



BETH ROLAND | DRC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
AMANDA PILLAR | COMMUNICATIONS  
SPECIALIST

# Why is Business Booming at the Disability Resource Center?

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## What we will cover today

- "The Question" - DRC Student Growth – Why?
  - Broader trend in U.S. at DRC's
  - What data do we have already to help us understand?
  - What other data do we need to obtain?
- Other factors: New mission/vision, re-framing disability
- How our new understandings (answer?) connect to our bigger picture outreach and marketing
- Implications/Examples from DSA Marketing Team
- Your turn: Qualitative questions!



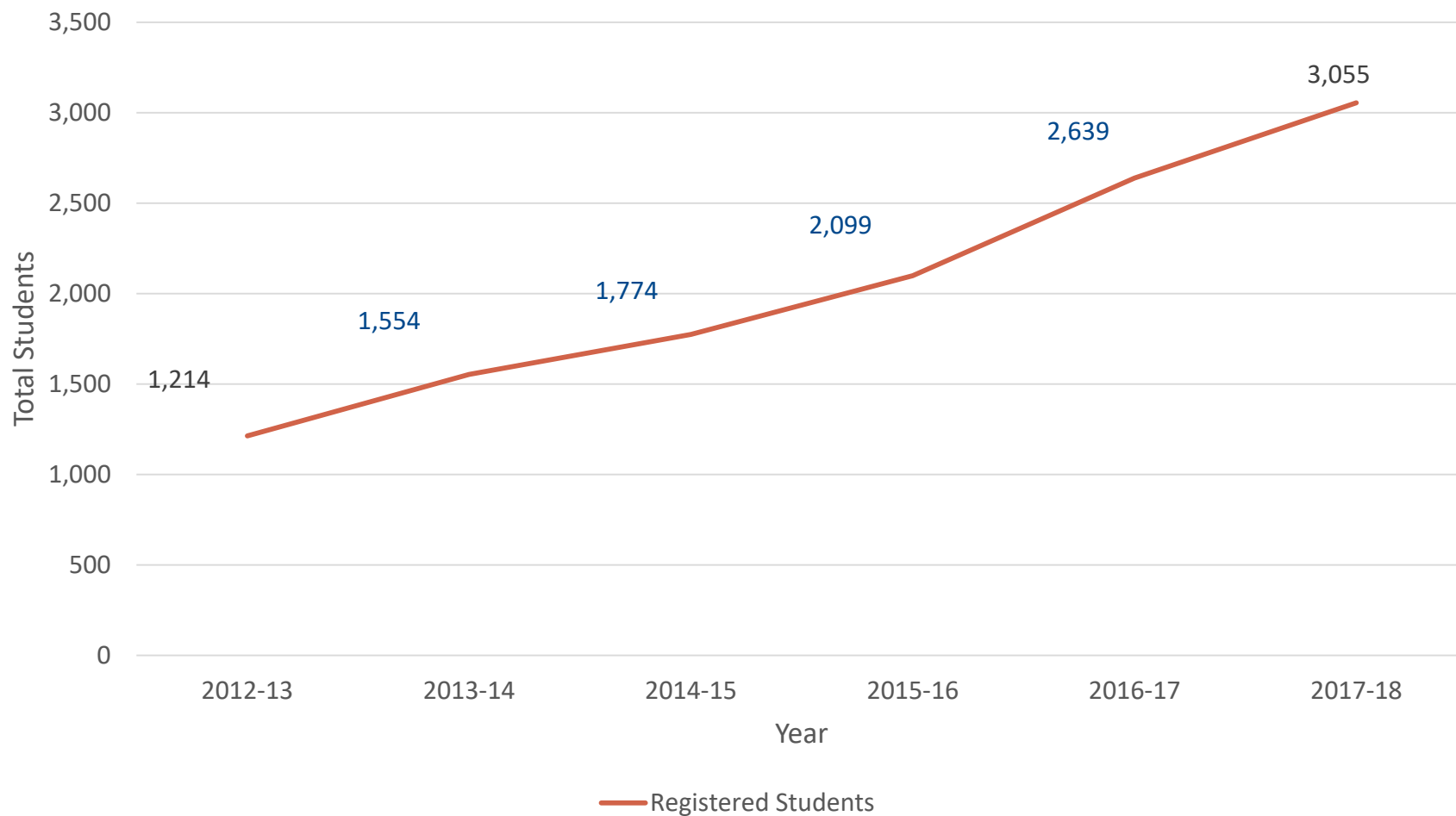


## When did I first think about this question?

- Fall 2015
- By fall 2016, these were some observations
  - Student growth: in particular with new students, mental health, students referring other students, reason for coming to DRC
- Sherlock
- Why does the question matter?




## DRC Student Growth





- **DRC students to date:**
  - 3,055 students
  - Undergrad, Graduate, Professional programs,
- **Categories of disability:**
  - Mental Health Impairments – highest increase
  - Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
  - Learning Disorders
  - Medical/Chronic Health Conditions
  - Hearing, Vision, TBI, Autism
  - Physical/Mobility Impairments
- Estimates show around 10-15% of college students have disability





What is happening at other DRC's around the country?  
Wall Street Journal Article  
May 24, 2018

- Public universities have also seen a significant uptick in test accommodations. From 2011 to 2016, the number of students with testing accommodations increased by an average of 71% among 22 flagship state schools, according to data obtained by The Wall Street Journal.
- The most common accommodations come during testing. Students who receive extended time typically receive time and 1/2 or double time.
- Public flagships with the highest percentages include the University of Vermont (16%), University of Massachusetts, Amherst (10%) and University of Arkansas (10%).



**Why do you think there is a  
rise in the number of  
students seeking services  
from the DRC?**



- Hypotheses for student growth
- More outreach efforts are helping students get to DRC
  - Admissions
  - Preview
  - Campus Partners
  - Tabling and presentations
- New Model of Disability – less stigma because problem resides primarily in inaccessible environment
- Generation Z – students aware of their civil rights, sharing with each other
- More inclusive K-12 experiences for students with disabilities





**What is the purpose of a  
Disability Resource Center  
on a University Campus?**

# Historical Oppression of Disabled People

Belief	Manifestation	Treatment
Possessed	Danger to self and others	Exploitation
Immoral/Sinner	Contagious	Experimentation
Defective	Incapable of independence	Sterilization, Institutionalization

## Reframing Disability

Prevalent - Medical	Emerging – Social
Due to a physiological difference, diagnosis, injury or impairment, individual is at a deficit, must be cured or pitied	The environment disables people with impairments by its design
The individual is the problem	The environment is the problem
Disabled by impairment	Disabled by design
Fear, separate, less than.	Assess is a right, not a special need
Dominant narrative	Disability Studies

# DRC's reframing through our New Mission and Vision

## Mission

The Disability Resource Center *celebrates disability identity as a valued aspect of diversity*. We champion a *universally-accessible campus* community that supports the holistic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

## Vision

The Disability Resource Center envisions a universally inclusive community where all individuals are seen as valued and contributing leaders of society.





- Disability is a social limitation that is not a result of the state of the body, but a **lack of fit between the body and the environment**
- **Difference** between **Impairment** and **Disability**
- Recognizes that **society perpetuates disability**
- Recognizes **disability as an identity**



## Previous DRC Student Satisfaction Survey

- Distributed each spring 2013 - 2017
- 105 Questions
- Closest question to help understand growth
  - What suggestions do you have to improve the campus climate related to disability.
    - Rights, understanding barriers, spreading message more broadly, address faculty





## New Qualitative Student Survey: Fall 2017

- Distributed end of fall 2017
- 14 Questions
- Why are you working with the DRC?
  - Environmental barriers with intersection of their diagnosis
- What has the DRC provided that benefitted you the most?
  - Access, Accommodations, support, transformed perspective, less barriers - "It feels great not telling my professors I need to go (to the bathroom) because they have an overall understanding why I must go."
- What have been your most important experiences on campus related to disability?
  - Educating professors about need for accommodations, understanding accommodations are for equity, new voice to advocate for access, telling others about what the DRC does, finding community, talking about ableism, being able to learn and succeed because of DRC support





## Our best guess "answer" for now!

- ~ 6000 students at UF have an impairment
- Almost all experience disability based on inaccessible environment
- Likely we will see close to 5000 students over next 5-10 years if nothing changes in environment

## Why is this important to share with the Campus community?

- Access matters in all spaces
- Expecting Disability – not just welcoming it
- Combatting misperceptions/stigma
- Transforming Campus – our new "scope"
- Marketing's role in helping us share our identity/mission/brand

# Evolution





## Building the Brand

- "The DRC transformed my life and my perspective about ability."
- "...you all made me feel less alone."
- "I have found a new voice to advocate for myself and others as I have seen how transformative access to the DRC can be."



## Visual Presence

- Table Cloth
- Pull-up banner
- Handouts
- New promotional items
  - Lapel pins
  - Stickers
  - Etc.









# Universal Design

The concept is also called inclusive design, design-for-all, lifespan design or human-centered design. The message is the same: if it works well for people across the spectrum of functional ability, it works better for everyone.





# What Sherlock Holmes type questions/mysteries do you have about your department?

What big picture questions do you wonder about?

What are some qualitative questions you might want to ask your stakeholders?

"What's going on" vs. "What's really going on?"

Bonus if you think about an Access question



# Final Thoughts

My next Sherlock questions...

- What does an accessible campus look and feel like?
- What would happen if every department asked this question?
- Will increased access result in more student success? How will we know?

Assessment starts with these big picture questions

Tackling problems by asking questions



# Final Thoughts continued

Success is not a straight line

A question can have significant impact on the world, or at least to you and your department





# QUESTIONS

**Beth Roland**

**[Bethr@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:Bethr@ufsa.ufl.edu)**

**352-392-8565**

**Amanda Pillar**

**[AmandaP@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:AmandaP@ufsa.ufl.edu)**