5. Lack of understanding regarding legal requirements as mandated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In response to Question #1, Respondent #1 alluded to the issue of faculty and staff sensitivity towards disabled students needs, especially those with hidden disabilities.

Respondent #1:

> I would have to say that another issue is faculty and staff sensitivity towards disabled students needs, especially to those students with hidden disabilities. Faculty has for the most part responded positively to students with learning disabilities, despite a poor understanding of their needs.

Respondent #3 explained that workshops have been developed to help create an awareness among faculty and staff, but there remains a need for even more awareness among the majority of the faculty and staff at Montana State University.

Respondent #3:

> On this campus workshops have been developed to create awareness on learning disabilities among staff and instructors. A good portion of instructors are aware, but there is a need to reach out to more, and also to continue renewing the process (of creating awareness).

The issue of faculty and staff sensitivity towards the needs of students with disabilities, especially those with hidden disabilities, is not unique to Montana State University. All learning disabled students require a different approach to academic learning. Learning disabled students view the world through completely different eyes than the majority of the population. But learning disabled adults have learned how to adapt and overcome the barriers

of a rigid educational system and many have succeeded well beyond college. For example, some notable dyslexics have been Albert Einstein, George Patton, Nelson Rockefeller, and Thomas Edison.

In order for colleges and universities to accommodate learning disabled students, instructors must have some awareness about the disability. If instructors are more aware of the disability, then they are more likely to have sensitivity towards the needs of students with disabilities. For example, Bernice Stone writes that:

> The greatest problem facing the learning disabled is the attitude of the faculty. Both colleges and universities usually meet with strong faculty resistance when attempting to establish accommodations and services for this group. Negotiating for special accommodations for the blind, deaf, or physically disabled is much easier than to do the same for an individual with learning disabilities (Stone, 1893:22).

It is evident from the responses of two administrators that a lack of faculty sensitivity towards the needs of the learning disabled population stems mainly from a lack of awareness about the disability. The two issues combined create barriers in providing accommodations for these students. For example, a lack of instructor awareness about learning disabilities creates an adversarial teaching-learning relationship. A lack of instructor sensitivity towards the needs of students with disabilities places the student in a position of having to justify

her/his disability to the instructor - who may question whether a hidden disability even exists. Finally, a lack of instructor awareness about learning disabilities, and sensitivity towards the student's needs may result in resistance by the instructor to make accommodations for the disability. Resistance by faculty to make provisions for academic accommodation can be seen in the following two responses:

Respondent #1:

> Learning disabilities are viewed as a myth by faculty because it's a disability that can't be seen, unlike physical disabilities. Learning disabled students require alternative testing which faculty sometimes view as inequitable. A legitimate question arises from faculty as to whether or not we get comparable results when accommodations are provided for learning disabled persons. Not physical accommodations but accommodations such as alternative testing.

Respondent #3:

> There has been a recent influx of learning disabled students. The problem there is that they have to identify themselves. It is easier to make accommodations for physically disabled students, because students whose disabilities are hidden are called on to explain their disability more frequently than students with physical disabilities.

Equal access to higher education of the learning disabled require that adjustments be made to accommodate the disability of the student. In some cases, this may mean allowing the student additional time to complete an exam. It does not mean that the student with a learning

disability who is given extra time to complete an exam gains an advantage over non-disabled students in the classroom. The accommodation is simply an adjustment for the learning disability.

Some resistance by faculty to provide accommodations for students with disabilities can be due to a lack of knowledge about the disability, as well as a lack of knowledge regarding the rights of students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Educators may not understand that in order to comply with Section 504 colleges and universities must remove all educational barriers. This means more than removing the obvious physical barriers for students with obvious disabilities. Nielsen and Polishook write:

> Ultimately, access for the disabled must be realized in the regular college classroom. That is because "separate" is, for the disabled as for others, not equal. We have a mandate to "mainstream" disabled students and it can only be fulfilled in the classroom. Reasonable accommodations should be made in the instructional process itself, in our teaching strategies and modes, to ensure full educational opportunity. The means of achieving this ideal are often not merely matters of judgement and common sense. They are matters of knowledge and sensitivities that most of us simply do not have because of inexperience in dealing with disabled people (Nielsen & Polishook, 1988).

Affirmative education at Montana State University for the disabled cannot evolve under conditions of ignorance and indifference.

The theme of faculty resistance towards accommodation was reiterated by administrative respondents when asked Question #2. For example, two respondents identified resistance towards accommodation as follows:

Respondent #1:

> There are pockets of resistance meeting needs of disabled students from academic departments at MSU. The Math Department has not been responsive to learning disabled students and the visually impaired, primarily because of the alternative testing issue. Alternative testing is a problem with the Math Department, although they do comply, but they are not "user friendly," not sensitive.

Respondent #3:

> I have not found much difficulty in dealing with issues as they arise, only with certain departments (declined to say which ones). The problems these departments have is with the special alternative testing in place for students, such as the extended time. The debate is over how do you grade students who test under nonstandard testing conditions, versus students who test under standard testing conditions. I think this is a national debate and not MSU specific. There is some resistance from some faculty, and this is mostly due to a lack of knowledge about disabled students issues.

Resistance by faculty towards accommodation in the classroom encompasses all of the following issues: a lack of awareness about disabilities; insensitivity towards the students needs; and a lack of understanding regarding the legal imperative embodied in Section 504.

Academic accommodation for disabled students at Montana State University is also limited by economics. The

disabled student population is increasing, especially those students with learning disabilities, while state and federal funds are decreasing. Physical access can be the most costly to colleges and universities, but other forms of accommodation can be just as costly. For example, auxiliary aids for the hearing impaired, print enlarging machines for the visually impaired, telecommunication systems for the hearing impaired, and student service programs for the disabled are all costly accommodations especially to universities with limited budgets. In response to questions #1, #2, and #3 all respondents identified the lack of available funds for increased services as a problem in meeting the needs of the disabled student population at Montana State University.

Respondent #2, Question #1:

> There is not enough money for tutoring, we would like to, but Montana is not big enough, there is not a big enough tax base to provide adequate funding.

Respondent #1, Questions #2 and #3:

> There is limited staff time and resources of other offices to devote to disabled students' issues. The demands placed in our office has increased because the learning disabled population has grown, while at the same time our funding has decreased. In order to address the increase of the students with learning disabilities we are in dire need for additional staff and operating expenses. We need money for tapers, readers. These services have not been increased, taping services alone will eat into our operating budget.

> ABC is pretty responsive to the needs of disabled students at MSU. They are the primary academic support for learning disabled students. If they can request additional funds for tutors, I'd like to see that. Students can go to the ASMSU for tutoring, but they can't afford it.

Respondent #3, Question #3, said, "We need more staffing and ABC needs more staff."

In response to Question #4, all those interviewed were in agreement that more funding for additional staff and tutors would help to improve the services provided for the disabled student population by the Advance By Choice program.

Responses to Question #5 revealed that a lack of faculty sensitivity towards disabled students needs, a lack of faculty awareness about disabilities, and a lack of understanding about the legal mandates of Section 504 can create discriminatory behavior towards disabled students. This, of course, places the university in peril of being found in violation of Section 504.

When asked if disabled students at MSU are ever discriminated against because of their disabilities, one respondent emphatically stated that there were instances of discrimination; it was usually the result of ignorance about the disability and the law. This respondent was willing to elaborate on the subject of discrimination, whereas the other two respondents would not address the question directly.

Respondent #1:

> I think there is discrimination towards disabled students, but it is based on ignorance. There is always going to be forms of discrimination based on resistance, but that stems from ignorance not only because of a lack of awareness regarding disabled students issues, but also from not knowing the law (what is required by the law). There are no institutional policies regarding discrimination against disabled students at MSU. Affirmative Action is responsive when we have instances of discrimination.

By circumventing the question, two respondents clearly chose not to make any statements with specific examples directly addressing the issue of discrimination towards disabled students at Montana State University.

Respondent #2:

> There are two levels of discrimination: the overt, obvious, horrific kinds of discrimination and the subtle feeling type of not feeling welcomed. The subtle type of discrimination is the type which students feel keenly. The problem is the institution taking action on that subtle discrimination (it's hard to). You are going to have to talk to the students about discrimination.

Respondent #3:

> Students have sometimes been upset about something, but if they don't come in and let us know, we don't know. It is the responsibility of the student to identify what the problem is, for example, if the elevator is locked in one of the buildings, the student needs to let us know and it will be dealt with quickly.

The very tentativeness with which the last two respondents choose to answer the question suggests perhaps that they may have a lack of awareness regarding the issues of disabled students, and also with the 504 requirements.

Indeed, a lack of awareness and sensitivity towards the disabled population was obvious in this reply to Question #3 by this administrator.

Respondent #3:

> I think they've been very helpful, without them we'd be more crippled in our ability to provide services to this population. [Emphasis added]

Any person who is sensitive to the issues of persons with disabilities should know that gaining civil rights for the disabled population has required many changes. One way these changes have come about is by changing the terms we use to describe persons with disabilities. A very big part of the struggle for the disabled has been changing the misconceptions and the stereotypes of persons with disabilities.

It was mentioned earlier that during the 1960s persons with disabilities were called the "handicapped." "Handicap is not a synonym for disability. It describes a condition or barrier imposed by society, the environment, or by one's own self" (Hab News, 1990:10). "Crippled" is a negative term when describing any disability. Indeed, using this term, even in the context of describing a service for students with disabilities, shows little awareness regarding the effort to change societal attitudes towards the disabled by changing the language.

When asked Question #3, regarding ABC's helpfulness to the disabled student population at MSU, two respondents suggested that the Advance By Choice program is the primary academic link, and more, for the disabled population at Montana State University. In addition to providing academic support for disabled students, Advance By Choice has also been able to provide additional support through 005 Instructor Kay MacAllister. The Math Department was identified earlier as resistant to making accommodations for students with disabilities, but due to the presence of Kay MacAllister many disabled students have successfully completed their math requirements at MSU.

Respondent #1:

> They are the primary academic support for learning disabled students. The ABC study skills workshops are beneficial to disabled students at MSU. The assistance provided by Kay MacAllister in math is indispensable. Without her help, many disabled students would be lost and wouldn't make it through the program.

Respondent #3 also identified the Advance Program as an important academic link to the disabled student population, as well as an important link in the student services programs at Montana State University.

Respondent #3:

> ABC is most helpful in their academic counseling, tutorial services, as well as the remedial math classes. They are very important to the disabled student population. We cooperate quite well with ABC, they do referrals to our program, and we likewise.

Respondent #2 had little understanding about the role that the Advance by Choice program plays in providing services for the disabled student population at Montana State University.

Respondent #2:

> I have less of an understanding of that (ABC) than what the Resource Center or Disabled Students Services does for disabled students.

Summary

Clearly, the themes throughout the interviews include: sensitivity towards disabled students needs; awareness of disabilities; resistance towards accommodations; limitations towards accommodations; understanding of Section 504. All of these issues serve to foster an attitude which limits the accommodation of disabled students in the classroom. Fortunately for students with disabilities, however, Advance By Choice helps to redress barriers to equal educational opportunities for these students. The role that Advance By Choice plays in addressing the needs of the disabled students goes beyond the academic counseling and tutorial support they provide. The Advance By Choice program helps to break down these barriers for students by providing instructors such as Kay MacAllister who are sensitive and aware of the issues for disabled students. ABC is an important link in the services for disabled students at MSU.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ISSUES AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Interviews

The purpose of the follow-up interview is to gain multiple perspectives about the issues of students with disabilities, from the perspective of the student with a disability. It is an opportunity to learn if respondents feel the issues they have identified are being adequately addressed, and what part Advance By Choice plays in addressing those issues. It is also an opportunity to compare issues identified by both the students with disabilities and the administrators of the student service programs as described in Chapter Seven.

Data from the interviews of students with disabilities will be compared with the data from Chapters Six and Seven. All data will then be used to make the recommendations in Chapter Nine. Recommendations will be available for use by the Advance By Choice program.

Interview Questions

For the purpose of this study, a list of sixteen students with disabilities was provided by ABC Director,

Mary Lukin. Of the sixteen students on this list, twelve were contacted by telephone for the interviews. Of those contacted, two phone numbers were obsolete and two students were unavailable for the interviews. This leaves a total of eight students interviewed for this study.

All of the students with disabilities contacted for the interviews were enthusiastic about giving their perceptions of issues for students with disabilities at Montana State University. In addition, the students made comments that they were pleased that someone was asking them about their perspectives and that the information would be written about.

Each student was asked six questions known as probing questions that are designed to "summon forth some associative and elaborative responses regarding the issues of students with disabilities" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981:179). The probing questions were also designed to explore the themes identified by administrators interviewed earlier. For example, students were asked to relate what they know about their rights as a student with a disability in order to determine their knowledge of Section 504.

The six probing questions used were framed to explore the following topics: faculty and staff sensitivity towards disabled students needs; faculty and staff awareness of disabilities; awareness of students rights as

outlined in Section 504 requirements; discrimination; and the effectiveness of the Advance by Choice program in meeting the needs of disabled students. The questions were asked in a funnel sequence, moving from general to more specific.

The respondents were interviewed by telephone, and each one was asked the following six questions as described below:

> QUESTION #1: In your opinion, what are the issues for disabled students at MSU? In other words, what kinds of things cause problems for disabled students in successfully completing their education at MSU?
>
> QUESTION #2: How is MSU responding?
>
> QUESTION #3: Do you know your rights as a disabled student at MSU?
>
> QUESTION #4: Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your disability?
>
> QUESTION #5: What is your perception of ABC's helpfulness to the disabled student population?
>
> QUESTION #6: What would you suggest to make ABC a better program for disabled students?

A mapping method of recording was used to record verbatim all of the responses. Responses were read back to respondents in order to clarify statements, and to encourage the respondents to include additional information if they so desired.

Profile of Disabled Students Interviewed

The students who were interviewed were not asked to identify their specific disability, or any other criteria which they might fall under for utilization of services provided by Advance By Choice. During certain moments of the interviews, however, respondents voluntarily identified her/his disability, as well as any other information she/he felt important to the conversation. For example, seven respondents identified her/his age, and one respondent identified her/his ethnicity. That information was used to provide a breakdown of the profiles for the eight students with disabilities who were interviewed.

Table 2. Profile of Students Interviewed.

Disability	Sex	ABC Clientele Group
Hearing impaired: 1	Female: 4	Older student: 7
Learning disabled: 2	Male: 4	Native American: 1
Developmentally disabled: 2		First generation: 1
Physically disabled: 3		

Interviews of Students with Disabilities

When the interviews with the Advanced by Choice students with disabilities clientele were completed, the data from the responses was sorted and categorized into the following areas.

1. Faculty and staff awareness towards disabilities and sensitivity to the needs of disabled students.
2. Accommodation issues.
3. Knowledge of Section 504 requirements.
4. Discrimination.
5. Advance By Choice - Helpfulness.
6. Advance By Choice - Suggestions.

It is worth taking a close look at the ABC students with disabilities interview responses to provide a context for the analysis at the end of this chapter. The student interview responses will also help to provide a context for Chapter Nine recommendations. The information from the interviews with students will be compared with the information from Chapters Six and Seven. Only by reading the student responses themselves is it possible to fully understand how multiple perspectives contribute to the whole picture.

All student responses in their entirety are included below. The responses appear according to the categories outlined above.

Faculty and Staff Awareness Towards Disabilities and Sensitivity to the Needs of Disabled Students

Responses to Question #1: In your opinion, what are the issues for disabled students at MSU?

Respondent #1:

> I have experienced a problem with different instructors. I sit in the front of the class. Some of the instructors speak to me and their words overlap because they talk too fast.
>
> I have been in a lab class where they showed videos and then quizzed on it. I didn't do very well. That's why I went to ABC, I could not hear the video clearly. This issue was never resolved. I did talk to the instructor and did explain my hearing problem to him and he directed me to the T.A., but I didn't pursue it any further. My hearing disability had a bearing on my performance in the class. I didn't do good on the quizzes.

Respondent #3:

> The worst problem for disabled students is they don't identify with other students as well. It is the worse problem, because disabled people don't have any close ties with the non-disabled population. There is no empathy or understanding between the two. I'm not saying all non-disabled students have no empathy. When I was here in 1976 through 1980, the situation was far worse. There are good and bad students.
>
> The other worse problem is dealing with teachers who have no empathy. I know of a disabled student who had a problem with a teacher. He really screwed her over. I don't want to go into detail, these kinds of things have happened more than once. The heart of the problem was that the instructor lacked empathy for the disabled student. He could not identify with the problems the disabled student had. He had no feelings for her.

Respondent #4:

> Just because you aren't in a wheelchair doesn't mean that you aren't disabled. It's not discrimination you face, it's more a lack of awareness. Courtesy is not shown unless the handicap can be seen. It comes from instructors and students, all the way around.

Respondent #6:

> There is a general lack of awareness on the part of the faculty, especially the older faculty.

Respondent #8:

> I personally feel access issues begin as attitudinal issues.

Responses to Question #2: How is MSU responding?

Respondent #1:

> As far as the narrow minded teachers, MSU has a long way to go. It is hard enough for disabled students to identify with their peers, and it is worse to have to identify with instructors. As far as narrow minded teachers, you will always have those. I think, generally, attitudes have gotten better. MSU has come a ways in terms of improving their attitude. You always have good and bad.

Respondent #4:

> Awareness. I know there was a seminar at lunch that dealt with awareness of disabled students, but not many professors attended that. Attitude is not something that can be dealt with, labeled and fixed.

Respondent #6:

> But I understand that they (Resource Center) had a workshop two weeks ago about disabled students, and no one came. They have a problem in getting through to the faculty about disabled students. Faculty is not interested.

Responses to Question #4: Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your disability?

Respondent #1:

> A friend who has problems with his sight also has problems with instructors being insensitive to his problem. They lack sensitivity to handicapped persons. They treat them as an ordinary person without a handicap. That's the main complaint I've heard is instructors' insensitivities towards handicapped people.

Respondent #2:

> Yes, but it's mostly a lack of awareness from instructors.

Respondent #6:

> I have had professors make remarks (same one in major) about people who can't spell the same word the same way. I can't do that. He just sort of made it as an off the cuff remark about stupid people. I don't think he made the remark about me, but here's someone who is not aware of how disabilities affect people. He's just making blanket remarks. It really upset me. I just think they need to be more sensitive about what people are about.

Accommodation Issues

Responses to Question #1: In your opinion, what are the issues for disabled students at MSU?

Respondent #1:

> I did talk with the instructor and did explain my hearing problem to him and he directed me to the T.A, but I didn't pursue it any further. My hearing disability had a bearing on my performance in the class. I didn't do good on the quizzes.

Respondent #2:

> For me it is trying to keep up with the notes. To have a note taker take notes for you takes away from what you are learning.

Respondent #4:

Elevators are not easily accessible in all the buildings on campus, Linfield, specifically and underline that. The elevator in Cheever is not readily accessible.

If you have a class in Linfield, they either move it, or you have to drop it. The problem with moving classes is that it's not just moving one person, it's putting all the other students out. I had a class and the way they accommodated me was to let me leave class early to get to the class in a building that was not accessible. I have a heart problem and am partially paralyzed on one side. It would take me a long time to walk all the way to this building, and then have to walk up the stairs to get to class. Even with the extra time I was always late, but the instructor always had a chair by the door for me.

Respondent #5:

MSU is reasonably good at access, but there is always room for improvement in some areas. I have arthritis and a back problem, and from my point of view the desks are antiquated. They get very uncomfortable for those students with back problems. To have to sit in them for very long, especially when we are being tested, is unbearable.

Student #6:

In terms of my experience the Math Department is not flexible. I happen to do well in math. I could do better, but because I do OK, they're not willing to give me more time.

The Resource Center comes off as combative with the faculty. I know a couple of cases where students have had problems with the faculty and the Resource Center goes after the instructor. I have an instructor that I have a problem with who also happens to be in my major. I won't go through the Resource Center for help because I'm afraid they will jump on him with both feet. It might help someone else down the road, but I'm afraid I might get burned.

Some of the physically disabled students can't get around as well, especially in the library. They can't get around stacks and can't reach books and there isn't someone at the desk to help them.

Student #7:

I've had to test a couple times at night, it was bad. I hate to ask for alternative testing. I feel like I'm asking for special favors. I don't like for people to know I have a problem, I want to be accepted as just another person.

Student #8:

I feel that I'm graduating because I attended MSU. I was on a student exchange - went to another school that claimed to have affirmative education for disabled students. There was a tremendous gap in terms of accessibility of the system. So when I come to this university (MSU) there are instances where some kind of physical barrier prohibits my access. Indeed, in my experience here, for the most part, upon presenting the physical barrier and the requesting of accommodation the majority of times the present attitude of a positive desire to remedy the situation has always prevailed. I'll be realistic to the fact that there are buildings here that won't be accessible to me. For example, Linfield Hall. Granted, in my major I didn't have to use it, but my writing instructor was on the second floor in Linfield. We met on the first floor. Montana Hall - I can get into the basement only. Corky Bush's office is totally inaccessible, but I would be hard pressed to say Affirmative Action is inaccessible to me, because Corky comes to me wherever I want to meet her. My nose is not out of joint that I can't get to the top of Montana Hall - a beautiful old building that would cost a fortune to put an elevator in. Money for access is best spent towards education - get rid of attitudinal barriers for the future and adaptation. My adapting to meet Corky is realistic.

Responses to Question #2: How is MSU responding?

Respondent #1:

> I have identified myself to ABC. I have not identified myself to instructors, to say to them I need some help. I have made some attempts to address my hearing problem, ABC referred me to the Resource Center. I told them I was going to get a hearing aide. I tried to get a hearing aide, but I can't get any on my own, they are too expensive. I have tried to obtain a hearing aide through outside [agencies] like the Welfare Department, but they don't have the funds.

Respondent #2:

> I don't know if the issue of accommodating disabled students has been resolved, other than setting up special classes. It would be good to have someone be able to teach at the pace of the disabled student. I don't have any complaints. To me it doesn't matter whether someone helps me, it makes me feel like I'm getting a gift. This is my second quarter. It's been twenty-five years since I've been in school so I have all kinds of obstacles.
>
> Some of the students I've talked with are almost blind, they can't see the black board and it really limits them. Why should they have to take 15 credits for the Vocational Rehabilitation fee waiver? That makes it more difficult, more pressure to have to take that many credits, plus have to maintain a C average, and have a disability. You run into students who have flunked. It's nothing to do with MSU, it is trying to keep up with the requirements of the Voc. Rehab. If you don't maintain 15 credits per quarter, they cut you off, and you have to pay.

Respondent #4:

> The Resource Center is good at helping relocate classes.

Respondent #5:

> I think MSU like any other place is more interested in spending their money on other

things. The attitude is why spend money addressing issues of a minority?

Respondent #6:

I guess that ABC people - I get support, more like commiseration but I don't get the impression they do anything, that that's more the Resource Center, but they're too combative.

Respondent #7:

Very well. When you need the extra help, they're there. I haven't run into anyone who hasn't been helpful.

Respondent #8:

Overall - well - on initial contact and on a secondary level extremely well because of support system in place for me. Because of student support services, for example, ABC, Resource Center, Affirmative Action, those programs are available when I need them. They have mediated almost every access issue to a workable resolution. The examples are prolific, I wanted access to things most disabled students don't, like sports, and Disabled Student Services said go for it, if there isn't something we'll do it for you. They adapted classes for me like racquetball, horseback riding - now there's one! At first they weren't going to do it because of the liability issue, but they acquiesced. It involved five different people to get that class.

Response to Question #4: Have your ever experienced discrimination based on your disability?

Respondent #6:

Generally, if I let them know what my problems are, they're helpful and if I need special testing, I've got it without a hassle.

Response to Question #5: What is your perception of ABC's helpfulness to the disabled student population?

Respondent #3:

They got me through one section of math, without them I never would have gotten through. Kay

MacAllister is a modern day miracle worker. She can make handicapped people succeed.

Respondent #7:

They (ABC) always show you doors to find your way. They're always there for you.

Respondent #8:

Excellent, my personal experience, as far as usage, has been as a reference point for discrimination or access issues or support counseling when I am encountering problems intrinsic to disabled students.

Knowledge of Section 504 Requirements

Response to Question #3: Do you know your rights as a disabled student at MSU?

Respondent #1:

No, I'm not sure I do.

Respondent #2

Well, I do know that if I need help I can get it.

Respondent #3:

No, I don't, because I don't consider myself as disabled. I have been almost cured of my mental health (problems) and cerebral palsy does not allow me to play sports. That's about it. But I don't know what they are, no one has ever sat me down and told me what my rights are.

Respondent #4:

No, I don't think any of them are hampered, though I've never been told. No one has walked up to me and told me I could actually do something (about my rights as a disabled student). I just work around problems. I can't take notes, I am partially paralyzed. I had to get help on my own. ABC gave me a tape recorder.

Respondent #5:

Yes, I do. I haven't really had to use them. I've had a few friends in wheelchairs who at times have been terribly frustrated, whether it was due to their disability, I don't know. ABC is the only program I have ever dealt with, if there's any other program I don't know what they can do. ABC always steers me in the right direction.

Respondent #6:

Yeah, and I mostly do, not because of MSU particularly. My little brother who also has a learning disability went to a special college for learning disabled students and they had a class on the whole federal regulations. For example, I heard that we can register early. I went to the Resource Center and told them I had heard that and they said yeah. But no one gave me this information directly, I heard it from another student. I could have missed out on a great opportunity.

Respondent #7:

I think I know what I qualify to be able to do - the Resource Center gives you a little paper listing the things you qualify for. They specify - there are different levels and different things you qualify for depending on a person's disability. When I first went to school, I went to ABC for the math program and I qualified for ABC because my parents didn't go to school. I found out I qualified medically. Things went along fine until the math test. The math program teacher, Kay MacAllister, let me test in the morning, which was good for me. She told me to go to the Resource Center, and that's how I got the information.

Respondent #8:

Yes, Disabled Student Services have referred me to ABC or Affirmative Action.

Discrimination

Response to Question #4: Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your disability?

Respondent #1:

I was majoring in Sociology. I just did not care for the department, I did not care for the staff. For me it was like walking into a freezer. They have this attitude: what do you want, what are you doing here? I would only go there to get my signatures for classes. If I had any problems, I would go to ABC.

A friend who has problems with his sight also has problems with instructors being insensitive to his problem. They lack sensitivity to handicapped persons. They treat them as an ordinary person without a handicap. That's the main complaint I've heard is instructors insensitivities towards handicapped people.

Respondent #2:

Yes, but it's mostly a lack of awareness from instructors.

Respondent #3:

I think when I was here in 1976-80, lots of people did because I was sick. There were lots of things happening, mostly people didn't include me in their lives, very few people were involved in my life who cared if I was sick.

Respondent #4:

No, not from people or the teachers, none at all.

Respondent #5:

No.

Respondent #6:

Not knowingly, or directly. I have had a professor make remarks (same one in major) about people who can't spell the same word the same way. I can't do that. He just sort of made it as an off the cuff remark about stupid people. I

don't think he made the remark about me, but here's someone who is not aware of how disabilities affect people. He's just making blanket remarks. It really upset me, I just think they need to be more sensitive about what people are about. Generally, if I let them know what my problems are, they're helpful and if I need special testing, I've got it without a hassle.

Respondent #7:

No.

Respondent #8:

Yes, initial discrimination based on awareness. Another key factor is attitude - mine as much as theirs. When I get it into my head that I'm being wronged and in a situation where my rights are being violated, my experience is that the intensity I deal with the situation returns doublefold versus a non-defensive stance where the approach is I assume that the problem is where someone hadn't thought of it not because I'm willing to change it. The difference is success and positive conversion of the barrier of attitude or a long drawn out battle.

Advance By Choice - Helpfulness

Responses to Question #5: What is your perception of ABC's helpfulness to the disabled student population?

Respondent #1:

Since I've been in school I've used ABC, it is an important resource for me. If they can't help they give me referrals.

Respondent #2:

ABC is excellent, for as much as they can do. I don't even know how much they can do, haven't seen it. They got me through my first quarter.

Respondent #3:

I think it's fantastic. If I could give them four gold stars I would. They got me through one

section of math, without them I never would have gotten through. Kay MacAllister is a modern day miracle worker. She can make handicap people succeed.

I didn't ever participate in ABC lectures, I'm sure they were good. The tutor I had was excellent. I had a test after the shootings on campus and didn't do very well. But the tutor kept telling me I had to keep at it myself, just do it. The tutor took the time to talk to me about this.

Respondent #4:

ABC is really willing to help out, they will seek you out. Everyone at ABC is available, everyone keeps up with each person. I think they are very good. The ABC study skills classes are super. I'm in 005 Math with Kay MacAllister, she is just super. Helen Porter, too. She is very good. She gives you that extra incentive, always telling you to keep at it, you can do it.

Respondent #5:

I think they are very helpful. By my dealings I couldn't say anything bad about them at all. They go out of their way to help.

Respondent #6:

I think they're real helpful, certainly to me, especially on core classes, I get good advice. It's just nice having somebody who cares, because regular advisors don't care - they just tell you what requirements you need to graduate, sign your slip, and away you go.

Respondent #7:

I think it's wonderful. I can't say enough about ABC. I'm also an older student and I found it difficult in school. They (ABC) always show you doors to find your way - they're always there for you. ABC's a big, big, help. Too bad everybody can't use it.

Respondent #8:

> Excellent, my personal experience, as far as usage, has been as a reference point for discrimination or access issues or support counseling when I am encountering problems intrinsic to disabled students.

Advance By Choice - Suggestions

Responses to Question #6: What would you suggest to make ABC a better program for disabled students?

Respondent #1:

> There isn't anything I can think of. I am satisfied with ABC. They have been a godsend to me, they have helped me make a transition I don't know if I could have done it without them.

Respondent #2:

> All I can come up with is for them to have special classes that are taught at the pace for disabled students.

Respondent #3:

> I heard reports from people on campus who are disabled that there used to be a club called something like People, Crutches and Wheelchairs. The club gave them unity, love. I suggest maybe to get handicapped people identified, they have to identify with each other first. Start another club, get them together - it helps make them stronger to have a common bond.

Respondent #4:

> Have seminars concerning handicapped people. Make the community aware of the handicapped people and just because they don't have a physical disability doesn't mean they aren't handicapped. Also, get a list of handicapped people on campus, list what their handicap is. Network disabled students so they can learn how to go it (get through school) better. Learn from each other. Like me, there is one other woman on campus who is also paralyzed and can't write. She just doesn't take notes, she listens and learns

from the lectures. I couldn't do that, I am older and don't have as good a memory.

Respondent #5:

There are more people who would use the ABC program if they knew about it. It is hard to get to. ABC should be in a more prominent place with a straight shot through the door. It can be difficult for disabled people to get to.

Respondent #6:

I don't know. I feel like I get . . . if they could have more . . . a lot of the remedial classes like for writing, math, are real low level. If you can get beyond that, maybe they could offer something better - I know my writing needs work. I transferred my English requirements from another school, I'd like to take a 300 level Research Writing class, but I don't know.

Respondent #7:

I can't think of anything, because they do such an excellent job.

Respondent #8:

I don't feel qualified to answer because they've served the needs I have, I haven't been disappointed.

Analysis of Student Interviews

Throughout the interviews both administrators and students identified a lack of faculty awareness towards disabilities and sensitivity to the needs of disabled students as being a major issue at MSU. Some respondents made direct statements regarding faculty awareness and sensitivity issues. For example, one administrator respondent said "faculty and staff sensitivity towards

disabled students' needs" and another administrator respondent said, "There is a general lack of awareness on the part of the faculty." One student respondent described a scene that illustrates both a lack of awareness and sensitivity by an instructor towards students with disabilities. The student respondent described a situation where a professor made "remarks about people who can't spell the same word the same way." The professor made the remark in a way as to suggest these people are "stupid." The student did continue on to say that "generally when [she] asks for accommodation [she] gets it without a hassle."

Earlier in this study it was pointed out that discrimination towards students with disabilities occurs when they have been ignored. The two elements are intertwined: a lack of awareness about students with disabilities perpetuates discrimination towards them, especially those with invisible disabilities. As one administrator respondent said, "Learning disabilities are viewed as a myth by faculty." Another administrator respondent made this statement, "There is some resistance from some faculty, and this is mostly due to a lack of knowledge about disabled students."

The resistance to change that is seen in dominant cultures is, of course, not limited to resistance toward

students with disabilities. It is undeniable, in any event, that the first step toward providing accommodations for students with disabilities is to recognize that accommodations are needed.

Discrimination towards students with disabilities is manifested in the denial of equal educational opportunities in postsecondary institutions. That denial is generally due to a lack of academic and physical accommodations. For example, a major part of postsecondary education is the utilization of the library. However, the library at Montana State is not readily accessible to students with disabilities as described by this student respondent:

> Some of the physically disabled students can't get around as well, especially in the library. They can't get around the stacks and can't reach books and there isn't someone at the desk to help them.

The author of this study shudders to think about the difficulties an inaccessible library could create.

Two students expressed feelings that requesting academic accommodations is like "asking for special favors," or that it makes them feel like they are "getting a gift." Those sentiments are not surprising, since it was only thirteen years ago that all educational institutions receiving federal funds were legally required to make physical and academic accommodations available to students with disabilities. Because seven out of the eight students

interviewed are students over traditional age, it is likely that some of them have experienced in their lifetime an elementary, secondary or postsecondary educational environment inhospitable to students with disabilities.

In addition to all the factors described above, money is an issue in the level of accommodation a college or university is able to provide for students with disabilities. All of the administrators responded that inadequate funding limits "staff time and resources of other offices to devote to disabled students' issues." In fact, one administrator stated that while the demands placed in their office have increased, funding has decreased. This no doubt creates stress on the system for both administrators and students. For example, a student respondent stated that:

> The Resource Center comes off as combative with the faculty. . . I won't go through the Resource Center for help because I'm afraid they will jump on him [instructor] with both feet.

There are other types of academic accommodations that many colleges and universities in Montana find difficult to fund. For example, there are no postsecondary institutions in Montana with one or more full-time interpreters for students who are deaf, have talking computers, and or reading machines. Making all accommodations to all students with disabilities available would require having more funds available for student service programs serving students with disabilities. It was stated earlier that more funding

is desperately needed to provide staff to meet the demands of an ever increasing population at Montana State University. For many student service administrators providing services, other than basic services, at this point seems like a pipe dream.

The lack of available hearing devices to accommodate students who are hearing impaired affects the progress of some students. One example is the case mentioned earlier about the student with a hearing impairment whose lab quizzes were based upon information from videos. Later on in the interview that student made this statement:

> I made some attempts to address my hearing problem. ABC referred me to the Resource Center. I told them I was going to get a hearing aide. I tried to get a hearing aide, but I can't get any on my own, they are too expensive. I have tried to obtain a hearing aide through outside [agencies] like the Welfare Department, but they don't have the funds.

The student describes a situation which shows how frustrating it can be for students with a disability who do not readily have access to auxiliary aides that accommodate their disability. The problem of not having access to auxiliary aides is a result of a lack of available funding to subsidize the equipment necessary to provide accommodations for students who are hearing impaired or have limited vision. Another student made a similar reference about how frustrating it is for students who do not have access to auxiliary aides, "Some of the students

I've talked with are almost blind, they can't see the black board and it really limits them."

Many students simply are not informed about what is available to accommodate their disability. For example, one student who is partially paralyzed relayed information about another student who is also paralyzed:

> There is one other woman on campus who is also paralyzed and can't write. She just doesn't take notes, she listens and learns from the lectures. I couldn't do that, I am older and don't have as good a memory.

Fortunately, the student respondent did not have to rely on her memory because she sought help through ABC, and they equipped her with a tape recorder.

In addition to the barrier of limited access to accommodation, students are burdened with the demands of maintaining a credit load which exceeds that of full-time status. One student pointed out that students with disabilities who receive fee waivers from the state of Montana's Vocational Rehabilitation program are required to take fifteen credits per quarter and maintain a C average. If the student does not comply with this requirement they are dropped from the program and must pay their own tuition.

In Chapter Six, author Goldman stated that, "Academic adjustments may have to be made in the program, including more time for completing the degree." The Vocational

Rehabilitation requirement of 15 credits per quarter exceeds full-time status and does not provide the accommodation of allowing more time to complete the degree. It is obvious that the state Vocational Rehabilitation's interest is to process as many students, as quickly as possible. They pay no heed to the barriers already in place for students, and compound barriers with an unrealistic requirement of an increased credit load.

Limited resources for many colleges and universities makes providing more than basic services difficult. The changes necessary to provide physical accommodations to many of the older buildings can be costly. As one student said,

> I'll be realistic to the fact that there are buildings here that won't be accessible to me . . . my nose is not out of joint that I can't get to the top of Montana Hall - a beautiful, old building. Money for access is best spent towards education - get rid of attitudinal barriers for the future and adaptation.

The exclusion of students with disabilities in the architectural planning of the old buildings on the Montana State University campus is largely the result of the societal norms which at that time excluded people with disabilities.

When asked Question #3, do you know your rights as a disabled student at MSU, four students were unaware that they have legal protection and did not mention Section 504

of the Rehabilitation Act. The four students who responded yes to question #3 also made no reference to Section 504. One student respondent knew that there were federal regulations, but did not specifically mention Section 504. For example, her/his response when asked was:

> Yeah, and I mostly do, not because of MSU particularly. My little brother who also has a learning disability went to a special college for learning disabled students and they had a class on the whole federal regulations.

The student went on to say that she/he had heard about early registration from another student and went to the Resource Center to confirm that information. The student felt that she/he would have "missed out on a great opportunity" had she/he not heard about early registration from another student. Limited funding to provide adequate staff to meet the demands of an increased population of students with disabilities perhaps makes it difficult to assure that information is disseminated to all the students.

For Question #5 students were asked if they had ever experienced discrimination based on their disability. Four respondents felt that they had experienced discrimination and four students felt that they had not experienced discrimination.

Of the four students who responded no to Question #5, one student respondent indicated earlier when asked

Question #4 that she/he is unaware of Section 504. The student stated that she/he had not experienced discrimination "not from people or the teachers, none at all." One of the four students who responded to Question #5 in the affirmative was also a student who stated that she/he understands her/his student rights. When asked if she/he had ever experienced discrimination, the student responded "yes, initial discrimination based on awareness."

One student when asked about discrimination gave this account:

> I was majoring in Sociology. I just did not care for the department, I did not care for the staff. For me it was like walking into a freezer. They have this attitude: what do you want, what are you doing here? I would only go there to get my signatures for classes.

Although the student respondent did not say specifically why she/he felt discriminated against, it interesting to note that the Sociology Department was identified by the Native American students as having an environment inhospitable to them as well (Webber, 1990). Another department identified as a problem department by Native American students, students with disabilities, and Special Service administrators is the Math Department. In interviews with administrator and student respondents one student respondent described the Math Department as "not flexible" and one administrator identified the Math

Department as "not 'user friendly,' not sensitive." Both respondents gave those descriptions of the Math Department when asked to respond to accommodation issues.

When the author of this study asked Mary Lukin, Advance By Choice Director, about students who have experienced discrimination, she mentioned the names of several academic departments where students have had problems. Both the Math and Sociology departments were included in those departments mentioned by the ABC Director.

Two student respondents said that the discrimination they have felt was due to a lack of awareness from students and instructors. One student stated that when he was at MSU ten years before, he was visibly ill, and the discrimination he experienced was that of feeling excluded. He said that "there were lots of things happening, mostly people didn't include me in their lives, very few people were involved in my life who cared if I was sick." It is likely that people on the MSU campus over ten years ago did not feel comfortable talking about their differences, and as a result students with disabilities were invisible to faculty, staff, and service providers.

Only one administrator respondent was willing to reply directly the issue of discrimination when asked if disabled students are ever discriminated against because of their

disabilities. The administrator respondent felt that the instances of discrimination against students with disabilities was based on ignorance. The administrator respondent felt that the ignorance stems from "a lack of awareness regarding disabled students' issues, but also from not knowing the law."

Two student respondents also felt that discrimination was based on a lack of awareness from faculty. One respondent stated that, "Another key factor is attitude - mine as much as theirs." The student feels that when her/his rights have been violated it is better to deal with the situation in a non-confrontive manner. Otherwise, "the intensity I deal with the situation returns doublefold." The student believes that the difference between taking a defensive stance versus a non-defensive stance can result in "success and positive conversion of the barrier of attitude or a long drawn out battle." That student's reply is reminiscent of the statement made earlier from this student who felt that it was best not to take accommodation issues to the Resource Center, because she/he felt that they would be confrontive with the instructor. The student continued on to say that a confrontive method of dealing with accommodation issues "might help someone else down the road, but I'm afraid I might get burned."

All of the student respondents had positive feedback when asked about the helpfulness to them by the Advance By Choice program. Two students described ABC 005 Math instructor, Kay MacAllister, as being "a modern day miracle worker" and "she is just super." Most of the students responses indicate that the Advance By Choice is an "important resource" for them. A student respondent expressed, "It's just nice having somebody who cares, because regular advisors don't care - they just sign your slip, and away you go." Another said that when she is "encountering problems intrinsic to disabled students" ABC "has been a reference point for discrimination or access issues or support counseling." Clearly, student respondents believe that the Advance By Choice program contributes greatly towards their academic success as students with disabilities at Montana State University.

When student respondents were asked for their suggestions to make ABC a better program for students with disabilities, three students responded that they were satisfied with the services and could not think of any suggestions to improve ABC.

Two students mentioned that they would like to have "special classes that are taught at the pace for disabled students." One of the students stated specifically that the pace of the ABC remedial classes are too slow. For

example, the student stated that "a lot of the remedial classes like for writing, math are real low level. If [ABC] could get beyond that, maybe they could offer something better."

One student respondent felt that ABC should "have seminars concerning handicapped people." Another student said, "There are more people who would use the ABC program if they knew about it." The student also stated that the ABC office should be in a different place, that because it is not a "straight shot through the door, it can be difficult for disabled people to get to."

One student respondent stated that there should be more networking among students with disabilities so that students can "learn from each other." Another student had a similar suggestion when she/he said, "I suggest maybe to get handicap people identified, they have to identify with each other first. Start another club, get them together - it helps make them stronger to have a common bond."

While all of the student respondents feel that ABC is doing an excellent job serving students with disabilities, the majority of the student respondents did offer suggestions in making improvements. This suggests, perhaps, that there is more that can be done by the ABC program for students with disabilities. It was also revealed by program administrators that in order to better

serve the students with disabilities at MSU, more funding is needed to increase the staff from ABC and the Resource Center. It stands to reason that if the population of students with disabilities is increasing, more staff will be needed to help serve these students.

In conclusion, the basic themes found in the interviews with the student target population is that of a lack of faculty awareness and sensitivity regarding the issues of students with disabilities. It was also found that students feel there is a need for networking for the purpose of information sharing among the students with disabilities population at MSU. Furthermore, it was found that many of the students do not have a clear understanding regarding the their rights as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

Upon completing interviews for this study several important issues facing students with disabilities at Montana State University have emerged. The issues which have been identified are not unique to Montana State University. Many institutions of higher learning are attempting to fulfill their legal obligations to accommodate students with disabilities. "Although the academy has formally acknowledged its obligations toward disabled students in principle, it has sometimes been slow to implement concrete measures to effect their realization" (Nielsen & Polishook, 1988). Montana State University has made attempts to fulfill their obligation towards students with disabilities primarily through physical accommodation and Special Services programs. However, there are issues which have been identified that ultimately must be resolved in order for students with disabilities to truly have equal educational opportunities at Montana State University.

In concluding this chapter, the several important issues which have been identified will be categorized and

summarized. The recommendations for the Advance By Choice program will follow the issues summary section.

Awareness and Sensitivity Issues

The ABC students with disabilities and special services administrators who were interviewed for this study revealed throughout their responses the issue of a lack of faculty awareness and sensitivity regarding the issues facing students with disabilities. The issue of faculty apathy towards students with disabilities is related to the other issues such as accommodation issues.

Faculty apathy towards students with a disability is, of course, a barrier in higher education for students with disabilities. Faculty themselves can become a barrier primarily because they are on the front lines of the efforts of colleges and universities to fulfill legal obligations towards students with disabilities. For example, faculty who are unaware of various learning disabilities are less likely to help identify students with learning disabilities. Most importantly, though, faculty who are unaware of the characteristics of learning disabilities may unconsciously resist providing academic accommodations for students who have learning disabilities.

Accommodation Issues

At Montana State University limited resources have made it difficult to provide services other than basic services to students with disabilities. For example, MSU does not have the financial ability to provide accommodations for students who are totally deaf. Although MSU is the best university in the state in providing access and accommodation to students with disabilities, not all buildings on the MSU campus are entirely accessible. Several buildings, such as Linfield Hall and the MSU library, have been identified as having limited access to students who are physically disabled.

It is undeniable that discrimination against students with disabilities occurs when these students are denied physical and academic access to higher education. Several departments at MSU have also been identified as being resistant to providing academic accommodation to students with disabilities. MSU administrators indicated that the resistance by these departments is due primarily to a lack of awareness by faculty about the disability.

Some of the student respondents stated that they are reluctant to come forward and identify themselves as needing accommodation for their disabilities, because they view it as asking for special favors, or getting a gift. In addition to feeling that they are asking for special

favors, some students are simply unaware of the accommodations available to them.

Section 504

The Special Services administrators in the interview responses indicated that they are aware of the legal requirements the university has to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. However, many of the students interviewed indicated that they are uninformed regarding their right to receive reasonable accommodation as outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Furthermore, it appears that many faculty members are similarly unaware of the legal requirements of Section 504.

Advance By Choice

The interview responses revealed that the Advance By Choice program plays an important role in helping to address some aspects of the issues which have been identified. For example, ABC is instrumental in providing academic counseling, tutoring, remedial math and English classes. In addition, ABC has provided enlightened and sensitive instructors, such as Kay MacAllister, in departments which have been identified as being resistant to providing academic accommodations.

However, there are several areas in which ABC could improve its services to students with disabilities at MSU. For example, as part of their mission ABC has agreed to provide a "comprehensive project to identify disadvantaged students." Despite this mission, ABC has been remiss in its effort to identify students with disabilities. The Resource Center Director reports that there may be as many as 1,000 students with disabilities currently attending MSU, yet only 350 students have been identified by the Resource Center. The Advance By Choice program serves only 46 students with disabilities. The disparity in the figures reveals that there are no institutional methods in place to accurately identify students with disabilities. Currently, sole means of identification depends upon the student coming forward to identify her/himself. In some cases an instructor will identify the student and recommend that the student seek help at ABC.

In the ABC work plan for the 1988-1989 school year ABC indicated that it would attend student meetings to give presentations on its program. ABC identified Wheelchairs, Crutches and People as one student group they would give their presentation to. Yet some of the students who were interviewed did not even know that a student group for students with disabilities existed. One student suggested that a student group be organized for the purpose of

networking and support of students with hidden disabilities. Another student stated that "there are more people who would use the ABC program if they knew about it."

All of the Special Service administrators responded that in order for ABC to better serve the students with disabilities population, ABC needs more money to provide more staff. Increasing staff is necessary if ABC is to meet the increasing number and demands of students with disabilities. The Advance By Choice program receives all of its funding from a federal grant through the U.S. Department of Education. Montana State University benefits greatly from the presence of ABC, while contributing little in terms of actual funds available to help increase the services of ABC.

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are based upon the issues which have been identified through interviews with Special Services administrators and ABC students with disabilities clientele. The recommendations are presented in a prioritized order, beginning with those having the greatest potential for helping to address the significant issue confronting students with disabilities.

1. Identification of students with disabilities must not depend entirely upon the student. Other methods for

identification of students with disabilities must be incorporated into the ABC special services program. One method would be to recruit faculty from academic departments to serve as student advocates. The faculty member who serves as an advocate for students with disabilities would be a liaison to ABC, would help with identification of students with disabilities, and help to arrange academic accommodations within her/his department. Another purpose of faculty serving as a student advocate would be to help sensitize and create awareness among other departmental faculty of the different issues facing students with disabilities.

2. A handbook outlining the requirements of Section 504 should be developed and given to all faculty, staff, and students. The handbook should be a cooperative effort between the special services programs. In addition to the 504 handbook, institutional policies regarding discrimination against students with disabilities at MSU should be developed.

3. Assistance in networking students with disabilities should be provided by strengthening the existing student group Wheelchairs, Crutches and People. Clearly, an active student group should be encouraged for the purpose of information sharing within the students with disabilities community. An active student group can also take the lead

in educating the non-disabled population by organizing and facilitating workshops. In addition to the students organizing and facilitating workshops, an active student group can also take the lead in week-long programs and activities akin to the Native American Awareness Week Activities.

4. Develop an ongoing formal committee of students with disabilities who will develop a plan to address the issues facing students with disabilities. The committee should include faculty who serve as student advocates, as well as special services administrators.

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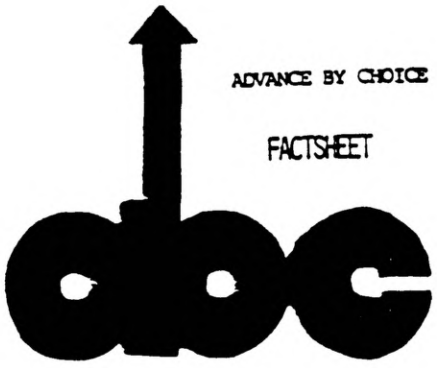
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FACTSHEET



* ELIGIBILITY *

Advance By Choice is funded by a grant through the Department of Education. Our application process determines eligibility. A student must meet one of following criteria:

First Generation - neither of the student's parents nor guardian had a Bachelor's degree.

Low Income - verification of taxable income is necessary by submitting a copy of the previous tax year's 1040/1040A/1040EZ forms.

Physically Disabled - this includes hidden and learning disabilities.

* COURSE OFFERINGS *

English 001, 002, 003: These classes are geared toward building writing competencies within a small class setting.

Math 005: Weekly lectures and individual aid supplement the TAC format of Math 010, 011, 012, and 140.

The above courses are pass/fail and require a restricted entry card.

ADVANCE BY CHOICE
STRAND UNION BUILDING
Room 146 994-4541

* STUDY SKILLS *

Workshops - The ABC Study Skills coordinator offers several compact workshops dealing with the most essential study skills.

Videotapes covering study skills topics are available and may be checked out at the ABC office for viewing at the Library.

Target Session Tapes audio cassettes and accompanying workbooks, each focusing on a specific study skill, are available in the ABC office.

* COUNSELING *

ABC counselors are available to assist students with career, academic or personal concerns.

* TUTORING *

Individual and group tutoring are available in many undergraduate classes.

* DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES *

ABC closely coordinates services with MSU's Disabled Student Services office for students in need of special equipment or assistance.

* OTHER ABC SERVICES *

- Diagnostic testing in English, Math and study skills.
- Test Analysis
- Study Groups
- Assistance with Financial Aid Forms
- Referrals to university and community resources.

A Department of Education Special Services Project within the Division of Student Affairs and Services

APPENDIX B

TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

If you are interested in receiving a tutor through the ABC program, please complete this form and sign it.

Name _____ Date_____

Are you currently enrolled in the Advance By Choice program? ____Yes ____No

For which course are you requesting tutoring? _____

What grade are you presently earning in the course? _____

Have you had all the necessary prerequisites? ____Yes ____No

When did you take the prerequisite courses? _____

At MSU ____Yes ____No

What grades did you receive in the prerequisite courses? _____

ABC WILL NOT TUTOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE COURSE PREQUISITES (D's are not considered passing).

Have you discussed the trouble you are having in this course with your instructor?

____Yes ____No

Have you inquired about help sessions or review sessions which the instructor may be offering? ____Yes ____No

Are you presently a member of a study group for this course? ____Yes ____No

How would you describe the problems you are having with this course?

_____

_____

How many hours per week do you study for this course? _____

* * *

Please make a check next to any of the following ABC Study Skills Workshops you have either attended or listened to on cassette:

____ Reading Textbooks & Remembering What You've Read

____ Taking Notes & Listening in Lectures

____ Taking Tests & Controlling Test Anxiety

____ Beating the Time Crunch

____ Preparing for Final Exams

_____
Signature

APPENDIX C

FORMAT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS

FORMAT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interaction I: Briefly explain the purpose of the project. Follow this with:

"Is there anything you would like to know right now about me (us) and my (our) involvement in this project?"

Interaction II: Review and obtain agreement with ground rules for the interview (see attached).

Interaction III: Pose the following questions (or some general adaptation of the following form of questions):

1. Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?

2. What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here?

3. Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?

Interaction IV: Any further comments, questions, or afterthoughts?

Interaction V: Thanks for your cooperation.

PROVISIONS AND GROUND RULES FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWING

Introduce this with a statement to the effect that "I'd like to go over the ground rules we are using for these interviews and see if they are acceptable to you."

1. First, about the type of data we will be gathering: I will ask you three open ended and general questions that are stated in the same way for everyone who is interviewed. I will record, as closely as I can, your exact verbatim response to these questions. You may interpret the questions as you wish and answer them in any way you like. My role is only to record your response. In order to check the accuracy of what I am recording from you, I will frequently say it back to you so that you can see if what I am getting down is what you wish to say.

2. What we will do with the data after we complete all the interviews is to group the responses according to what appear to be common themes in what people have said in response to the questions. We will then sort the categorization of responses into concerns and issue areas. We will not be analyzing or interpreting the responses in any way. The class purpose of our project is to give us experience in conducting open ended interviews and to conduct background research necessary for the development of evaluation designs.

3. We will be making the final categorization of responses into concerns and issues available to the program director for her/his own information since these interviews should provide your director with valuable program information. We wish to assure you that your responses to the questions will remain anonymous. We will connect no one's name to any of the responses. Not even the professor for our course will have such information.

APPENDIX D

DATA MAPPING

DATA MAPPING: Method of Notetaking for Open-ended Interviewing

Respondent No.____ Question No.____

1. 2. Same Subject 3. New Subject

. Center Circle

Instructions: Begin by putting a small circle in the center of the page. This circle serves as a simple ordering device for your notetaking.

1. Record first statement at left hand top of page and put a balloon around it. Draw a line connecting the balloon with the center circle.

2. If second statement is on same subject as first, put a balloon around it and draw a line to connect the first two balloons.

3. Whenever a statement begins a new subject put a balloon around it and draw a line to connect the balloon with the circle in the center.

4. Move around the page in a circular clockwise fashion.

5. Lines are used to connect balloons only when they are on the same subject.

This method of notetaking (it must be rapid) keeps your interview data in order. As soon as you come out of the interview you can translate the notes into data statements. Use 5 x 7 note cards for this and record one thought per card (this facilitates the categorizing and sorting process that ultimately yields a set of discrete concerns and issues). When translating interview notes into data statements (on the cards), put your own clarification notes, if any, into brackets.

The connecting lines are useful for making associations and helping to trigger your memory.