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Status – quo Analysis Reports

Activity 1 of the



Project:

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

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Note: The texts included herein, in general, are as originally submitted by the authors, i.e. they were not subject to contextual changes.



University of Zagreb Students with special needs – status quo analysis –

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Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

Contents:

1. Students with special needs.....	3
2. Individualized custom classification methods for taking exams for people with disabilities 4	
3. Transport of students with disabilities	5
4. University Peer Support for students with disabilities	6
Plan for conducting courses.....	6
The aim of the course:	6
Topics covered in the Peer Support Course:	6
Requirements for admission to the course:	8
5. Working with students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb.....	8
6. Office for Students with Disabilities	10
7. Association of students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb	11
Association SIZIF (Sisyphus).....	11
Association ZAMISLI (Imagine)	11
8. Working with students	12
9. Access to university for people with disabilities	13
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.....	13
Faculty of Economics.....	14
Student Center, Zagreb	15

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

1. Students with special needs

Students with special needs are students who because of illness or injury have difficulties in realizing the daily academic activities (students with visual impairments and hearing and physical disabilities, including students with chronic diseases, mental disorders and specific learning difficulties) (Regulation on organization and operation of the Office for Students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb, 2007).

In Croatia there are no reliable data on the number of students with disabilities. According to some estimates there are over 500 disabled students at the University of Zagreb, (University has over 65 000 students annually).

According to data gathered by the Office for Students with Disabilities at the University of Zagreb, the number of students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb, according to the study and by type of disability is:

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES By Institution
Academy of Fine Arts	6
Faculty of Architecture	1
Social Science Polytechnic	2
Special Education and Rehabilitation Sciences	7
Faculty of Economics	21
Faculty of Organisation and Informatics, Varazdin	5
Faculty of Political Science	14
Faculty of Traffic Engineering	7
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	1
Pharmacy and Biochemistry	1
Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	6
Faculty of Philosophy	48
Croatian studies	7
Catholic Faculty of Theology	7
Faculty of Metallurgy, Sisak	1
Academy of Music	2
Faculty of Science	8

Equal Access through Sevice Learning for Persons with Disabilities

Faculty of Law	20
Faculty of Forestry	3
Polytechnic University	5
Teacher Education	5
Medical College	4
Unknown data	17
TOTAL	198
	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES By type of disability
Physical disability	44
Visual impairment	43
Hearing impairment	20
Unknown data	91
TOTAL	198

Note: Data is approximate and is not complete because they are collected on voluntary basis and from several different sources. The assumption is that the actual number of students with disabilities is slightly higher than shown, but not significantly.

2. Individualized custom classification methods for taking exams for people with disabilities

Candidates with disabilities (including candidates with visual impairments and hearing impairments, physical disabilities and chronic diseases, mental disorders and specific learning disabilities), for whom there is such a need, regardless of the degree of physical disability, have the right to request a custom individualized way of taking the entrance exam, additional checks or special knowledge, skills and abilities. Payment adjustments vary from candidate to candidate with respect to specific defects, disorders, diseases, etc., and the basic rules of how adjustments are regulated by the Instruction for individualized custom installation classification examination for candidates with disabilities adopted by the Commission for students with disabilities.

To accomplish this, the candidate is required to state the need for custom mode test, and kind of adjustment needed when applying for accession to the verification of specific knowledge, skills and abilities. Also, the candidate is required to substantiate his/her request by documentation that proves that the adjustment is in fact really needed.

Such need may be proven by the following



Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

documents:

- The categorization of disability (physical disability level)
- The decision on an individualized approach in earlier studies
- Confirmation of the competent school of medicine.

Picture 1. Entrance exam

3. Transport of students with disabilities

University students with disabilities, Croatian citizens, are eligible to receive costs of transportation if they are unable to independently use public transport. Students with Disabilities who take courses on more than two colleges and more than two study programs may not qualify for aid. Students with disabilities who receive post-graduate studies for transportation reimbursement from other sources (employment, etc.) are not eligible for support. Grant applications submitted to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Department of Higher Education, a special form which is available on the website of the Ministry.

The right to transport costs lasts for the entire academic year. Students with disabilities have the right to retain this support until the end of last semester of the program of study, and a maximum of one year after graduating. Funds to support the cost of regular transportation of students with disabilities and professional studies university students and postgraduate students with disabilities is provided by Croatian State Budget, the budget position of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.



Picture 2.

for persons with disabilities

Transport vehicle

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

4. University Peer Support for students with disabilities

Peer support for students with disabilities has emerged as a measure of equal opportunities for students with disabilities in higher education in Croatia. Sensitized and trained student assistants, providing the basis of peer support can create such conditions for students with disabilities to overcome a number of organizational barriers that exist objectively in the higher education system in Croatia. At the same time, through the knowledge and skills gained in the preparatory workshop and the implementation of peer support, students themselves will gain valuable experience and develop a range of socially desirable skills and abilities.

Plan for conducting courses

In the academic year 2011./12. (winter semester) course started being implemented at the University of Zagreb. A handbook for teachers was created, and parts of the course were planned in the form of e-learning (materials for teachers, individual plans, feedback to individual plans, planning activities).

The aim of the course:

The main goal of the course is to enable students to provide quality peer support for students with disabilities in an academic environment.

After completion of the course, students will be able (to know / be able) to do the following:

- Maintain the quality of social contacts in the context of peer support
- Examine the social context and their attitudes / values towards people with disabilities
- Identify ethical challenges in providing peer support
- To argue the applicability of social policy in direct work with people with disabilities
- Develop work plans to provide peer support
- To provide peer support for students with disabilities in an academic environment
- The analysis of specific examples, students with disabilities and their peers - a provider of support, establish adequate and appropriate forms of support.

Topics covered in the Peer Support Course:

- **General Characteristics of Persons with Disabilities:** Definition of basic concepts, classification of injury / disability, active policy measures, models of support
- **The etiology and phenomenology of physical disability,** capabilities and limitations of students with physical disabilities

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

- **barriers to students** with physical disabilities in higher education and the possibility of overcoming them
- **Visual impairment** (blindness and visual impairment; features, capabilities and peculiarities of functioning of students with visual impairments, difficulties in everyday academic life of students with visual impairments, the possibility and importance of support)
- **Understanding hearing loss** (deafness and hearing loss, in the adoption of specific speech and language, character-based communications; needs in higher education support system)
- Specific features, characteristics and abilities and needs of people / students with deaf blindness and support system in their daily academic activities.
- **Sensitization to the needs of students with disabilities** in the academic environment. Human Rights: Introduction to the importance of human rights, especially the rights of people / students with disabilities
- International and regional instruments protecting and promoting **the rights of persons with disabilities**. National frameworks and institutions to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities.
- **Adequate access to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities:** Accessibility to higher education for persons with disabilities (review of existing regulations that allow activities on the Equalization of Opportunities for students with disabilities in higher education system in Croatia; view of the special rights of students with disabilities; analysis current state of accessibility of higher education institutions in Croatia
- **Specific needs of students with disabilities** and the obstacles encountered in the academic environment through practical examples. Empowering students with disabilities through various forms of support Sensitization to work with people with disabilities.
- **Attitudes toward persons with disabilities:** The definition of attitude and attitude components. Origins position. Attitudes and behavior. Change of attitude. Attitudes toward people with disabilities. Application of the questionnaire of attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Ethics. Ethical principles in relation to student assistant - a student with disabilities. Ethical

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

issues and dilemmas in relation to student assistant - a student with disabilities. The skills of peer support

- The importance of recognizing our own **feelings and emotions of others**. Appropriate display of feeling. The importance of empathy in interpersonal relationships. Developing empathy skills. Setting boundaries in relationships. Assertiveness skills.

Requirements for admission to the course:

Peer support for students with disabilities is conceived as a university course. Therefore it is available for enrollment to all students enrolled in any of the University of Zagreb, at the undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate level studies. The condition for entering this course is a student with disabilities in need of peer support, and his/her agreement to a student who is enrolled in assistant course ("pair"). Also, they need to be "paired" it with the same program of study (and the same level of study with respect to enrolled semester / year). The students: Students are required to attend a preparatory workshop to provide 75 hours of peer support in accordance with individual plans to provide peer support and attend supervisions.

5. Working with students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb

The needs of students with disabilities require different forms of support - from information to help them every day, and this requires the involvement of different systems at the state level: education, social welfare, health and labor. University of Zagreb has over 65,000 students, of which about 200 students with disabilities. The organization, responsibilities and method of working with students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb, as defined by the Regulations on organization and operation of the Office for Students with Disabilities at the University of Zagreb, and activities are carried out through the following bodies:

- Committee for Students with Disabilities University of expert body tasked with creating plans and programs, priorities and activities of the Office for Students with Disabilities. Commission appointed by the University Senate, consisting of one representative from each council area.
- Chancellor for Teaching and Quality Assurance, a representative of students with disabilities nominated representative of the Student Union and Student Center.
- Coordination for students with disabilities make up of one representative of students with disabilities on each of the components of the University of Zagreb, where he

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

studied. Coordination is appointed Rector of the University with the task of presenting needs, proposing and evaluating activities committed.

- Coordinator for students with disabilities - to each member of the University of Zagreb, was appointed coordinator for students with disabilities.

Coordinators are individuals from the scientific and teaching positions, and the link between students and teachers and administrative staff at each component and the Office for Students with Disabilities.

- Office for Students with Disabilities was established by decision of the Senate of the University of Zagreb in 2007. The basic tasks of the Office are: to assist students with disabilities in connection with his studies at the University, monitoring their needs, promoting international cooperation and exchange of students with disabilities, assistance with application and implementation of projects, ensuring quality access to higher education to all students who due to illness or damage have difficulty in the realization of daily activities, etc.

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

6. Office for Students with Disabilities

In order to achieve that all prospective students with disabilities who wish to study at the University and to realize, it is necessary to provide conditions for successful studying all current and future students with disabilities. Therefore, the University of Zagreb established the Office for Students with Disabilities as a reference center where students can get information on the site, as well as via phone, e-mail, flyers, and brochures. The Office through its activities to students and offers direct assistance in solving specific problems that may occur during the study, and thus represents a mechanism for ensuring equal opportunities.

The office is designed for students:

- visually impaired
- with hearing impairments
- with physical disabilities
- with multiple disabilities
- chronic diseases
- with mental disorders
- with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, etc.)
- with other medical conditions or disabilities that may affect the course of study

Important role in the work of the Office are:

- Coordination for Students with Disabilities at the University of Zagreb

Coordination for students with disabilities make up of one representative of students with disabilities on each of the components of the University of Zagreb. Coordination is appointed Rector of the University with the task of presenting needs, proposing and evaluating the activities of the journal.

The coordinators for students with disabilities are the link between students with disabilities and the teachers and administrative staff at each component and the Office for Students with Disabilities at the University of Zagreb. They will, through lectures and workshops will be trained and regularly informed of all activities and procedures to ensure minimum standards of accessibility to all components of the University of students with disabilities. The coordinator is the contact person at the university / academy where students can go to exercise their rights related to the adaptation of teaching and examinations, and other issues related to the rights of students with disabilities.

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

7. Association of students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb

Association SIZIF (Sisyphus)

SIZIF Association was founded by nine students all of whom have different disabilities - movement, sight, hearing and speech. Gathering experience from various organizations and dedicating their free time, they went together to actively participate in making decisions that affect not only them, but the fate of all future students with disabilities. The power of the Association are its members who, due to various disabilities, can speak on a wide range of problems that students might encounter and how best to solve them. The association was established to promote, develop and improve the conditions of study of people with disabilities, which is to be achieved in a maximum harmonization of existing institutes support and develop new ones which would have resulted in a gradual increase in the number of students with disabilities at the University of Zagreb, simplify the academic obligations of those who now studying without affecting the graduation criteria. As part of the activities round tables were organized that discussed the literature for the blind students, teaching assistants, ensuring transportation for students with difficulties in movement, and scholarship for students with disabilities.

Association ZAMISLI (Imagine)

Society for the Promotion of quality education of young people with disabilities "Imagine" was established in April 2005. year. Association headquarters in Zagreb, working on the Croatian territory, the registered office of the city of Vukovar 68th Street.

The purpose of the Association "Imagine" is to promote quality education for young people with disabilities in accordance with the advocates for the adoption of minimum standards in the education of persons with disabilities. The Association is currently working on developing international cooperation, translating the relevant documents from other EU countries regarding education of young people with disabilities, arranges guest lectures of experts from abroad, preparing educational workshops and other members of the Association "Imagine" are those who work on projects for young people with disabilities and youth with disabilities between 15 and 29 years.

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

Young people with disabilities on a daily basis calls for active involvement in the Association, so that one part of interested volunteers or fees for the activities dealt with the Association.

8. Working with students with disabilities

Educational integration of people with disabilities in institutions of higher education requires the provision of conditions which would enable the development of students with disabilities in order to be comparable with the knowledge of their colleagues. During the quality assurance requirements of education of students with disabilities higher education institutions should take into consideration: conducting individual interviews with candidates with disabilities to meet the additional needs in all phases of academic planning and resource planning (meet the candidates with all the possibilities that the Faculty can provide, ask him to point to the additional needs and arrange a way of meeting the needs of the application, access to exam passing through the study), the incorporation of equal treatment of students with disabilities in all operational activities, adequate understanding of the legal framework regarding persons with disabilities by the management staff, to provide systems to collect information for proper decision-making regarding participation and progress of students with disabilities, including students with disabilities in academic governance, in view of students with disabilities in the development and the physical environment, academic programs and services, definition of specific contacts for students with disabilities with senior staff, development of staff awareness of the needs of the institutions students with disabilities and ongoing monitoring and progress in working with students with disabilities.

Equal Access through Sevice Learning for Persons with Disabilities

9. Access to university for people with disabilities

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb has the largest number of students with disabilities. The Faculty has an external access ramp for students with physical disabilities in wheelchairs, and inside the building there is also a ramp that allows movement inside the faculty. The Faculty is equipped with several elevators that allows for vertical movement for persons with physical disabilities. This is the only college that has a wheelchair lift and a working room for students with special needs. Operating rooms for students with special needs is primarily intended for blind and visually impaired students. The special room for the blind includes a computer, two laptop computers and printers and Braille equipment. The

equipment for work rooms was provided by the Ministry of Science, and the space was furnished with a donation. Faculty is also equipped with several accessible toilets.



Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

Faculty of Economics

On the Zagreb Faculty of Economics there are 21 students with special needs. School has external access for people with physical disabilities and is equipped with elevators which allow vertical movement of students and access to virtually all classrooms. In order to accommodate students in wheelchairs, the tables in first rows have no chairs in order to facilitate access to the desk. Faculty of Economics is also equipped with several disability-adapted toilets.



Picture 3. Access to Faculty of Economics Zagreb

Equal Access through Service Learning for Persons with Disabilities

Student Center, Zagreb

Student center is the main location for student restaurant, learning space, cultural and educational events. The restaurant in the Student center is located on the ground floor and it is accessible to students in wheelchairs. Resources located on the first floor such as Internet café is inaccessible to persons with disabilities as it is possible to reach only by stairs. Student Service which serves as the mediator to find part-time jobs is on the second floor and is also inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Student Center is not equipped with wheelchair-accessible toilet.



Picture 4. Access to Student Center Zagreb