

WSU Access Center Update – Faculty Senate Meeting

February 12, 2026

Overview of Disability Accommodations

Current Landscape

- 2,411 students across WSU currently have approved accommodations.
- Distribution by campus:
 - Pullman: 1,476
 - Vancouver: 279
 - Spokane: 257
 - Global Campus: 237
 - Tri-Cities: 144
 - Everett: 18
- Accommodation applications have stabilized over the last three years, averaging ~950 – 970 applications annually (May – January).

Accommodation Process

1. Student Application: Submitted through the system-wide website.
2. Documentation: Students provide medical or psychological documentation.
3. Intake Meeting: A one-hour appointment where specialists:
 - Discuss barriers in coursework, testing, or learning environments
 - Review and explain accommodation options
 - Train students on communicating with faculty and managing accommodations
4. Approval & Renewal:
 - Accommodations are approved after intake.
 - Students renew each semester through the online system.
 - Students may return at any time to update accommodations as conditions change.

Most Common Disabilities Encountered

- ADHD
- Psychological conditions (anxiety, depression, bipolar)
- Chronic medical conditions (diabetes, migraines, etc.)
- Learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia)
- Temporary injuries (concussions, broken bones)
- Sensory impairments (deaf/hard of hearing, low vision/blind)
- Mobility impairments (least common)

Team Structure Across the System

- Pullman team supports Pullman, Everett, Global Campus, and Extension/Research Centers.
- Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver operate dedicated accommodation teams.

Key Initiatives

- Revised Faculty Notification Letters: Enhancements aimed at clearer expectations and guidance for faculty.
- MyAccess System Upgrade: Planned for summer; improved interface and additional staff functionality.

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- New Workshops:
 - Accommodations 101 (system-wide)
 - Accommodations in complex environments (labs, clinicals, studios)
 - Classroom compliance (religious accommodations, pregnancy modifications, disability requirements, active-duty students)
- System-Wide Standardization: Efforts underway to ensure consistent accommodation practices across all campuses.

Faculty Guidance

- Accommodations are a collaborative partnership to ensure equal access.
- Faculty cannot deny accommodations without engaging in the interactive process.
- For questions or concerns, faculty should contact:
 - The student's accommodation specialist, or
 - Their campus director, or
 - Matthew Jeffries for general guidance.

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Overview of Student Care & Support

- Serves students on Pullman, Global, Everett, and Extension campuses.
- Provides consultation and training support to Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver.
- Expanded training via in-person sessions, Zoom sessions, retreats, and mini-retreats to ensure consistency across campuses.

Services Provided

- Emergency funding and emergency notifications
- Resource referrals and benefits navigation
- Guidance on university processes, especially for first-year and first-generation students
- Support is guided by academic regulations

Scope & Limitations

- Non-clinical case management (not therapy; clinical needs referred to CAPS or private providers)
- Not a replacement for:
 - First responders (no welfare checks)
 - CCS/CCR reporting requirements
 - Academic advising
- Student participation is voluntary, not mandatory

When to Refer a Student

- Academic, social, financial, or general well-being concerns
- Hospitalizations or significant medical/mental health challenges
- Students may contact CAPS directly; referral to Student Care is not required first

Referral Process

- Referrals submitted via Request for Support form by faculty, staff, or students
- Pullman/Global/Everett: assigned to a case manager
- Other campuses: one staff member manages all steps
- Confirmation emails sent within 1–2 business days
- Students may:
 - Engage
 - Opt out (new process, unless safety concerns exist)
 - Ignore outreach
- Cases close after multiple unanswered contacts, but reopen with new referrals

Trends & Case Volume

- Significant increase in referrals over the past 3 years
- Current academic year is on pace to exceed prior year
- Increase partially due to proactive outreach (e.g., flood-affected students)
- Most common referral types:
 - Academic concerns

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- Mental health
- Financial concerns
- Other frequent issues: housing insecurity, medical needs, suicidal ideation or attempts

Referral Options

- Two pathways:
 - For others (faculty/staff submitting on behalf of a student)
 - Self-referrals
- Referral form includes option to keep reporter identity confidential

Emergency Notifications

- The Office of the Dean of Students cannot excuse absences; only faculty can
- Emergency notifications sent only when the student cannot communicate themselves, such as:
 - Death of immediate family (parent/guardian/sibling)
 - Hospitalization (medical or mental health)
- Not issued for:
 - Extended family deaths
 - Non-emergency surgeries
 - Illnesses where students can communicate
 - Vacations
- Staff can help students craft emails to faculty when needed

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Questions & Answers

Q: What happens when a student agrees to accommodations with faculty, then later seeks changes through the Access Center?

Response:

- Process varies case-by-case, depending on student–faculty relationship and circumstances.
- If conditions worsen or documentation supports changes, the Access Center may:
 - Review updated documentation.
 - Reach out to faculty to renegotiate accommodations.
- Small adjustments (e.g., one extra day) may result in the student being directed back to faculty.
- Larger or more complex changes (e.g., increased absences) typically involve more Access Center intervention.

Q: How many referred students engage with the Care Network?

Response:

- Few students opt out of engagement.
- 70–80% open the outreach letters (tracked via Maxient).
- 20–30% meet directly with Student Care.
- Many resolve issues via phone without formal meetings.
- Even minor referrals can help keep students on track.
- Sometimes best intervention is advising a temporary “off-ramp” (e.g., medical withdrawals for injuries).

Q: Why are accommodations increasing?

Response:

- Greater openness about mental health among Gen Z and subsequent generations.
- Rising diagnoses of anxiety, depression, and ADHD.
- Increased access to testing for learning disabilities.
- Trend is consistent nationally.

Q: Are graduate/professional students requesting more accommodations?

Response:

- Data not immediately available; will follow up with grad vs. professional breakdown.

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Q: Is there a reporting link from the LMS to Student Care?

Response:

- A Pullman-only pilot is underway with Academic Advising.
- Every two weeks, Student Care receives a list of students with EARS referrals.
- If students don't engage with advising, Student Care follows up.
- No universal "easy button" yet, but goal is a more streamlined system next year.
- Faculty who submit referrals receive confirmation, but do not receive details of student engagement to preserve student agency and privacy.
- Faculty may email case managers directly with follow-up information.

Q: How do accommodations translate to employment expectations post-graduation?

Response:

- University's legal obligation is to ensure access to *education*, not guarantee workplace outcomes.
- Students can request workplace accommodations, but these are typically less flexible than collegiate accommodations.
- Important to guide students early on about:
 - Documentation needs in employment settings.
 - The reality that flex hours and extended deadlines may not be available in certain industries (e.g., accounting).
- Faculty express concern that students may be unprepared for workplace expectations.