

An Examination of Faculty Attitudes and Willingness to Accommodate Students with
Disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan

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ABSTRACT

Despite evidence that post-secondary students with disabilities who access support services and accommodations have greater success, many of these students choose not to disclose to their institutions or utilize their accommodations. Many students cite negative faculty reactions and attitudes towards the accommodation process as an influential barrier (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). The purpose of the current study was to investigate the existing faculty attitudes and willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. Participants included 229 students with disabilities and 137 faculty members from the participating colleges. A series of one-way between-group ANOVAs was performed on the online survey data to determine if faculty and student perceptions varied based on several factors. In addition, independent sample t-tests compared faculty and student responses to shared survey items. Overall, the majority of faculty and students with disabilities reported faculty willing to make accommodations. Significant differences were found in faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness based on factors such as gender, age, and academic department. Significant differences were also found between faculty and student perceptions, and in student responses based on type of disability. Faculty and student responses indicated a need for greater education and awareness about the nature of disabilities, rationale behind accommodation, and the rights and responsibilities of parties involved in the accommodation process. Greater promotion of the available services and supports, and the need for additional resources to support reasonable accommodations were also identified as important objectives moving forward. In addition, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to anyone experiencing struggles in their pursuit of education as a result of disability. Know that you are not alone, and with self-knowledge, determination, and the courage to seek out and utilize supports when they are needed, anything is possible.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in studying the educational and vocational needs of individuals with disabilities after personally experiencing several unsuccessful years at university. After always performing well in high school with little effort, my post-secondary academic career became defined by persistent, unexpected and unexplained underachievement. No matter how good my intentions at the start of each new semester, things would inevitably fall apart. I changed academic directions multiple times before my mother suggested that I gain work experience with her when she tested individuals for learning disabilities. She felt that the field of educational psychology and working with individuals with learning disabilities would be suited to my personality and interests. I began by meeting with some of her adult clients to collect background information and typing her psycho-educational reports. During these early experiences, I found the academic and career histories of many of the clients fascinating, particularly in terms of recurring themes of discrimination, misinformation, and resilience. I wanted to learn more about how to support these individuals and affect change in their lives through making education more accessible.

As I learned more by working with individuals whose disabilities negatively impacted their educational performance, I began to recognize some aspects of their struggles in my own academic history. I completed psycho-educational testing in 2007, which diagnosed me with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This diagnosis finally allowed me to understand my struggles with learning in the post-secondary environment. It also provided me with greater knowledge and insight into my personal strengths, weaknesses, and learning style, which helped me to make changes in the way I studied and approached my classes. In addition, specific accommodations, targeted to support individuals with ADHD, allowed me to

demonstrate my true academic abilities at the post-secondary level, to build my confidence after the years of underachievement, and to find strategies for managing my ADHD that allowed me to decrease reliance on accommodation supports. My interest in the success of students with disabilities, particularly those with non-visible disabilities in the education system, has thus been influenced by my own educational experiences.

As a university student with ADHD, I have had mixed experiences in accessing and utilizing accommodations designed and provided for post-secondary students. For the most part, my experiences with colleges and individual faculty members have been quite positive. Many faculty members are very supportive and some even go above and beyond the documented accommodations to help their students where they can. However, I have found that the process of approaching faculty regarding accommodation needs can be intimidating and that some professors are more receptive to the accommodation process than others. Additionally, I have come across challenges as a result of gaps in the policies and supports aimed at promoting the success of those students who struggle with undiagnosed disability issues. In general, when I have chosen to not use certain accommodations or not self-disclose my disability it has been because of my own discomfort with the process rather than the direct influence of others. For example, in smaller classes, in order to receive accommodations, my disability is not only disclosed to the professor and institution, but also my peers through questions raised when I write an exam apart from the class.

Most of my accommodations were received while I attended the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Research has shown that colleges of education generally tend to be more receptive than other academic departments to students with disabilities and the accommodations process (Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992; Lombardi & Murray,

2011; Murray, Wren & Keys, 2008; Nelson, Dodd & Smith, 1990; Skinner, 2007; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Therefore, my experiences in receiving accommodations may differ from those of other post-secondary students with disabilities. Through my work experience in psycho-educational assessment, I have heard stories from individuals with disabilities who were in post-secondary programs that were reluctant or even unwilling to provide them even the most basic accommodations, therefore adding significant stress and struggle to the student's educational experience. If students with disabilities perceive receiving accommodations to be a stressful process that brings them negative attention from faculty or their college of study, they are less likely to utilize needed supports to help them achieve to their full potential at the post-secondary level. Therefore, I want to determine if the student experiences I have heard about are isolated incidents or if their presence can be supported through empirical evidence.

There has been a growing research interest in the post-high school outcomes for individuals with disabilities, particularly regarding their pursuit of higher education. This is a valuable field of study because successful completion of post-secondary education and training is increasingly valued within modern society and leads to greater social mobility (Shah, 2010). Despite the positive social and personal gains as a result of completing post-secondary education, research has indicated that individuals with disabilities are more likely to drop out of high school and generally obtain lower levels of schooling than their non-disabled peers (Fleischmann & Miller, 2013; Taymans, 2011). In the first four years after high school graduation, individuals with disabilities are significantly less likely to enrol in post-secondary studies and have higher rates of degree non-completion (Duquette & Fullarton, 2009; Newman, Wagner, Cameto & Knokey, 2009; Orr & Goodman, 2010). These individuals also demonstrate consistently higher than average poverty rates and dependence on social assistance (Bolt, Decker, Lloyd & Morlock,

2011; Lindstrom, Doren & Mirsch, 2011). If individuals with disabilities are able to complete some form of post-secondary education they experience more employment security, which leads to greater financial self-sufficiency (Lindstrom, Doren & Mirsch, 2011). Research has also shown that academic support services and accommodations benefit students with disabilities in post-secondary education and increase their odds of graduation (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). However, due to the presence of physical, social, and organizational barriers, a significant number of students with disabilities choose not to disclose their disability to their post-secondary institution and therefore do not receive these vital accommodations and supports (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). In order to best support the needs of post-secondary students with disabilities, it is important to understand what factors influence their decision not to disclose their disability and utilize accommodations.

An increasing number of post-secondary institutions are developing policies regarding access to services and accommodations for students with disabilities, in accordance with human rights legislation. However, it is important to remember that just because these policies and pieces of legislation are in place, it does not mean that students with disabilities always receive such mandated supports. Despite legislation designed to protect the rights of people with disabilities, negative attitudes and discrimination towards them still exist, and these individuals face barriers to their inclusion and success at the post-secondary level. One of the most commonly reported barriers to disability disclosure and accommodation utilization is negative faculty reactions and attitudes towards the accommodation process (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). Beilke & Yssel (1999) argued that support and policy

implementation from post-secondary institutions does not necessarily guarantee positive faculty attitudes towards accommodating disabilities. This has been confirmed by more recent research, which supports the contention that not all post-secondary faculty are supportive in the process of accommodations for students with disabilities (Byrd, 2010; Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Erten, 2011; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Orr & Goodman, 2012). Although all of these studies found a generally positive willingness to accommodate among faculty, they were also contrasted with examples of negative attitudes and a resulting unwillingness to make certain disability accommodations.

The available knowledge about the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, and information regarding the potential educational barrier that negative faculty attitudes towards accommodations can create, necessitate an investigation to determine current faculty attitudes towards post-secondary students with disabilities and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations. Of particular interest is whether these faculty attitudes are consistent or if they differ based on factors such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, or college affiliation. The current research literature regarding question demonstrates conflicting results. Some studies have found differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate based on gender, age, college, or faculty rank. However, other research has found no significant as a result of these variables. Research into faculty attitudes and willingness towards accommodations has received limited attention in Canada and there have been no such studies conducted at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). In 2010, the U of S developed an overall campus accommodation and access policy and tasked the individual colleges with writing their own specific policies that would define the essential requirements within each program (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). Since no research of this nature has been conducted at this university and

because new policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities are currently under development, this study will investigate current faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate within this climate.

1.1 Statement of Purpose

Despite evidence that students with disabilities who access support services and accommodations have greater success at the post-secondary level, many choose not to disclose to their educational institutions or utilize their accommodations. Research has shown that many factors influence this difficult decision including fear of facing negative faculty attitudes to disabilities and accommodations, which significantly decrease the odds that these students will attempt to disclose their disabilities or utilize their accommodations in their future studies (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). There is now a growing climate of awareness of disability issues and the need for accommodations, as well as the development and establishment of new disability access and accommodation policies at the University of Saskatchewan. As a result, there is a current need for research into Canadian post-secondary faculty perspectives on these issues.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Access to and successful completion of some form of post-secondary education often results in better employment, higher wages and decreased reliance on social assistance for individuals with disabilities (Bolt, Decker, Lloyd & Morlock, 2011; Lindstrom, Doren & Mirsch, 2011). Those who graduate are able to not only be increasingly self-sufficient but also to make significant contributions to their communities. Evidence has shown that when post-secondary students with disabilities are supported and have proper accommodations in place they are more likely to graduate (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Hudson, 2013; Vogel, Leyser,

Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Hudson (2013) found within six year graduation rates of 85% for students with disabilities when they disclosed their disability and accessed supports within the first year of studies, compared with 48% for those who disclosed after the first year. Therefore, the general public has a vested interest in promoting disability disclosure and the increased use of accommodations. If negative faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations are impacting the post-secondary experiences of students with disabilities, it is important to know so that corrective measures can be developed and put into practice.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) What are the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodating students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan? Are these attitudes dependent on factors such as gender, age, years of experience, or academic department?
- 2) What do students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan perceive the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodations to be? Are these student perceptions dependent on factors such as the type of disability experienced by the student, or the college attended?
- 3) How do students' perceptions of faculty attitudes compare to faculty self-reports?

1.4 Definitions

For the purpose of adding greater clarity to the current study, the following terms will be defined:

1.4.1. Disability. Although our understanding of the term disability has made tremendous gains in the last few decades and many operational definitions of disability share common elements, there is no current consensus on a definition for disability (Harrison &

Holmes, 2012; Taymans, 2011). This lack of definitional consensus creates issues in the assessment and diagnosis of disability, as well as societal perceptions of disabilities (Harrison, 2012; Harrison & Holmes, 2012; Taymans, 2011). Although the social model of disability has gained recent prominence as the theory of how disability should be viewed, many policies, pieces of legislation, and social perceptions still frame disability according to the medical model (Shah, 2010). The social model frames disability as a socially created construct, where impairment comes from the limits that society imposes upon individuals with physical, psychological or learning differences (Shah, 2010). For example, a person with vision impairment would not be disabled in a task that requires listening to music and expressing reactions to it. Within the social model, an individual's impairment becomes disabling when they do not seek out accommodation or support in a particular situation due to fear of facing societal stigma (Denhart, 2008). The medical model of disability contrasts this theory by viewing the source of disability as internal to the individual in terms of that person's physical, psychological or learning difference (Shah, 2010). It has a more negative connotation because it implies that because of a specific impairment, something is different about the individual person.

For the purposes of the current research the definition of disability from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code will be used. This definition is grounded the medical model of disability and is the most relevant within the current study because perceptions of faculty and students with disabilities from the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) will be examined. The U of S falls under the jurisdiction of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and therefore its policies such as the Disability Accommodation and Access Policy (University of Saskatchewan, 2010) must align with this code. Therefore, in accordance with Section 2(1)(d.1) of the

Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, the term disability refers to:

(i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

- (A) epilepsy;
- (B) any degree of paralysis;
- (C) amputation;
- (D) lack of physical co-ordination;
- (E) blindness or visual impediment;
- (F) deafness or hearing impediment;
- (G) muteness or speech impediment; or
- (H) physical reliance on a service animal, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; or

(ii) any of:

- (A) an intellectual disability or impairment;
- (B) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language; or
- (C) a mental disorder.

1.4.2. Accommodations. According to Shah (2010), an accommodation occurs when a conventional rule or way of doing a task is specifically tailored to support the unique needs of an individual. Accommodations allow for some differential treatment of individuals in order to “level the playing field” of inequities that may arise from some form of physical, learning or psychological impairment and allow for more equitable participation in mainstream society (Shah, 2010). Specific to the context of education, accommodations make the delivery of services more accessible and allow students with disabilities to better demonstrate their learning and understanding of academic material, without requiring the educational departments to alter crucial components of their programming (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission,

2004; Shah, 2010). In the post-secondary setting, both general academic accommodations and exam accommodations are offered to support students with disabilities. Accommodations are not designed to lower academic standards or omit the student from developing the essential skills and competencies required in a program of study (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004). Rather, they enable the student with a disability to meet the same requirements as non-disabled peers. This is done with specific types of support, which are designed to counterbalance a specific area of impairment caused by the disability, and through which non-disabled peers have not had to struggle to perform that same requirement. For example, when students are accommodated for an exam, they complete the same exam as their peers in the course but with the support of extra time or a quiet room to write for impairments including attention deficits or slower processing speed.

1.4.3. Reasonable Accommodations. Under the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, students with disabilities have a right to education as well as to have their unique learning needs supported through reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodations within a school context are those accommodations that allow for equitable access to programs or activities but do not compromise the academic integrity of the course or program (Shah, 2010). These accommodations can be implemented without undue hardship on the part of the program or institution (Shah, 2010; University of Saskatchewan, 2010). Reasonable accommodations may not be the exact services the student with a disability wants; therefore students need to be willing to try other approaches or accommodations offered by their program to determine what works for them (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004; University of Saskatchewan, 2010). Accommodations that would cause undue hardship to the educational institution are not considered reasonable and are therefore not

mandated by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982; Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2014).

1.4.4. Undue Hardship. The concept of undue hardship is included in the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and involves the point at which an accommodation no longer becomes reasonable; therefore employers, educational institutions, and service providers are no longer expected to accommodate (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). The standard for determining when an educational accommodation request reaches the point of undue hardship depends on four primary factors: significant financial burden on the educational program or institute; whether the student is able to meet the essential requirements or core competencies needed to complete a program; significant infringement on the rights of other students; and concerns for health and safety (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004; University of Saskatchewan, 2010). However, there is a very high standard needed to establish whether an accommodation is considered undue hardship and in most cases institutions will need to provide at least some support (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004; Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2014). The extent of the hardship must be well-research, documented, and cannot be based on suppositions or opinions.

1.5 Chapter Organization

A review of the literature related to accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities and faculty attitudes and willingness to support accommodations is provided in Chapter 2; then a description of the research methods and procedures utilized in this study is provided in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses

the findings of the current research, details limitations and implications of the study, and suggests avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the reader with a review of the literature related to academic and exam accommodation for students with disabilities at the post-secondary level. It is divided into seven major sections. Section one focuses on the outcomes for students with disabilities without post-secondary education and why accommodations at the post-secondary level are critical. Section two reviews factors that influence whether or not students with disabilities utilize their accommodations at the post-secondary level. Section three discusses faculty perceptions of their attitudes towards and corresponding willingness to accommodate students with disabilities. The fourth section focuses on student perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities. Section five reviews the relevant legislation, which supports the educational rights of students with disabilities. Section six delves into the debate over whether accommodations for students with disabilities are fair to students without disabilities. Finally, section seven discusses the establishment of the Disability Services for Students (DSS) office at the University of Saskatchewan and the role of this office in supporting the needs of post-secondary students with disabilities.

2.1 Outcomes for students with disabilities without and during post-secondary education

A quality post-secondary education has become increasingly important in today's society. The competitive job market often necessitates a post-secondary degree in order to obtain a well-paid, meaningful career with greater social mobility (Marshak, Van Wieren, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010; Shah, 2010). Despite legal rights and legislation designed to promote equal opportunity and access to education, individuals with disabilities are not only significantly less likely to have a university degree than those without disabilities (13% vs. 30% in the US) but are also significantly less likely to enrol in post-secondary studies (Duquette & Fullarton, 2009;

Newman, Wagner, Cameto & Knokey, 2009; Orr & Goodman, 2010). This lack of higher education experience often results in higher unemployment rates or underemployment in base-wage occupations (Denhart, 2008; Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010; Reed, Lewis & Lund-Lucas, 2006). The phenomena of unemployment or underemployment experienced by individuals with disabilities significantly decrease their level of social mobility and create greater poverty rates and reliance on social assistance (Lindstrom, Doren & Miesch, 2011; Shah, 2010; Taymans, 2012). When adults with disabilities are able to complete some form of post-secondary education, they experience employment that leads to greater financial self-sufficiency (Lindstrom, Doren & Miesch, 2011). Therefore it is important to understand the reasons why some people with disabilities do not successfully pursue post-secondary education, in order to develop strategies and policies to increase their enrolment and graduation rates.

Increased awareness of and advocacy for disability rights have led to greater enrolment of students with disabilities into post-secondary institutions. Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte and Trice (2012) reported that the number of post-secondary students with disabilities in the US rose from 11.4% in 1990 to 34.5% in 2005. Canada has seen a similar rise in enrolment. Between 1995 and 2003, the percentage of the Canadian university population that were students who had disclosed disabilities rose from an estimated 0.25% to 5.67% (Erten, 2011). Despite this increase, rates of drop out, failure and degree non-completion are much greater than those for students without disabilities (Denhart, 2008; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012; Skinner, 2007; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). In particular, the NLTS-2 survey in the US found within six year graduation rates of 34% for students with disabilities, compared with 51.2% rates for students without disabilities (Newman, Wagner, Cameto & Knokey, 2009). Research has shown the benefits of academic support

services and accommodations including an increase in graduation rates (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Although students with disabilities have a legal right to receive reasonable educational accommodations to help even the playing field, many choose not to disclose their disability or access post-secondary accommodations. Hill (1996) found that up to one third of such students reported that a lack of accommodations negatively affected their ability to pursue higher education. It is therefore important to investigate what factors may influence students with disabilities to not seek out or utilize accommodations at the post-secondary level.

2.2 Factors that influence students with disabilities in utilizing their accommodations

The NLTS-2 survey in the US found that only 40% of students with disabilities who received supports in high school, disclosed their disability to their post-secondary institution (Newman, Wagner, Cameto & Knokey, 2009). Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) found that 75% of the students with disabilities they surveyed did not disclose their disability to their peers and 61% chose not to disclose to their professors. Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte and Trice (2012) found similar non-disclosure rates (35.5%) and many of those surveyed chose to not disclose until they experienced some form of academic crisis without supporting accommodations.

To better understand this reluctance to disclose in order to utilize accommodations, it is important to gain an insight into the experiences of students with disabilities growing up within the education system. There has been a growing research interest in examining the lived experiences of such students at the post-secondary level, particularly for those with ADHD and/or other invisible learning disabilities. Orr and Goodman (2010) found poignant themes from the experiences of their participants that detailed a “lasting emotional legacy” as the result

of learning differently, where almost all participants reported feeling “stupid”, “embarrassed”, or “ashamed” of their learning struggles (p. 217). Koch (2004) detailed his own struggles growing up with an undiagnosed learning disability and confirmed these feelings of frustration, humiliation and deeply rooted personal inadequacy. When considering the perceptions of students with disabilities, and reasons why they may or may not access their educational accommodations, we must acknowledge the impact that this emotional legacy may have on their self-concept and their level of sensitivity to both real and perceived criticism (Erten, 2011; Orr & Goodman, 2010).

In the literature, students with disabilities often describe very negative experiences with their teachers or peers that impacted their sense of self and their perception of their own abilities. This is particularly evident for individuals with invisible disabilities. Within Orr and Goodman’s (2010) study, many of the participants became emotional when talking about their past experiences growing up with an invisible disability. People with disabilities are influenced by society to define themselves by their struggles, rather than by their own personal abilities. Focusing on deficits as opposed to strengths can leave lasting negative consequences on an individual’s self-concept. The emotional toll on the self-esteem of individuals with disabilities resulting from facing societal stigmas has been well documented (Denhart, 2008; Duquette & Fullarton, 2009; Fleischmann & Miller, 2013; Green, Davis, Karshmer, Marsh & Straight, 2005; Koch, 2004). Denhart (2008) discussed how this diminished sense of self-esteem and self-concept in post-secondary students with disabilities can manifest in an “imposter phenomenon,” where the student with a disability feels undeserving of university admission and therefore believes at the outset of post-secondary studies that he or she will not be capable of success (p. 485). However, research has shown that when students with disabilities feel they are challenged

with high yet achievable expectations and they have the presence of supporting interpersonal relationships, they experience greater degrees of success in post-secondary education (Koch, 2004; Orr & Goodman, 2010). Therefore, it is important that post-secondary institutions and society as a whole promote positive expectations for students with disabilities and utilize the social model of disability.

It is not unusual for a student to be reluctant to disclose a disability at the post-secondary level or seek academic supports when there is a history of negative experiences in the educational system as a result of adverse social reactions. Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss and Dugan (2010), found five primary barriers that influenced students with disabilities to not seek out or utilize disability services or accommodations at the post-secondary level. In their study, students discussed struggling with identity issues, a desire to avoid negative social reactions from their peers, insufficient knowledge about their disability and the services available to them, the perceived quality and usefulness of the services, and negative experiences with professors. The presence of these barriers to accommodations has been confirmed in other research (Denhart, 2008; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012). Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of accommodations for improving graduation rates, found in the research literature, Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss and Dugan (2010) found that students with disabilities are often unaware of the range of services available to them or perceive the accommodation process as time consuming and not always worth the additional effort. Even when these students do disclose their disabilities, they often report the need to work significantly harder on their studies than their non-disabled peers. This extra work often goes unrecognized

because the quality of their finished product is not equivalent to the amount of work and effort they put in (Denhart, 2008; Mullins & Preyde, 2013).

Students with disabilities often report a history of experiencing stigma in educational settings as a result of disclosure of their disabilities (Green, Davis, Karshmer, Marsh & Staight, 2005; Koch, 2004; Orr & Goodman, 2010). Therefore, at the post-secondary level it is not surprising that many take an opportunity to avoid negative social reactions from their peers and faculty through non-disclosure (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Green, Davis, Karshmer, Marsh & Straight, 2005; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Roberts & Hoff Macan, 2006). Many students with disabilities wish to shed a stigmatized identity from their past as they enter the post-secondary environment. Often they also want to demonstrate their self-sufficiency and prove to themselves that they can do the same things as their non-disabled peers in the same way (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012; Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010; Paetzold, Garcia, Colella, Ren, Triana & Ziebro, 2008). Mullins and Preyde (2013) investigated the lived experiences of Canadian university students with disabilities, who reported that although accommodations were vital to their academic success at the post-secondary level, they were reluctant to utilize services that would identify them as a disabled student to their professors and peers. Research has also demonstrated how the fear of negative reactions from others can result in hesitancy to disclose in adults with non-visible disabilities (Denhart, 2008; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Taymans, 2011).

While avoiding stigma is the most commonly reported barrier to disclosure and accommodation utilization, the second most common is negative experiences with faculty (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). Evidence suggests that negative

faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities and the accommodation process are more detrimental to the self-concept and sense of belonging of these students than negative attitudes held by their peers (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002). Koch (2004) reported that when faculty held lower expectations of the abilities of students with disabilities it could negatively impact the performance of these students. Also, if faculty demonstrated negative attitudes towards disabilities and accommodations, especially if these attitudes were directed at specific students, it significantly decreased the odds that the students with disabilities in their classes sought out further academic supports (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Research has shown that not only do negative classroom climates and negative interactions with faculty impact a student's decision to seek accommodations at the post-secondary level, but students' perceptions of the presence of negative faculty attitudes towards accommodations can affect their decision to disclose and seek support (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). There is evidence that if a student with a disability perceives a negative reaction or unwillingness to accommodate from a faculty member, even if that faculty member is generally supportive of the accommodation process, it is sufficient to deter the student from seeking further accommodations in the future (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Carroll, Landrum & McCarthy, 2012; Lombardi & Murray, 2011).

While most studies examining faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities at the post-secondary level report overall positive results from the perspectives of students and faculty, differences between the perceptions of these populations have been found. Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) surveyed both faculty members and students at an American university to determine their perceptions on the overall campus climate and faculty

willingness to accommodate students with disabilities. They found a significant gap in the perception of whether faculty were receptive to making accommodations, with 82.7% of faculty agreeing with this statement, and only 55.3% of students agreeing. Faculty were also found to have a more favourable view of the overall campus climate than students with disabilities (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012). Byrd (2010) found that although the faculty in her study primarily reported they understood the need for accommodations and expressed a general willingness towards most accommodations, five of the six students with disabilities interviewed reported at least one negative experience with faculty when trying to seek supports. Both studies suggested the more positive faculty reports could be due to the social desirability of being seen as accepting of learning differences and the need for accommodations for students with disabilities (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010). However, these differences could also indicate that students with disabilities may be especially attuned to any perceived negativity or hesitation on the part of faculty in terms of classroom and exam accommodations. When investigating faculty willingness to make accommodations, it is important to consider this issue from the perspectives of both the faculty themselves and students with disabilities, because these are the primary stakeholders involved at the post-secondary level.

2.3 Faculty perceptions of their attitudes and willingness to accommodate

The significance of the negative impact that poor faculty attitudes and a corresponding unwillingness to accommodate students with disabilities can have over disclosure rates and accommodation utilization necessitates a deeper investigation into what current faculty attitudes are. Most research in this area has found that faculty report overall positive attitudes towards students with disabilities and their accommodation needs. However, the positive attitudes and willingness to accommodate have been found in varying degrees and in some cases, faculty

report they are unwilling to make certain accommodations. Although attitudes and willingness to accommodate have improved significantly with more information and the development of legislation and policies that support the rights of individuals with disabilities, work still needs to be done to improve current attitudes. Byrd (2010) interviewed the director of an Office for Disability Services at an American university, who agreed that while faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities had improved during her 18-year tenure, negative faculty attitudes were still present. In particular, she cited faculty arguments that the provision of accommodations at the post-secondary level were an “unfair advantage,” “not reflecting the real world of work,” “lowered academic standards” and were not valued by their individual academic department (Byrd, 2010, p. 15). In order to best understand the prevalent state of this issue, it is important to examine not only current faculty attitudes but also how these have developed over time.

Early legislation to support the needs of students with disabilities was developed in Canada, the United States, and internationally during the 1970s. However, Nelson, Dodd and Smith (1990) reported that during the early 1980s, there was little evidence that post-secondary faculty were making adjustments to their practices in order to accommodate students with disabilities. Disability support centres began to be established in Canada during the mid-1980s, however concern remained during the 1990s that several institutions were only minimally complying with federal regulations, which required students with disabilities to be accommodated at the post-secondary level (Hill, 1996; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Not only were some post-secondary institutions suspected of doing the bare minimum to accommodate students with disabilities, some post-secondary faculty were vocal against the practice of accommodations for these students. In 1989, John Kelley, the Dean at Kendall College in the United States, stated

that if students were hardworking he was more than willing to make accommodations for them (Beilke & Yssel, 1999). However, he argued that many students with disabilities used “a label as their excuse for inadequate performance” rather than questioning how much effort they were putting into their studies (Beilke & Yssel, 1999, p. 364). This stigmatizing perception of students with disabilities suggests that their disabilities could be overcome if only they would work harder and not make excuses for themselves and is the type of negative social perception that perpetuates a fear of discrimination. Students with disabilities may internalize these negative attitudes and assume they are just not working hard enough to overcome their impairments and therefore may not seek out needed and justified academic supports (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010).

Research during the 1990s revealed the start of a shift towards more positive faculty perceptions and a faculty desire for more information on disabilities. Both Houck, Asselin, Troutman and Arrington (1992) and Nelson, Dodd and Smith (1990) found that overall, faculty were willing to make a majority of accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities. In particular they found faculty were willing to give students extra time on exams, assignment extensions, and allow them to record lectures. However, both studies found accommodations that faculty were less willing or not willing to make including extra credit assignments, not penalizing spelling, grammar or punctuation errors, access to lecture notes, alternate assignments or exams, and having a proofreader for written assignments. In cases where faculty were not willing to make certain accommodations they cited concerns over fairness for non-disabled students, as well as a lowering of academic standards or integrity (Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992; Nelson, Dodd & Smith, 1990). Vogel, Leyser, Wyland and Brulle (1999) found that 8.8% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that teaching

accommodations for students with disabilities were unfair to students without disabilities, and 13% believed exam accommodations were similarly unfair. While the majority of faculty responses in the 1990s suggested overall positive willingness to support the needs of post-secondary students with disabilities, these results demonstrated that misperceptions about accommodations and negative attitudes towards disabilities were still present.

Research in the 1990s also demonstrated that faculty responded with more negativity towards a student with generally positive attributes who was diagnosed with a learning disability, rather than a student with generally poor working habits and attributes but without a disability label (Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992). The faculty surveyed placed a higher level of academic expectation on the poorer student, simply due to the lack of a disability label. Students with disabilities perform better when they are given challenging yet attainable expectations. Therefore, these results suggest that further investigation is warranted because if lower expectations are being placed on post-secondary students with disabilities simply due to the presence of a disability label, their outcomes, sense of accomplishment, and self-sufficiency will also suffer. Beilke and Yssel (1999) found that all ten students with disabilities they interviewed were able to speak about a faculty member who had made a positive contribution to their post-secondary education. However, these stories were accompanied by contrasting stories, from six of the interviewees, of faculty who were not responsive or were outright hostile to their accommodation needs.

Due to the growing amount of information on the academic strengths and weaknesses of individuals with disabilities, one would expect faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to accommodate students with disabilities to have improved significantly even within the last decade. Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) found that 82.7% of faculty at their post-

secondary institution agreed to the statement that professors are receptive to accommodations. In particular, faculty ranged from *willing* to *very willing* to allow students with disabilities to record lectures, have extra time for tests, have assignment extensions, give oral responses to essay questions, and have the use of a calculator or laptop in class (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Skinner, 2007). However, faculty reported they were less willing or unwilling to provide copies of lecture notes, create alternate assignments/exams, give extra credit assignments, and not penalize poor spelling, grammar or punctuation (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Skinner, 2007). This more recent research indicates that faculty ratings of willingness to provide certain accommodations are similar to research results obtained in the 1990s. This suggests that while overall faculty attitudes have increased in positivity, there are still hesitations or resistance in terms of willingness to make certain kinds of accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities.

Recent research has also illuminated the continued presence of negative perceptions regarding the abilities of students with disabilities, as well as continued concern over the fairness of accommodations to non-disabled students. Boland, Baker & Nowik (2012) found that some faculty believed students with disabilities were less capable than their non-disabled peers of meeting academic program demands and that 12-14% of faculty reported that accommodations during exams gave students with disabilities an unfair test advantage. These results are consistent with the research data from the 1990s, which found 13% of faculty reported exam accommodations were unfair to non-disabled students (Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Murray, Wren and Keys (2008) found that while faculty reported mainly positive perceptions of students with learning disabilities, they also reported that they often do not inform their students of the disability services available to them and they do not invite their students to disclose the

presence of a disability. Therefore, through this lack of action many students may not disclose their disabilities because they are not aware of the range of support options available to them. Carroll, Landrum and McCarthy (2012) examined the ethical considerations faculty factor into their willingness to provide accommodations. They found concerns that some students with disabilities request accommodations that seem inappropriate to the professor, that receiving accommodations for the course will not serve the students' long-term interests, and concerns for the academic integrity of their class/program. Skinner (2007) also raised faculty concerns over whether accommodations affected student mastery of course content and the need to perform well without accommodations on field-specific entry.

Research into faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations to post-secondary students with disabilities has found differing results on whether this willingness varies by factors including age, gender, rank, academic discipline, and the type of accommodation requested. While several studies have not found age to be a significant factor, Skinner (2007) found that older faculty members were more willing to make accommodations than younger faculty members. Some studies have also reported no influence of faculty rank while others found that non-tenure track faculty were more flexible in making accommodations and investing their time to help students with disabilities than tenure track faculty (Bourke, Strehorn & Siler, 2000; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Skinner, 2007). More consistent results have been found when investigating the influence of the type of accommodation requested on faculty attitudes and willingness. Research has shown that faculty are generally more willing to make minor accommodations involving less intrusiveness and work on their part rather than major accommodations (Bourke, Strehorn & Silver, 2000; Murray, Wren & Keys, 2008; Skinner, 2007). Therefore, if faculty are asked to make accommodations that require more than minimal

effort on their part and they feel less support from their departments, they are less willing or enthusiastic about making these accommodations. Significant differences in willingness to accommodate have also been found in regards to the gender of the faculty member, with females being generally more willing to accommodate and personally invest in students with disabilities (Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Murray, Wren & Keys, 2008; Byrd, 2010; Skinner, 2007).

Research has also been conducted into whether the academic discipline affects faculty attitudes or willingness to accommodate students with disabilities. While some research has found no significant correlation, several studies have found that faculties within colleges of Education are more receptive to making academic and exam accommodations than faculties within the colleges of Business, Humanities, and Science (Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Murray, Wren & Keys, 2008; Nelson, Dodd & Smith, 1990; Skinner, 2007; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Bourke, Strehorn and Silver (2000) found that faculty in the Humanities and Fine Arts departments reported that accommodations were easier and fairer than faculty in the departments of Math and Science. One of the participants interviewed by Byrd (2010) came from an academic background in the sciences and reported such a negative experience requesting an accommodation from one professor that the student never sought disability supports again. Byrd's (2010) participant quoted this faculty member as curtly expressing that "those people who want accommodations are ridiculous" in response to a request for extra time on an exam (p. 63).

2.4 Student perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate

When considering faculty engagement with accommodation, one must also consider what students with disabilities perceive faculty attitudes to be. Some of the most frequently reported barriers to disability disclosure and accommodation utilization at the post-secondary level are

past negative experiences with professors and a fear of negative social reactions (Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010). Consideration of the student perspective is important because the students' perceptions regarding faculty attitudes, as well as any actual negative attitudes on the part of faculty both significantly influence whether students access their accommodations (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012). Research has shown that when students experience or perceive negative reactions to their disclosure or requests for accommodations at the post-secondary level, they are less likely to disclose or seek formal supports in the future (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Denhart, 2008; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Hill, 1996; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Byrd (2010) interviewed a post-secondary student who reported that a past negative experience with a professor, regarding disability accommodations, had made her feel ashamed of her disability and had prevented her from seeking further accommodations. However, Byrd (2010) also interviewed several students with disabilities who reported that although they have experienced negative reactions from their professors they have not let these experiences affect their pursuit of their needed academic supports and accommodations. Work still needs to be done to prevent further negative experiences, which discourage students with disabilities and affect their sense of self. Faculty at the post-secondary level must make a concerted effort to identify these students by their achievements rather than their deficits in order to foster a burgeoning sense of self-esteem and an identity of themselves as successful, resilient students (Carroll, Landrum & McCarthy, 2012; Erten, 2011; Koch, 2004).

When considering the perspectives of students with disabilities regarding faculty willingness to accommodate, it is important to consider whether these perceptions have changed over time. Hill (1996) surveyed students with disabilities and found that while the majority

(65.5%) felt their academic needs were being met at the post-secondary level, over a third of students with disabilities reported that their needs were not being met, and 25% reported that a lack of accommodations was seriously impacting their ability to pursue their post-secondary education. Hill (1996) also found that students with invisible disabilities had significantly more negative perceptions of faculty willingness to accept their disabilities and offer supports, than students with physical disabilities. Only 20% of the students with an invisible disability perceived faculty as very willing to accept and support them, compared with 58.3% of students with physical disabilities that were surveyed. The students with disabilities interviewed by Beilke and Yssel (1999) all had positive things to say about faculty members and the accommodation process. However these positive stories contrasted with negative experiences with other faculty members.

Since the 1990s there has been a tremendous increase in research and knowledge surrounding disabilities and the academic needs and effective supports required for affected students. Therefore, one would expect the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding faculty attitudes towards disability and willingness to accommodate to have made positive gains. Although the majority of students still report that their needs are being met (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Reed, Lewis & Lund-Lucas, 2006), a surprisingly high percentage of those surveyed or interviewed still describe negative faculty reactions to their disability or an unwillingness to provide accommodations for them. Reed, Lewis and Lund-Lucas (2006) found 43% of the students with disabilities they surveyed felt disrespected by faculty as a result of their disability or that a faculty member would not provide them with assistance or accommodations. Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) found that 44.7% of the students surveyed disagreed that professors were receptive to accommodations. These numbers are surprising given the amount

of information currently available regarding the needs of students with disabilities, as well as the more recent policy developments from post-secondary institutions regarding the provision of accommodations. Research has also illustrated the continued presence of a contrast between student reports of positive and supportive faculty members versus faculty who hold negative attitudes towards the accommodation process (Byrd, 2010; Mullins & Preyde, 2013).

While more of this research has been carried out in the United States, Mullins and Preyde (2013) examined the experiences of students with invisible disabilities within a Canadian post-secondary context. The students they interviewed reported that while accommodations at the post-secondary level were critical in obtaining academic success, the presence of social and organizational barriers increased their reluctance to utilize these supports and therefore negatively impacted their education. In particular, these students reported dealing with negative perceptions from both faculty and their non-disabled peers about disabilities, which included questioning the validity of invisible disabilities as a construct. The students also reported that although they felt their post-secondary institution as a whole was supportive, they had faced resistance to accommodations from specific faculty members. Mullins and Preyde (2013) found that reluctance to utilize accommodations resulted from the students' not wanting to disclose their invisible disability to avoid stigma, the extra time and effort needed to obtain accommodations, the fluctuating nature of their disability, which intermittently affected their ability to meet academic requirements, and the concern that receiving accommodations identified them to both faculty and their peers as a student with a disability. The presence of physical, emotional and social barriers to post-secondary education for students with disabilities, the reluctance to utilize accommodations for fear of being identified as disabled, and the hesitancy to

approach professors with disability disclosure or accommodation requests were also confirmed by Hutcheon and Wolbring (2012), who also conducted their research within a Canadian context.

2.5 Relevant legislation and policies that support the rights of students with disabilities

An examination of the development of policies and legislation that govern educational supports for post-secondary students with disabilities is required in order to gain an insight into why accommodations are important and why post-secondary institutions are mandated to provide these supports. Disability rights in Canada have been greatly influenced by developments in the United States as well as conventions from the United Nations mandating equality of rights and the provision of supports for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, it is important to examine not only the pertinent Canadian legislation that would impact students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan, but also the influential legislative and political documents that have shaped the development of Canadian policies. This section first details relevant American and international policies and legislation supporting and protecting the equality of persons with disabilities and their right to education. A discussion of relevant Canadian, Saskatchewan, and University of Saskatchewan-specific legislation and policies is included.

2.5.1 Relevant American and International Legislation and Policies. Historically, individuals with disabilities were marginalized and often excluded from mainstream society through either isolation or institutionalization (Carter, 2013). One of the earliest documents related to the promotion of the rights of individuals with disabilities was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948 (Shah, 2010). While this document did not speak to the needs of these individuals specifically, it spoke to the principle that all people are equal and therefore should all receive primary and secondary education that promotes the development of their full potential and have the opportunity to access post-

secondary education (United Nations, 1948). Carter (2013) describes how the promotion of the rights and equality of those with disabilities gained strength in the 1970s through advocacy movements that fought for their rights to access a greater and more equitable quality of life. Specifically, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in the United States was passed in 1973, which requires federally funded post-secondary institutions in the US to make their institutions and programs accessible to students with disabilities through the provision of reasonable accommodations (Bourke, Strehorn & Silver, 2000; Marshak, Van Wieran, Raeke Ferrell, Swiss & Dugan, 2010; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999). Internationally, the United Nations released the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons in 1975 (Shah, 2010). While this document does not provide a specific legally binding right to education, it confirms the rights of persons with disabilities to basic human dignity and the same civil and political rights of any person (United Nations, 1975).

The United Nations continued to develop the framework for the rights of persons with disabilities in 1989 through the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Shah, 2010). This document included the first legally binding article that involved the educational rights of children with disabilities and guaranteed them the right to education without facing discrimination (United Nations, 1989). Soon after this convention was passed by the UN, the United States passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 with the goal of preventing discrimination against persons with disabilities (Taymans, 2011). This legislation requires that students with disabilities have accessible education and that reasonable accommodations be made in order to provide people with disabilities the same access to work and education as their non-disabled peers (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990; Bourke, Strehorn & Silver, 2000; Paetzgold et al., 2008; Skinner, 2007). With the passing of the ADA in 1990, individuals who

disclose a disability to their educational institution or employer are entitled by law to receive reasonable accommodations (Bourke, Strehorn & Silver, 2000; Skinner, 2007). The ADA was also accompanied by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, which contains more information on disability eligibility, details what constitutes a specific learning disability, and mandates that individual transition plans be developed to help prepare students with disabilities for college (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004; Taymans, 2011; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland & Brulle, 1999).

More recently, the United Nations has continued developing and refining international policies that promote the rights of individuals with disabilities and have included more focus on the right to education and accommodations. In 2004, the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights banned discrimination in education based on disability (Shah, 2010). This work continued with the 2007 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which confirms the right to education without discrimination for persons with disabilities and requires signatory nations to ensure that reasonable accommodations that meet the individual needs of the student are in place (United Nations, 2007). Canada has been one of the signatory nations of each of the relevant UN policies on the rights of persons with disabilities, which suggests that these policies and conventions, as well the influence from the United States, have helped shaped our federal and provincial legislation regarding the rights of these individuals.

2.5.2. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was passed in 1982 with the Canadian Constitution and is an overarching statute to which all federal and provincial laws must align (Shah, 2010). While the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not specifically detail a right to education for people with disabilities, it guarantees that all individuals are seen as equal and therefore are due equal protection under

the law (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Although not specific to education, the Charter includes the right of individuals to not face discrimination and allows for the concept of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). The Canadian provinces have legal jurisdiction over education and therefore, individual provincial legislation and codes must also be considered. However, when considering the rights of students with disabilities within a Canadian setting, the Charter is the legal baseline and all provincial codes and laws must align with it.

2.5.3. Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code was initially passed in 1979 and has since undergone numerous revisions, most recently in 2015 (Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2015). It specifically defines the terms *disability* and *mental disorders* and specifies that these disabilities are under the protection of prohibited ground (Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2015). Prohibited ground includes classifications for individuals that could serve as the basis for discrimination. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code not only promotes the rights and dignity of all persons, but also guarantees to all the right to education without discrimination based on prohibited grounds with the exception of age (Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2015). It clarifies that support and accommodation are requirements to promote the educational and workplace needs of individuals with disabilities but, like the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, requires that these efforts need only be made up to the point of “undue hardship” (Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2015, p.6). This prevents students with disabilities from being denied access to post-secondary education if they are able to complete these studies through the use of reasonable accommodations provided by the institution.

2.5.4. University of Saskatchewan Academic Accommodations and Access Policy. In order to better serve the needs of students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and to streamline the accommodation policies of the various colleges, the university developed an overarching Academic Accommodations and Access Policy in 2010. The purpose of this policy is to promote diversity and inclusiveness on campus and to increase the success rates of students with disabilities by ensuring their opportunities to access reasonable academic accommodations and supports (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). The policy details the individual stakeholders in the accommodation process and their individual roles. For example, students with disabilities are responsible for self-advocacy of their rights and for both registering with the DSS office and meeting the accommodation requirements of that office. Faculty at the U of S are expected to make accommodations for students with disabilities, contribute to developing a positive campus climate for all students, and maintain the academic integrity and standards of their programs (University of Saskatchewan, 2010).

The U of S Academic Accommodation and Access policy utilizes the definition of disability from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and pledges to adapt its programs and make accommodations for students with disabilities as outlined in this code (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). It also discusses what situations may arise when accommodating students with disabilities that could be considered undue hardship: For instance, an accommodation could affect the academic integrity of the program or would not be reasonable if it would bypass a necessary and critical component of that course (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). The Academic Accommodations and Access policy prompts the individual colleges and programs at the U of S to establish their own policies in line with the general U of S policy, and to detail the essential requirements of their programs (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). While most

individual colleges at the U of S are still constructing their own academic accommodation and access policies, several colleges have released their list of essential skills that are requirements to successful participation in their programs (e.g. Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy and Nutrition and Physical Therapy).

2.5.5. Rights and Legislation Summary. Despite legislation, negative attitudes and discrimination towards persons with disabilities still exist, and these individuals still face barriers to their inclusion and success at the post-secondary level. An increasing number of post-secondary institutions are developing policies regarding access to services and accommodations for students with disabilities. However, it is important to remember that just because these policies and pieces of legislation are in place does not mean that students with disabilities currently always receive these mandated supports. Beilke & Yssel (1999) argued that support and policy implementation from post-secondary institutions does not necessarily guarantee positive faculty attitudes towards accommodating disabilities. This argument has been confirmed by more recent research, which supports the position that not all faculty are supportive in the accommodation process for students with disabilities (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Orr & Goodman, 2012).

2.6 Debate over fairness

Accommodations are modifications or assistance designed to support the specific needs of individuals with disabilities so they can overcome the societal barriers resulting from their physical, learning or psychological impairments, and participate more equitably in mainstream society (Shah, 2010). These supports are intended to allow persons with disabilities to demonstrate their capabilities and understanding without also having to overcome their impairments. Despite the push for equitable treatment, which fuels the provision of

accommodations for individuals with disabilities, concerns over the fairness of accommodations have been raised. Debates about the fairness of accommodations exist in two primary formats: The first concerns how these supports affect the academic integrity of post-secondary programs. The second debate entails whether accommodations for students with disabilities provides them an unfair advantage over those without disabilities.

Bourke, Strehorn and Silver (2012) found that while many post-secondary faculty are willing to accommodate students with disabilities, they struggle with how this can be done in a way that does not damage the academic integrity of their program and that is ethically responsible to students with and without disabilities. Particularly, it must be determined if the elimination of an essential component of the course would result in a student's not being able to learn or demonstrate something fundamental to that course or program (Carroll, Landrum & McCarthy, 2012). Especially within professional colleges, there are essential requirements necessary to competently and successfully perform a job and situations where accommodating or modifying these core requirements are not appropriate. However, in any evaluation of essential program requirements, they must not be so broadly defined as to simply exclude persons with disabilities for the convenience of not needing to develop and implement reasonable accommodations. Human rights codes mandate provision of reasonable accommodations to support not only the educational success of individuals with disabilities, but also their vocational success within the workplace.

While concerns about the academic integrity of post-secondary programming may be valid, there are faculty members who push this line of reasoning further. They suggest that not only do accommodations for students with disabilities lower academic standards or ignore the reality students will have to face in life outside of school, but they give students with disabilities

an “unfair advantage” over students without disabilities (Byrd, 2010). Beilke and Yssel (1999) detailed the case of Jon Westling, who as the president of Boston University in 1997 created controversy by critiquing the advocacy movement to support students with disabilities at the post-secondary level. He argued that the advocacy push was going beyond reasonable accommodations and was defining any and all deficits as a disability (Beilke & Yssel, 1999). Misunderstandings about the abilities of students with disabilities can arise because if a student with a disability has reached the post-secondary level it indicates some level of academic success and achievement. This can often be misunderstood to mean that that student’s disability is mild or is not a problem (Erten, 2011). Due to the prominence of the medical model of disability, in many cases people have a hard time conceptualizing the label of a disability to include success (Erten, 2011; Paetzgold et al., 2008; Roberts & Hoff Macaan, 2006). Paetzgold et al. (2008) conducted a social experiment to evaluate the fairness perceptions of accommodating a person with a disability. The participants in this study found accommodations for persons with disabilities unfair to those without disabilities regardless of whether an accommodated person was in an individual competitive task, or competing as part of a team. Unfair conditions were reported by participants when a person with a disability received an accommodation that the non-disabled participants did not receive. In relation to the disassociation of the terms *success* and *disability*, Paetzgold et al. (2008) found that when a person with a disability excelled in a task after receiving an accommodation it was viewed by their non-disabled peers as less fair than when that person did not excel.

Although accommodations are meant to level the playing field for students with disabilities so they can participate on par with their non-disabled peers, in many instances these supports can be perceived as an unfair privilege that serves to give these students an edge above

their non-disabled competition (Erten, 2011; Paetzgold et al., 2008). The arguments that accommodations provide an unfair advantage stem from a perspective that in order for everyone to be treated fairly, they need to be treated equally. Any deviation from equal treatment, from this perspective, creates a situation where at least one party is gaining an advantage at the expense of the others. However, this perspective does not take into account that if all individuals are treated equally, those individuals with disabilities are put at an intrinsic disadvantage due to the societal barriers and limitations placed on their impairments. In order for everyone to be treated fairly, equitable rather than equal treatment is required, which does not always look the same for every individual.

2.7 Establishment and role of the DSS office at the University of Saskatchewan

Post-secondary institutions in Canada began establishing offices to support the needs of students with disabilities in the mid-1980s (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). The Disability Services for Students (DSS) office was established at the University of Saskatchewan in 1996 with the goal of assisting in the creation of a more accessible learning environment on campus (Disability Services for Students, 2015). The DSS office serves both post-secondary students with disabilities and the wider university community through education on the nature of disabilities and the needs of these students. It also supplies advice for faculty on the provision of reasonable accommodations (Disability Services for Students, 2015). For students with disabilities, who are registered with their office, DSS provides services (such as exam accommodations, note-taking, and alternate format) as well as information and advice (Disability Services for Students, 2015). These services are in line with the functions outlined by Carroll, Landrum and McCarthy (2012), who suggested that the role of the DSS office was to assist in the provision of accommodations and protect the legal rights of students with disabilities.

The U of S provides a wide variety of general accommodations to its students registered with the DSS office, depending on the nature and extent of their academic needs. The DSS office also organizes and facilitates the note-taking and exam accommodation processes at the U of S. Individual students are required to book their exam accommodations before stated deadlines, which are generally two weeks before non-final exams in the regular sessions and prior to specified fixed dates for final exams (Disability Services for Students, 2015). The types of exam accommodations provided depend on the individual student's documentation; however the most commonly provided exam accommodations include extra time, a quiet exam space, a reader, a scribe, use of a computer, specialized lighting, height-adjustable work surface, ergonomic chair, spell-only dictionary, and exams spaced over several days (Disability Services for Students, 2015). While the DSS office organizes and provides exam accommodations, it is generally the responsibility of the university faculty to facilitate academic accommodations because they support the day-to-day functioning of the student within the classroom (Disability Services for Students, 2015). General academic accommodations may support the physical needs of students with disabilities, such as requiring accessible physical spaces, interpretive services, and the use of assistive technology (Disability Services for Students, 2015). Other accommodations commonly include permission to record lectures, not grading spelling or grammatical errors, deferral of exams, extensions on assignments, exclusion from class participation as a graded component of the course, and forgiveness of occasional absences (Disability Services for Students, 2015).

In order for students with disabilities to receive accommodations at the U of S, they need to register with the DSS office and provide current and sufficient documentation of their disability (Disability Services for Students, 2015). The DSS office provides only those

accommodations recommended in the student's documentation that are deemed to be reasonable and is responsible for determining reasonable academic and exam accommodations in conjunction with the colleges (Disability Services for Students, 2015). Therefore, faculty at the U of S must adhere to accommodations accepted by the DSS office and recommended for individual students with disabilities unless they are able to make a successful case that these accommodations would cause undue hardship or would undermine the academic integrity of a course and/or program (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). The DSS office provides registered students with digital copies of letters to their professors, confirming their registration with DSS and detailing the accommodations they should receive (Disability Services for Students, 2015). The students then deliver these letters to their professors in person, although delivery of the letters is not a requirement for students to receive accommodations.

2.8 Summary

Individuals with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment and are more often employed in base-wage and entry-level positions than their non-disabled peers. Their career outcomes and levels of social mobility are greatly increased through the completion of some form of post-secondary education. The successful completion of higher education is far more likely when the proper accommodations are in place to support a student's unique learning needs. There are specific policies and legislation designed to support the unique academic needs of students with disabilities, however the presence of such policies alone does not guarantee that these supports are consistently implemented. Despite the advantages of the use of reasonable academic and exam accommodations, especially their correlation to successful graduation rates, many students do not disclose their disabilities at the post-secondary level and therefore are not able to access these accommodations. When students with disabilities were asked why they did

not utilize their accommodations at the post-secondary level, one of the most frequently cited reasons involved fear of facing negative perceptions and attitudes on the part of faculty. Overall, both students with disabilities and faculty report mostly positive attitudes towards and willingness to make accommodations for those with documented disabilities. However, students with disabilities do report encountering faculty reluctance or resistance to implementing accommodations and when these negative reactions occur, the students are much less likely to try to seek accommodations in the future.

The significant influence that faculty attitudes towards disability and their willingness to accommodate students with disabilities have on student success necessitates investigation into the current perceptions of faculty members. It is important to understand the nature of faculty attitudes towards accommodating disabilities, as well as what students with disabilities perceive these faculty attitudes to be, in order to understand the campus climate that students with disabilities are facing. Negative faculty attitudes or student perceptions of negative faculty reactions can impact willingness to seek out and utilize needed supports and accommodations, which can in turn negatively impact academic achievement and degree completion. Research into current attitudes and willingness to accommodate can provide information on where post-secondary institutions could be directing information and resources in order to best meet the needs of students with disabilities. The aim of the current study is to determine the specific nature of existing perceptions students with disabilities and faculty at the University of Saskatchewan hold regarding faculty willingness to make accommodations for those with documented disabilities. The information gained from this study will assist in better understanding the experiences of students with disabilities at the post-secondary level within a Saskatchewan context.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The aim of the current study is to investigate the existing faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan through an analysis of both faculty and student perceptions. This chapter details the research design and methodology that was employed in the current study, as well as discusses the rationale which supported the use of this specific methodology. In particular, an elaboration of the study design; participant selection and recruitment methods; data collection; data analysis; and relevant ethical considerations will be included.

3.1 Rationale for Quantitative Methodology

Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) define quantitative research as the numerical analysis of information collected during the research process in an attempt to objectively answer a research question through the use of statistics. The data collected in the course of quantitative research can be quantified, compared against itself, and can be visually represented (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Quantitative research endeavours to investigate and provide an objective explanation for social phenomena and therefore assumes that these phenomena are measurable constructs (Groves et al, 2009). The concepts of objectivity and generalizability are highly valued within the quantitative research methodology. In order to increase objectivity, the researcher needs to take a more detached, scientific approach to the data collection and analysis processes, and must try not to incorporate their personal views or biases when reporting the data and answering the research questions (Groves et al., 2009). Generalizability involves the degree to which one can make inferences about whether the results of a current study can be assumed to be true in the general population (Groves et al., 2009). In order to promote greater generalizability of the

results of quantitative research the researcher strives to obtain high participant response numbers and to limit both random and systematic errors (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002).

The current study investigated both faculty and student perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to make disability accommodations. Although qualitative research is more widely used to study individual opinions, attitudes, and beliefs, quantitative research can be used to measure and report on such constructs (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). The choice between using a quantitative or qualitative methodology to measure attitudinal perceptions, therefore rests in the goals of the specific study. Within the current study, two of the goals were to obtain a broad range of faculty and student perspectives and to produce information that could be generalizable to a wider population rather than simply the participant group. Taking a qualitative research methodology approach, current perceptions regarding attitudes towards and willingness to make accommodations could be found by interviewing a small number of faculty members and students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan in order to gain a deeper insight into their own personal experiences with this issue. However, while interviewing two to four participants would produce rich data, it would limit the number of participant perspectives that could be included and considered, and any results from the study could not be generalized to the wider population of faculty and students with disabilities within the University of Saskatchewan campus. Quantitative research is also the more appropriate methodology for the current study because of the focus on an objective researcher who remains more detached from the data collection and analysis process. This is valuable within the current study because while I am the primary researcher, I am also a member of one of my participant groups. The requirement of quantitative research that the researcher focus on objectivity and a scientific approach assisted in limiting effects of my personal biases and opinions from the data collection and analysis process.

3.2 Descriptive Research

Quantitative research is primarily classified by whether the research design is experimental or non-experimental. Experimental research involves the manipulation of one or more variables by the researcher, to determine if this produces any changes in a dependent variable (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Whereas, Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) explain non-experimental research designs as those in which a specific phenomenon is studied without the imposition of any form of intervention. The research questions within the current study seek to investigate existing faculty and student perceptions. Research intervention of any kind may impact faculty or student reports of their perceptions and thus interfere with the collection of and meaningful data. Therefore, the research questions within the current study are best answered through non-experimental methods.

The form of non-experimental research which will be employed in the current study is descriptive research. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) descriptive research involves making thorough descriptions of the specific phenomenon under study. The information generated through descriptive research can be used to not only explain a phenomena, but also serve as a platform for change (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). This type of research assists in forming clearer, more accurate definitions regarding opinions, attitudes, and beliefs held by a specific group of individuals regarding a particular subject, as well as the key functions association with these attitudes (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Descriptive research can report on how things are and what is happening within a particular social organization but does not have any control over the circumstances. This research method is well-suited to the current study because its research questions seek to determine current attitudes and perceptions of both faculty and students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. Within the context of these

research questions and the current project, the researcher did not have any control over what these attitudes and perceptions were, and therefore simply collected this information and reported on it. The participants in this study submitted their answers through the use of online questionnaires and the researcher described the responses the participants gave with the hopes of shedding some insight onto this issue.

3.2.1. Survey Research. The specific method that was employed in the current study is survey research. This form of descriptive research is one of the most common types of quantitative research used within the social sciences and involves data collection through the standardized use of questionnaires or interviews from a specific sample of a target population (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Survey research is often planned and structured in such a manner that the information that is collected from the sample group of respondents can be used to make statistical inferences about the wider population (Groves et al., 2009). In particular, Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) detail the responses received can provide insights into current attitudes and beliefs and can help researchers track shifts in these attitudes and beliefs over time. According to Groves et al. (2009), the sample of survey respondents could be selected in various ways, which are primarily classified based on whether the chance of a particular individual being selected to participate in the survey is known. In probability sampling, each individual in the population has a specified chance of being selected to participate in the survey group. Whereas, in non-probability sampling, the odds of individual members of the population participating in the survey are not known. For example, this would occur with volunteer samples where the respondents self-select themselves to be in the sample through their voluntary participation.

Surveys can be administered to the sample by questionnaires or interviews, and can be done through face-to-face meetings, written documents, or online questionnaires. Some research

suggests that email surveys generally have higher response rates compared to paper-based surveys (Groves et al., 2009). However, these results have mostly been seen within the first few days of the email survey being released and then response rates appear to even out over time. Groves et al. (2009) describe the primary goals of survey research as obtaining a high survey response rate from the participant pool, and developing well-constructed survey questions which promote high levels of reliability and validity. These goals can be met by reviewing the questions of the survey with the purpose of eliminating any unclear or ambiguous items, and sending potential participants a pre-contact message which discusses the purpose of the study and politely invites their cooperation (Groves et al., 2009). Groves et al. (2009) also distinguish between the types of questions generally contained within the surveys used in this type of research. Open-ended questions usually take the form of comment boxes and allow the respondent to answer the survey question in whatever manner best suites their beliefs. In contrast, closed-ended questions require the respondent to choose their response from a finite selection of predetermined responses. Due to its standardized nature, survey research tends to have higher levels of reliability because the variable nature of researcher observation is less emphasized. However, survey research tends to demonstrate weaker validity, particularly with closed-ended questions, as it is hard to accurately assess the true attitudes or beliefs of respondents through the selection of approximate responses they can choose from (Groves et al., 2009).

Survey research is well suited to the current study as it allows for the participation of a large number of potential respondents, which promotes greater generalizability of the results. Online delivery and completion of surveys featuring closed-question responses were selected for data collection due to ease of administration and because research suggests higher participant

response rates through this method of survey delivery. To account for these higher response rates' being stronger, within the first few days of the email invitation, potential participants were sent a follow-up reminder email at two weeks and another at four weeks after the initial email invitation. Closed-ended questions promote greater reliability because open-ended ones require more researcher observation in order to analyze any themes within the participant responses. Closed-ended questions decrease any potential distortion stemming from preconceptions or personal biases on the part of the primary researcher, a student with a disability.

3.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment

In order to provide more comprehensive knowledge about faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness towards making accommodations for students with disabilities, the current study sought information from two distinct participant groups. A determination of faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan required directly asking faculty members themselves about their own attitudes. Therefore, the first participant group consisted of current faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan. Connections were sought and established with the Dean's offices of five selected colleges within the University of Saskatchewan campus (i.e. Arts and Science, Edwards School of Business, Education, Engineering, and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine). The first four colleges were selected because they have the highest percentages of students registered with the DSS office. The Western College of Veterinary Medicine was selected to provide a health sciences perspective. Through these connections, permission was obtained from the Dean's offices to send each faculty member within the five colleges an email invitation that invited their participation in the current research study.

While it was important to ask faculty directly about their attitudes towards and willingness to provide accommodations to students with disabilities at the post-secondary level, research has shown that student perceptions of faculty attitudes are also an important component in the decision to utilize accommodations and supports (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte & Trice, 2012; Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Therefore, the second participant group within the current study included students with disabilities registered with the DSS office at the University of Saskatchewan. In order to provide information about how accommodations are perceived by faculty at the post-secondary level, the students surveyed needed to be registered with the DSS office. Only students who have disclosed their disability to this office and provided sufficient documentation of their disability can access academic and exam accommodations. A connection with the DSS office on campus was sought and established, with the hopes that this office would send a recruitment email to the students that were currently registered with them. All students with disabilities registered with the disability services office were contacted in this manner and offered the opportunity to participate in the current study. This did not encompass all students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan, but included those students that could receive accommodations and therefore could provide feedback on how they felt their accommodation requests were perceived by university faculty.

An email inviting participation in this research study was sent to faculty members from the five selected colleges within the University of Saskatchewan, and to students with disabilities registered with the DSS office. This recruitment email provided a brief description of the purpose of the study, detailed the approximate completion time of the survey, and provided a website link that potential participants could follow if they chose to become a part of the study.

Information regarding informed consent was provided before access to the survey could be obtained. Potential participants were informed of the confidentiality of the study and that while some demographic information was collected, no identifying information was requested, nor their contact information given to the researcher. They were also be informed of their right to withdraw their participation at any time before the completion and submission of their survey responses. These initial emails were followed up by two reminder emails sent two weeks and four weeks after the initial invitation was distributed.

3.4 Data Generation

Before data collection began ethics approval was sought from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan. Once ethics approval was obtained, data for the survey was collected through the completion of two separate online surveys. The first survey was completed by faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan within the five selected colleges. The faculty survey consisted of 30 closed questions and contained an optional comment box, where faculty had the option to provide context for their answers. The second survey was completed by students with disabilities who were registered with the DSS office at the University of Saskatchewan. The student survey consisted of 20 closed questions and also contained an optional comment box, to allow the opportunity to provide for context to their answers. The data obtained from the faculty and student surveys was quantitatively analysed therefore, the responses within the comment box were not analyzed for themes. This information instead served as an opportunity for students and faculty to provide an explanation for their answers on the survey and thus provided the researcher with some human context to make sense of the numerical data.

The majority of the faculty survey was based on the work of Byrd (2010) with the author's permission. In order to investigate faculty attitudes in providing accommodations to students with disabilities at the university level, Byrd developed a 26-item survey which was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale. These 26 items were based on Byrd's experience working in the disability service office within her post-secondary institution and were organized into faculty's general knowledge and attitudes regarding disability and disability policies, their specific attitudes towards making various types of classroom/academic accommodations, and their specific attitudes towards making various types of exam accommodations. The results of this survey produced data consistent with previous research and indicated that overall faculty reported positive attitudes and willingness towards making accommodations for students with disabilities, but did report disagreement with some particular types of accommodations (Byrd, 2010). In the current study, survey items 1 through 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, 19, and 22 through 24 were used directly from Byrd's 2010 faculty survey.

Some of the items from within the faculty survey (items numbered 13 through 15, 20, 21, 25, and 26) were adapted from the work of Baker, Boland, and Nowik (2012). Their survey was developed through a process of literature review, incorporating the work of Houck et al. (1992), Wolman et al. (2004) and Murray, Wren, and Keys (2008), review by knowledgeable professionals, and a pilot test. Items numbered 11 and 12 were based on both the work of Baker, Boland, and Nowik (2012) and Byrd (2010). After all of these questions were included in the survey for the current study, there were a few common accommodations within the University of Saskatchewan which were not included. Therefore, survey items 18, 22, and 27 were developed by the researcher to investigate faculty attitudes and willingness towards these specific U of S accommodations. Upon completion of the faculty survey utilized within the current study, it was

reviewed by both the manager and a senior advisor within the DSS office in order to evaluate the survey's content validity. Both individuals have significant knowledge and experience in the area of post-secondary accommodations and working with students with disabilities. Some revisions were suggested which improved clarity of items, but overall the survey was viewed to ask questions relevant to the nature of the study.

The majority of the survey for students with disabilities was also based on the work of Byrd (2010) and Baker, Boland, and Nowik (2012). Survey items 6 through 14 on the student survey were shared with items numbered 7 through 15 on the faculty survey in order to allow for direct comparison of faculty and student responses. These nine items were worded differently on the student survey in order to fit the context of surveying students with disabilities on their perceptions of faculty attitudes (e.g. "My professors are willing to..." instead of "I am willing to..."). The second section of the student survey investigated the personal accommodation experiences of the student respondents. Items numbered 14, 15, and 19 through 21 on this section of the student survey were incorporated from the work of Baker, Boland, and Nowik (2012). Upon completion of the student survey utilized within the current study, it was also reviewed by the manager and a senior advisor within the DSS office to evaluate its' content validity. As with the faculty survey, some revisions were suggested which improved clarity of items, but overall the survey was viewed to ask questions relevant to the nature of the study.

Both of the surveys utilized by Byrd (2010) and Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) were organized into sections in order to provide structure to the surveys and aid in the ease of administration. As the survey employed within the current study was based on this work, it maintained the survey sections employed by both surveys. The purpose of the sections was to facilitate faculty and student responses, by providing a context for the types of questions they

would be answering on a certain page of the survey. The faculty and student surveys both began with several demographic questions. These were followed by a section which evaluated attitudes towards disabilities and the accommodation policies at the University of Saskatchewan and was rated by both the faculty and students on a 5-point Likert scale. The items within this section were the same on both the faculty and student surveys but with the wording slightly modified to reflect the different contexts. This allowed for the direct comparison of faculty and student perceptions on these questions. The final section of the student survey included six questions asking students with disabilities about their beliefs about disability disclosure and their experience as a student with a disability at the U of S. The final section of the faculty survey asked faculty about their willingness to make various forms of classroom and exam accommodations.

3.5 Data Analysis

The aim of the current study was to examine post-secondary faculty attitudes towards and corresponding willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. These faculty attitudes were examined from both the perspective of the faculty members themselves and from the perspective of students with disabilities who received post-secondary accommodations. Both participants groups completed an online survey and the results were analysed in order to help answer the study's research questions. In order to assess faculty attitudes and student perceptions, each item from the surveys was analyzed separately. The first research question investigated current faculty attitudes and willingness towards accommodating students with disabilities from the perspective of the faculty members themselves. Descriptive analyses were completed for the data collected from the faculty surveys to provide information about current attitudes. In order to determine if faculty attitudes are

dependent on factors such as: gender, age, years of experience or academic division, a series of one-way between-group ANOVAs were conducted, one for each of the factors in question. The faculty data within each factor was first analysed using Levene's test of homogeneity of variances. This was conducted to determine if the data met the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. If the data did not pass Levene's test, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences in the faculty responses.

The second research question sought to investigate student perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to make accommodations. Descriptive analyses of the student survey provided information on student perspectives, then one-way between-group ANOVAs were conducted to determine if the student perceptions were dependent on factors such as: type of disability or what college they attended. The student data within each factor was first analysed using Levene's test of homogeneity of variances. This was conducted to determine if the data met the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. If the data did not pass Levene's test, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences between the independent and dependent variables. Nine of the survey items were shared between the faculty and student surveys in order to allow for direct comparison of their responses. A series of independent sample *t*-tests were conducted on these shared questions with the intention of answering the third research question which compared faculty attitudes and willingness to make accommodations and the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding faculty attitudes.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations which needed to be taken into account within the present study. Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and therefore the participants

needed to be informed that their completion of the survey was their own choice and that they had the right to withdraw from the study up until their survey was submitted. Once a survey was submitted by the participant it could not be withdrawn because their data was anonymous and could not be distinguished from the data of the other respondents. Informed consent was established before participants received access to the online survey. Since the informed consent process was completed online, efforts were made to ensure that clear and concise information was communicated to potential participants so that they could make an informed choice. Issues regarding confidentiality in the research process was also be detailed for participants. Participants were made aware that their survey responses were confidential and that although some demographic information was collected within the survey that their data was anonymized. The information collected from the surveys is being securely stored for five years with the researcher's thesis supervisor at the University of Saskatchewan. The current study involved the collection of survey responses which were anonymized from the researcher. The participants recruited for this study were faculty members and post-secondary students with disabilities from the University of Saskatchewan. Both of these participant groups involved adults and the survey did not ask any specifically emotionally charged questions. Therefore, the current study was not deemed to involve more than minimal risk.

3.7 Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology which was used in the current study. A quantitative methodology was selected because of its' emphasis on researcher objectivity and because it allowed for greater generalizability of results than with a qualitative approach. In particular, descriptive research methods were employed in order to provide thorough accounts of faculty attitudes towards and corresponding willingness to accommodate students with

disabilities at the post-secondary level. The data for the survey was collected through the completion of online surveys by two distinct participant groups. Connections with the DSS office and the individual Dean's offices for the five colleges within the University of Saskatchewan in the study were sought and established in the hopes that these offices would give permission for the researcher to email invitations to participate in the current study to faculty and students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. These permissions were obtained and invitations to participate in the online survey were sent to faculty within the colleges of Arts and Science, Education, Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, and the Edwards School of Business, as well as to students registered with the DSS office. Data collected from the online surveys was subjected to descriptive analyses and a series of one-way between-group ANOVAs was conducted to determine if faculty attitudes and student perceptions varied based on different factors. The current study focused on ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality, but was not considered to be above minimal risk.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the current study. First, a description of the participant characteristics is provided. Following this information, the results of the statistical analyses will be detailed in relation to the following research questions:

- 1) What are the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodating students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan? Are these attitudes dependent on factors such as gender, age, years of experience, or academic department?
- 2) What do students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan perceive the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodations to be? Are these student perceptions dependent on factors such as the type of disability experienced by the student, or the college attended?
- 3) How do students' perceptions of faculty attitudes compare to faculty self-reports?

4.1 Participant Characteristics

The current study sought information from two distinct participant groups who volunteered their participation through the completion of separate online surveys. The first group was comprised of faculty members from within five selected colleges at the University of Saskatchewan (i.e. Arts and Science, Education, Edwards School of Business, Engineering, and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine). Students who were currently registered with the Disability Services for Students (DSS) office at the University of Saskatchewan comprised the second group. As there were two distinct groups of participants, the characteristics of each group will be detailed separately.

4.1.1 Faculty

A total of 932 faculty members from the five participating colleges were invited to participate in the online survey. Invitations were sent to the 626 faculty members from within the College of Arts and Science (67% of the potential faculty participant pool), the 107 faculty members from within the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (11.5% of the potential faculty participant pool), the 92 faculty members from within the College of Engineering (9.9% of the potential faculty participant pool), the 59 faculty members from within the Edwards School of Business (6.3% of the potential faculty participant pool), and the 48 faculty members from the College of Education (5.1% of the potential faculty participant pool). From this broader group of potential participants, 137 faculty members from the participating colleges completed the faculty version of the online survey. Descriptive statistics for the faculty participants can be found in Table 4.1.

Of the 137 faculty participating members, 45.3% were female and 54.7% were male. Most faculty who completed the online survey were 50 years old or younger (58.4%), while 41.6% were over 50 years of age. In terms of years of experience teaching at the post-secondary level, 40.9% reported that they had 10 years or less of post-secondary teaching experience, 37.2% reported 11 to 20 years of experience, and 21.9% reported that they had over 20 years of post-secondary teaching experience. The majority of participating faculty were Associate Professors (28.5%), followed by Assistant Professors (24.1%), Professors (20.4%), Sessional Lecturers (16.8%), and Other (10.2%). The “Other” category was made up of those individuals who reported their position as either lab instructors, teaching assistants, or graduate student instructors. In terms of which college faculty members taught within, 60.6% of the faculty respondents were from the College of Arts and Science, 11.7% were from the College of

Engineering, faculty from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the Edwards School of Business each comprised 10.2% of the faculty respondents, while 7.3% of the faculty were from the College of Education. The response rates from within the individual colleges were relatively consistent with the total number of potential faculty participants from within each college. Most faculty reported having *some* prior experience working with students with disabilities, with 11.7% of faculty reported having *significant* experience working with this population of students. Approximately one-quarter (25.5%) of faculty surveyed reported having *very little to no* prior experience working with students with disabilities.

Table 4.1. Frequencies and Percentages for Faculty Categorical Variables

Variable	N	Percentage
Gender		
Female	62	45.3
Male	75	54.7
Age		
50 years or younger	80	58.4
Over 50 years old	57	41.6
Years Teaching Experience		
10 years or less	56	40.9
11-20 years	51	37.2
Over 20 years	30	21.9
Faculty Rank		
Professor	28	20.4
Assistant Professor	33	24.1
Associate Professor	29	28.5
Sessional Lecturer	23	16.8
Other	14	10.2
College		
Arts and Science	83	60.6

Education	10	7.3
Edwards School of Business	14	10.2
Engineering	16	11.7
Western College of Veterinary Medicine	14	10.2
Disability Experience		
Very little to none	35	25.5
Some	86	62.8
Significant	16	11.7

4.1.2 Students registered with DSS

A total of 1185 post-secondary students with disabilities who were currently registered with the DSS office were invited to participate in the student version of the online survey. From this broader group of potential participants 229 students registered with the DSS office completed the online survey. Descriptive statistics for the student participants can be found in Table 4.2. Of the 229 student respondents, 74.7% were *female*, 23.6% were *male*, and 1.7% reported their gender as *other*. Most students who completed the online survey were in an undergraduate level program (85.2%), while 14.8% were in a graduate level program. In terms of the current year of study each student was in, 14.8% of the students reported that they were in their first year of study at university, 19.2% reported they were in their second year of studies, 38% reported being in either their third or fourth year of their program, 22.3% were in their fifth or sixth year, and 5.7% were in their seventh or greater year of study.

The majority of participating students reported that the nature of their disability was mental health related (30.1%), followed by Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (17.9%), learning disabilities (13.5%), and physical (13.1%). A further 10.5% of the students reported experiencing comorbid disabilities, 2.6% of the student respondents were on the Autism

Spectrum, and students reporting sensory and medical disabilities each made up 6.1% of the student population of surveyed. Based on the variable nature of the disabilities reported, these were further grouped into four broader categories: mental health, neurological, medical, and comorbid. Students in the mental health category (n = 69) were those students who reported that the nature of their disability was mental health-related (e.g. depression, anxiety, bipolar, etc.). Students within the neurological category (n = 78) reported the nature of their disability to be one of those classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fifth Edition (DSM-5) as neurological in nature (i.e. ADHD, learning disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder). Students within the medical category (n = 58) reported the nature of their disability to be either sensory, physical, or health-related. Finally, students within the comorbid category (n = 24) reported experiencing more than one disability concurrently. In terms of which college students were studying within, 48.9% of student respondents were from the College of Arts and Science, 10.0% were from the College of Engineering, 7.9% were in Nursing, 7.0% were in Education, 4.87% were from the Edwards School of Business, students from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Law each comprised 4.4% of the student respondents, 3.9% were from Medicine, 3.1% were in Kinesiology, 1.7% were in the College of Agriculture, and 1.3% were in Pharmacy & Nutrition. A further 2.6% of the student respondents reported their college of study to be one other than those previous listed.

Table 4.2. Frequencies and Percentages for Student Categorical Variables

Variable	N	Percentage
Gender		
Female	171	74.7
Male	54	23.6
Other	4	1.7

Program Level		
Undergraduate	195	85.2
Graduate	34	14.8
Year of Study		
First	34	14.8
Second	44	19.2
Third or Fourth	87	38.0
Fifth or Sixth	51	22.3
Seventh or more	13	5.7
Disability Type		
Mental Health	69	30.1
Physical	30	13.1
ADHD	41	17.9
Sensory	14	6.1
Autism Spectrum Disorder	6	2.6
Learning Disability	31	13.5
Medical	14	6.1
Comorbid	24	10.5
College		
Agriculture	4	1.7
Arts and Science	113	48.9
Education	16	7.0
Edwards School of Business	11	4.8
Engineering	23	10.0
Kinesiology	7	3.1
Law	10	4.4
Medicine	9	3.9
Nursing	18	7.9
Pharmacy & Nutrition	3	1.3
Western College of Veterinary Medicine	10	4.4
Other	6	2.6

4.2 Faculty attitudes and willingness towards accommodating students with disabilities

The items numbered 7 through 28 on the faculty survey used a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) to determine faculty attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. Most faculty reported belief in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities, with 90% of faculty respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Specifically, 78% of faculty reported belief in the importance of classroom accommodations and 84% reported belief in the importance of exam accommodations as necessary tools for the success of students with disabilities. Nearly 69% of faculty respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they are willing to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.

In terms of academic accommodations, the majority of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that they are willing to provide lecture notes (61%), allow their lectures to be audio-recorded (88%), not penalize for missing class occasionally (79%), wear a microphone to allow students to hear their lectures (88%), and to provide extensions for assignments for students with disabilities (82%). Faculty reported less willingness to not penalize students with disabilities for making spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors, with only 36% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Similarly, faculty reported less willingness (50%) to allow an alternate format assignment to be completed.

In regards to exam accommodations, the majority of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that they are comfortable allowing students with disabilities extended time on exams (83%), to write an exam in a low-distraction environment (88%), to utilize technology such as a computer without internet access or a calculator (66%), to use the assistance of a reader and/or

scribe (74%), or with having an exam proctored by an individual other than themselves (88%). Faculty reported less willingness to alter an exam for a student with a disability, with only 31% of faculty either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, and 40% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

In order to evaluate whether differences were present in faculty attitudes and willingness towards accommodating students with disabilities on a number of different variables, a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the survey data collected from the 137 faculty participants. The resulting data was first analysed to insure that it met the assumption of homoscedasticity required in order to conduct an ANOVA. If the data did not meet this assumption, then the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was run to provide more information about a potential relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

4.2.1 Gender

To determine whether or not there were gender differences across faculty's attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities, a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the 62 female and 75 male faculty participants who provided gender data. Of the 22 questions that inquired about faculty attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to provide accommodations, only one did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances. Question number seven violated the assumption of homoscedasticity on the dependent variable for ANOVA, and therefore, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to analyse this question of the survey.

When using ANOVA to analyse gender differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations, significant differences were found between female and male faculty

participants on five survey items ($p < .05$) and close to this level of significance on a sixth item. Specifically, female faculty were more in agreement with the statements regarding the necessity of classroom accommodations to support the success of students with disabilities and the importance of including information about DSS in the course syllabus and inviting students to register with this office. Female faculty were also likely to report more comfort with allowing students extended time on exams, altering exams for a student with a disability, and having students write an exam with the use of a reader and/or scribe. In regards to willingness to provide extensions on assignments for students with disabilities, female faculty reported somewhat greater willingness than male faculty ($p = .052$) to provide this accommodation. Refer to table 4.3 for the means and standard deviations of these differences.

Table 4.3. Gender data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations.

Questions	Female		Male		ANOVA
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
9. Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.	4.24	.694	3.84	.806	$F(1,135) = .011$, $p = .002^{**}$
15. I feel it is important to include information about DSS in my course syllabuses and invite students with disabilities to register with the DSS office so they can receive accommodations.	4.02	1.048	3.41	1.116	$F(1,135) = 10.460$, $p = .002^{**}$
20. I am willing to provide extensions on assignments for a student	4.19	.846	3.91	.903	$F(1,135) = 3.625$, $p = .059$

with a disability.					
23. I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on exams.	4.32	.763	3.96	1.006	$F(1,135) = 5.455, p = .021^*$
25. I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.	3.21	1.175	2.72	1.134	$F(1,135) = 6.125, p = .015^*$
28. I feel comfortable having students with disabilities write an exam with the use of a reader and/or scribe.	4.18	.950	3.80	1.065	$F(1,135) = 4.694, p = .032$

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

As question number seven in the faculty survey did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances in regards to gender differences, the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was run on the 62 female and 75 male faculty participants who provided gender data for this question. Results showed reliable gender differences on this item. Specifically, female faculty were more likely to express agreement with the belief that it is important to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation than male faculty, $H(1) = 4.55, p = .033$.

4.2.2 Age

To determine whether or not there were age differences across faculty's attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the 80 faculty participants 50 years old and younger, and the 57 faculty participants over 50 years of age who provided age-related data. From the 22 questions inquiring about faculty attitudes towards accommodations,

only two did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances and therefore violated the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. Therefore, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to analyse questions seven and nineteen of the faculty survey.

When using ANOVA to analyse age differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations, significant differences were found between faculty 50 years old and younger versus faculty over the age of 50 on one survey item ($p < .05$) and was close to this level on a second item ($p = .057$). In particular, faculty who were 50 years old or younger were more likely to question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability was fair to students without disabilities and that making adequate teaching accommodations for students with disabilities was unrealistic due to time constraints and other job demands. Refer to table 4.4 for the means and standard deviations of these differences.

Table 4.4. Age data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations (ANOVA).

Questions	50 Years and Under		Over 50 Years Old		ANOVA
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
11. I sometimes question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to my students without disabilities.	3.21	1.290	2.77	1.376	$F(1,135) = 3.674$, $p = .057$
14. Making adequate teaching accommodations for students with disabilities in my courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.	2.50	1.043	2.16	.902	$F(1,135) = 3.997$, $p = .048^*$

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$

As questions number seven and nineteen in the faculty survey did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances, the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was run on the 80 faculty participants 50 years old and younger, and the 57 faculty participants over 50 years of age who provided age-related data. No significant differences were found on the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric analyses of these questions, $H_s < 3.31$, all $p_s \geq .06$.

4.2.3 Years of Teaching Experience

To determine whether or not there were differences across faculty's attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities dependent on years of post-secondary teaching experience, a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the 56 faculty participants with 10 or less years of experience, the 51 faculty participants with 11 to 20 years of experience, and the 30 faculty participants with over 20 years of experience who provided experience-related data. From the 22 questions inquiring about faculty attitudes towards accommodations, only three did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances and therefore violated the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. Therefore, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed on questions 13, 18, and 24 of the survey.

When using ANOVA to analyse differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations based on years of experience teaching at the post-secondary level, no significant differences were found. For questions 13, 18, and 24 the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was run. All differences were non-significant, $H_s < 4.38$, $p_s > .111$.

4.2.4 College

To determine whether or not there were differences across faculty's attitudes towards and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations for post-secondary students with

disabilities based on which college they were teaching within, a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the faculty participants from the five colleges surveyed within the University of Saskatchewan. Of the 137 faculty participants, 83 were from the College of Arts and Science, 10 from the College of Education, 16 were from the College of Engineering, and 14 faculty participants each were from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and Edwards School of Business. From the 22 questions inquiring about faculty attitudes towards accommodations based on college, only three did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances and therefore violated the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. Therefore, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed on questions 13, 16, and 20 of the survey.

When using ANOVA to analyse differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations by the college they taught within, significant differences were found on ten of the survey items ($p < .05$). Questions numbered 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24, 25, and 27 all showed significant results in ANOVA and therefore post-hoc testing was done to determine where the differences in responses based on college affiliation occurred. Refer to Table 4.5 for the means and standard deviations of these differences.

The Tukey's HSD (honest significance test) was used to determine which of the means from the faculties within the five participating colleges were significantly different from each other ($p < .05$). Specifically, faculty within the College of Education reported that they are less likely to question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to their students without disabilities than faculty within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p=.008$), Engineering ($p = .010$), and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine ($p = .002$). Faculty within the College of Education were more likely to report willingness to allow students with disabilities to complete alternate format assignments compared to faculties within the Colleges of

Arts and Science ($p = .024$) and Engineering ($p = .001$). Education faculty were also somewhat more likely than faculty within the College of Engineering ($p = .060$) to feel comfortable allowing students with disabilities extended time on exams, and they were less likely than faculty within the College of Engineering ($p = .017$) to report that making teaching accommodations for students with disabilities was unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands. Faculty within the College of Education were similarly more likely to report comfort with altering an exam for a student with a disability than the faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p = .032$), Engineering ($p = .001$), and the Edwards School of Business ($p = .008$). While College of Engineering faculty were also significantly less likely to report comfort with altering an exam compared to faculty within the College of Arts and Science ($p = .003$) and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine ($p = .039$).

Faculty within the College of Engineering were less likely than faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p = .001$), Education ($p = .001$), and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine ($p = .024$) to agree with the statement that they feel that it is important to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation. Faculty within the College of Engineering were also significantly less likely to agree with the statement regarding the necessity of classroom accommodations for the success of students with disabilities, and were less comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low-distraction environment, or have access to the use of technology to complete an exam when such technology was not available to the rest of the class, than the faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($ps = .017, .011, \text{ and } .020$) and Education ($ps = .006, .018, \text{ and } .005$). Significantly less faculty within the College of Engineering reported belief that including information about DSS in their course syllabuses and inviting students to register with the DSS office was important

compared with faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p = .005$), Education ($p = .001$), and the Edwards School of Business ($p = .003$). Faculty within the Western College of Veterinary Medicine was similarly less likely to believe that including information about DSS in their syllabus and inviting students with disabilities to register with DSS was important compared to faculty within the College of Education ($p = .014$).

Table 4.5. College data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations (ANOVA).

Questions	Arts and Science		Education		Engineering	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
7. I feel it is important to make adjustments to my teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.	3.82	.885	4.50	.527	2.88	1.025
9. Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.	4.08	.719	4.50	.527	3.44	.964
11. I sometimes question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to my students without disabilities.	3.06	1.328	1.60	1.075	3.31	1.352
14. Making adequate teaching accommodations in my courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.	2.37	.984	1.70	1.252	2.94	.854

15. I feel it is important to include information about DSS in my course syllabuses and invite students with disabilities to register with the DSS office so they can receive accommodations.	3.76	1.111	4.60	.699	2.75	1.065
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Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4.5. (cont.) College data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations (ANOVA).

Questions	Edwards School of Business		Western College of Veterinary Medicine		ANOVA
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
7. I feel it is important to make adjustments to my teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.	3.64	1.082	3.86	.663	$F(4, 136) = 5.929$, $p = .001^{**}$
9. Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.	4.07	.730	3.93	.829	$F(4, 136) = 3.636$, $p = .008^{**}$
11. I sometimes question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to my students without disabilities.	2.93	1.328	3.64	.939	$F(4, 136) = 4.143$, $p = .003^{**}$
14. Making adequate					

teaching accommodations in my courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.	2.14	.949	2.29	.825	$F(4, 136) = 2.756, p = .031^*$
15. I feel it is important to include information about DSS in my course syllabuses and invite students with disabilities to register with the DSS office so they can receive accommodations.	4.14	.864	3.21	.893	$F(4, 136) = 6.674, p = .001^{**}$

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4.5. (cont.) College data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations (ANOVA).

Questions	Arts and Science		Education		Engineering	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
21. I am willing to allow a student with a disability to complete an alternate format assignment.	3.42	1.061	4.50	.707	2.75	1.291
23. I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on exams.	4.23	.801	4.60	.699	3.63	1.204
24. I feel comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low distraction environment.	4.37	.792	4.70	.675	3.56	1.153
25. I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.	3.04	1.053	4.10	1.101	1.94	.929
27. I feel comfortable allowing students with	3.86	1.014	4.50	.850	2.94	.998

disabilities to use technology (e.g. computer without internet access, calculator, or spellchecker) to complete an exam, even when such technology is not permitted for the rest of the class.

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4.5. (cont.) College data regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations (ANOVA).

Questions	Edwards School of Business		Western College of Veterinary Medicine		ANOVA
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
21. I am willing to allow a student with a disability to complete an alternate format assignment.	3.36	.929	3.50	1.092	$F(4, 136) = 4.221$, $p = .003^{**}$
23. I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on exams.	3.86	1.099	4.00	.961	$F(4, 136) = 2.595$, $p = .039^{*}$
24. I feel comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low distraction environment.	4.21	1.051	4.29	1.139	$F(4, 136) = 3.337$, $p = .012^{*}$
25. I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.	2.57	1.089	3.07	1.385	$F(4, 136) = 6.904$, $p = .001^{**}$
27. I feel comfortable allowing students with					

disabilities to use technology (e.g. computer without internet access, calculator, or spellchecker) to complete an exam, even when such technology is not permitted for the rest of the class.	3.64	1.336	3.64	1.447	$F(4, 136) = 3.684,$ $p = .007^{**}$
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Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

As questions numbered 13, 16, and 20 in the faculty survey did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances, the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was run on the data from the 137 faculty participants in regards to college affiliation. Results indicated college-based differences on the survey questions numbered 16 ($H(4) = 13.81, p = .014$) and 20 ($H(4) = 9.664, p = .046$). Therefore, the Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc method was used to determine where the significant differences between the college groups occurred through pairwise comparisons. Specifically, faculty within the Western College of Veterinary Medicine reported more willingness to provide lecture notes to a student with a disability than the faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p = .011$), Engineering ($p = .040$), and the Edwards School of Business ($p = .006$). Faculty within the College of Engineering were less likely to be willing to provide extensions on assignments for a student with a disability than the faculties within the Colleges of Arts and Science ($p = .015$) and Education ($p = .006$).

4.3 Student with disabilities perceptions of faculty attitudes/willingness to accommodate

Research has found that the perceptions of students with disabilities hold regarding faculty attitudes towards accommodations are as influential to their decisions to disclose their disability and/or seek accommodation supports as the actual faculty attitudes themselves.

Therefore, student perceptions were sought in addition to the faculty perspective. In order to evaluate the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness towards accommodating students with disabilities, invitations to participate in the student online survey were sent to students who were currently registered with the DSS office. At the time the survey invitations were distributed, 1185 students with disabilities were registered with the DSS office and were therefore sent an invitation to participate in the study. Of the total number of students invited to participate, 229 students with disabilities completed the online survey (5.2% response rate).

The items numbered six through 22 on the student survey used a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) to assess the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to provide accommodations, as well as their own post-secondary accommodation experiences. Most students reported that they perceived faculty to be willing to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation, with 62% of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement and only 17% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The majority of the students (55%) also reported that overall they were satisfied with their experiences as a student with a disability at the University of Saskatchewan (with 23% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement).

Overall, students with disabilities perceived greater faculty willingness to make or allow for exam accommodations as opposed to academic accommodations. Nearly 80% of students with disabilities either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt faculty were willing to make or allow for exam accommodations, while only 48% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt faculty were willing to make or allow for classroom accommodations. There was a similar difference in

how often students with disabilities reported using these types of accommodations. Almost 72% of students reported regularly using their exam accommodations, compared to 40% who reported regularly using their academic accommodations. Students with disabilities also perceived there to be less encouragement to seek out or utilize exam accommodations, with 51% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, compared to faculty results indicating their willingness to make or allow for exam accommodations, with 80% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Of the 229 student respondents who were registered with the DSS office, 39.3% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had had a negative experience at the University of Saskatchewan with a professor related to obtaining accommodations (41.5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed). Nearly 43% of students responded that they felt their professors sometimes questioned whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability was fair to their students without disabilities. Likewise, 47.6% of student respondents reported belief that their professors thought that some students with disabilities did not really need accommodations but were taking advantage of the system, compared to 28.4% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Many students with disabilities also reported the belief that their professors thought differently of them after being approached with an accommodation need, with 51.2% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

In order to evaluate whether differences were present in student perceptions of faculty's attitudes and willingness towards accommodating students with disabilities on two different variables a series of one-way between group ANOVA was run on the survey data collected from the 229 student participants. The resulting data was first analysed to insure that it met the assumption of homoscedasticity required in order to conduct an ANOVA. If the data did not

meet this assumption, then the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was run to provide more information about a potential relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

4.3.1 Differences by Disability Type

To determine whether or not there were differences across the perceptions of students with disabilities, regarding faculty's attitudes towards making post-secondary accommodations based on the type of disability the students were registered with, a series of one-way between-group ANOVAs was run on the four categories of disability type (i.e. mental health, neurological, medical, and comorbid). From the 17 questions inquiring about students with disabilities' perceptions of faculty attitudes towards accommodations, only one did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances and therefore violated the assumption of homoscedasticity for ANOVA. Therefore, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed on question 15 of the student survey.

When using ANOVA to analyse disability type differences in students' perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations, significant differences were found between participants based on disability category on five survey items ($p < .05$). Questions numbered 7, 8, 9 12, and 20 all showed significant results in ANOVA and therefore post-hoc testing was done to determine where the differences in responses based on disability-type occurred. Refer to table 4.6 for the means and standard deviations of these differences.

The Tukey's HSD (honest significant test) was used to determine which of the means from the students based on disability type were significantly different from each other ($p < .05$) using pairwise comparisons. Specifically, students who reported the nature of their disability was medical (i.e. physical, sensory, health-related) perceived more faculty belief in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities and more faculty encouragement to seek out

both classroom and exam accommodations, than students who reported the nature of their disability as neurological (i.e. ADHD, learning disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder). Students who reported that the nature of their disability was either neurological or mental health-related expressed greater belief that professors thought differently of them after being approached about a need for accommodation than students whose disability was medical in nature. Students who reported having a mental health-related disability perceived less faculty willingness to make or allow for classroom accommodations than students who reported a medical disability.

Table 4.6. Disability-related data regarding student perceptions (ANOVA).

Questions	Mental Health		Neurological		Medical	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
7. My professors express belief in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.	3.57	1.050	3.41	.999	3.90	.949
8. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize classroom accommodations to support my success.	3.28	1.235	2.94	1.188	3.60	1.042
9. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize exam accommodations to support my success.	3.48	1.038	3.23	1.104	3.76	1.048
12. I believe my professors think differently of me after I approach them about a need for accommodations.	3.62	1.086	3.54	1.276	2.97	1.213
20. My professors are						

willing to make or allow for classroom accommodations.	3.36	.785	3.45	.816	3.74	.828
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Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$

Table 4.6 (cont.) Disability-related data regarding students' perceptions (ANOVA).

Questions	Comorbid		ANOVA
	Mean	SD	
7. My professors express belief in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.	3.63	1.056	$F(3, 225) = 2.624$, $p = .051$
8. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize classroom accommodations to support my success.	3.21	1.250	$F(3, 225) = 3.621$, $p = .014^*$
9. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize exam accommodations to support my success.	3.38	1.096	$F(3, 225) = 2.757$, $p = .043^*$
12. I believe my professors think differently of me after I approach them about a need for accommodations.	3.25	1.152	$F(3, 225) = 3.842$, $p = .010^*$
20. My professors are willing to make or allow for classroom accommodations.	3.71	.806	$F(3, 225) = 2.954$, $p = .033^*$

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$

As question number 15 in the student survey did not pass Levene's test of homogeneity of variances, the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was run on the 229 students who provided

disability-type data for this question. Results showed reliable differences based on the type of disability reported by the students on this item. Specifically, students who reported that the nature of their disability was mental health-related were significantly more reluctant to disclose the nature of their disability than students who reported that their disability was medical in nature, $H(1) = 4.55, p = .033$.

4.3.2 Differences by College of Study

In addition to investigating potential differences across the perceptions of students with disabilities based on disability type, the second research question of the current study also sought to determine whether or not there were differences in students' perceptions based on their college of study. The intention was to run a series of one-way between-group ANOVAs on the student responses with the students' college of study as the independent variable. In total, the 229 students who were registered with the DSS office and who responded to the online survey reported studying within more than twelve separate colleges at the University of Saskatchewan campus. There were significant differences in the response rates between the individual colleges of study (ranging from single students within a few colleges classified as *other*, three students from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, to 112 from the College of Arts and Science). These differences were too discrepant to allow for accurate and meaningful statistical analyses of the data. Attempts were made by the researcher to further classify or categorize the twelve colleges into broader groups which could be statistically analysed. However, due to the diversity in programming, both amongst and within the individual colleges, this could not be done in a meaningful way.

Another consideration that arose in regards to statistically analysing the student responses based on college of study concerned the confidentiality of the individual students. Some of the

colleges on the University of Saskatchewan campus such as Arts and Science, have a significantly larger overall student population and therefore have a higher number of students registered with the DSS office. These higher numbers of potential participants work to promote greater confidentiality of the individual student respondents. However, in colleges where there are fewer students registered with the DSS office but where the response rate of these students was high, it would be difficult to protect the confidentiality of the individual students. For example, at the time the survey was distributed there were seven students in the College of Pharmacy & Nutrition registered with the DSS office. Out of these seven students, three responded to the online survey which is a 42.9% response rate for this college. As there were only seven students registered with DSS at the time of the survey completion, anyone who was privy to the identities of those seven students would have an easier time of establishing who might have responded to the survey as well as the nature of their responses. Therefore, due to concerns regarding significantly discrepant groups, no logical or meaningful way to categorize these colleges into broader groups, and for the confidentiality of the individual DSS students, the results of the student perceptions of faculty attitudes towards accommodations based on college of study are not reported.

4.4 Comparing the Perceptions of Students with Disabilities and Faculty

Of the 22 questions on the faculty survey and the 17 questions on the student survey that inquired about perceptions regarding disability accommodations at the post-secondary level, there were nine questions that were shared between the two surveys. The intention of these shared items was to allow for direct comparison of the responses of the faculty participants and the participating students with disabilities in order to determine if there was any significant differences among the perceptions of these two groups. To analyse any potential differences

between the responses of the two distinct groups, a series of independent sample t-tests was run on the nine shared questions. From these t-tests, significant differences were found on five items. Specifically, students with disabilities perceived less faculty belief in the necessity of accommodations, and less faculty encouragement to seek out or utilize both classroom and exam accommodations than faculty themselves reported. Also, students with disabilities were more likely to perceive that their professors thought differently of them after being approached regarding a need for accommodations, and that faculty expressed that adequate teaching accommodations were unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands, than the faculty participant reports. Refer to table 4.7 for the means and standard deviations of these differences.

Table 4.7. *t*-test Comparisons of Faculty and Student Perceptions.

Questions	Students with Disabilities		Faculty		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
2. I believe (My professors express belief) in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.	3.60	1.017	4.30	.741	$T_{350.404} = -7.533,$ $p = .001^{**}$
3. I encourage (My professors have encouraged) students with disabilities (me) to seek out or utilize classroom accommodations to support their (my) success.	3.23	1.192	4.02	.781	$T_{361.694} = -7.635,$ $p = .001^{**}$
4. I encourage (My professors have encouraged) students with disabilities (me) to seek					

out or utilize exam accommodations to support their (my) success.	3.46	1.080	4.11	.801	$T_{347.706} = -6.610,$ $p = .001^{**}$
7. I (I believe my professors) think differently of students with disabilities (me) after I approach them about a need for accommodations.	3.39	1.212	2.33	1.030	$T_{322.645} = 8.904,$ $p = .001^{**}$
8. I (My professors) express that making adequate teaching accommodations for students with disabilities in their (my) courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.	2.72	1.150	2.36	.998	$T_{317.953} = 3.153,$ $p = .002^{**}$

Note. Range: 1 – 5 for all responses (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

4.5 Summary

This chapter detailed the participant characteristics of both the faculty and student participant groups, and presented the results of the descriptive and statistical analyses of the survey data. A number of significant differences were found between faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities based on factors such as gender, age, and college affiliation. Significant differences in the perceptions of students with disabilities, regarding faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate, were also found based on disability type. While faculty and students with disabilities both reported overall positive perceptions of faculty's belief in the necessity of accommodations and their willingness to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation, significant

differences were found between faculty and student perceptions on a number of items. The implications of these findings are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the existing faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) through an analysis of both faculty and student perceptions. The previous chapter detailed the data obtained from the surveys and statistical. This chapter discusses the findings of the statistical analyses of the faculty and student responses pertaining to each of the research questions. Limitations of the current study are detailed and are followed by implications for practice at the University of Saskatchewan, as well as potential avenues for further research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The current study sought to investigate faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to accommodate post-secondary students with disabilities at the U of S. This investigation was divided into three primary research questions, which will be discussed individually.

- 1) What are the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodating students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan? Are these attitudes dependent on factors such as gender, age, years of experience, or academic department?
- 2) What do students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan perceive the current faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to support accommodations to be? Are these student perceptions dependent on factors such as the type of disability experienced by the student, or the college attended?
- 3) How do students' perceptions of faculty attitudes compare to faculty self-reports?

5.1.1. Research Question One

Overall, the majority of faculty respondents (90%) reported positive belief in the necessity of accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities, with nearly 69% of respondents reporting that they were personally willing to make adjustments to their teaching and/or testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation. However, the faculty respondents did report more comfort and willingness to provide some accommodations compared with others. Faculty reported greater willingness to allow students with disabilities to: negotiate extensions for assignments (82%), have extended time to write exams (83%), and write exams with the assistance of a reader and/or scribe (74%). The vast majority of faculty respondents (88%) also reported willingness to wear a microphone to allow students to hear their lectures, let students audio-record their lectures, and comfort with having students write an exam proctored by another individual, or write exams in a low-distraction environment. To a lesser extent (61-66%), faculty reported positive willingness to provide students copies of the lecture notes and to allow students to complete their exams assisted by technology not available to the rest of the class (e.g. calculator, computer without Internet access). Faculty respondents expressed that they were either reluctant or unwilling to not penalize students for spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors, or to create and administer alternate exams or assignments for students with disabilities.

These results are consistent with previous research. Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012), Byrd (2010), Houck, Asselin, Troutman and Arrington (1992), Nelson, Dodd and Smith (1990), and Skinner (2007) all found that while overall post-secondary faculty reported a positive belief in the need for and a willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities, faculty were more willing to provide certain accommodations as opposed to others. These studies

consistently found faculty most willing to allow students to record lectures, have extensions for their assignments, and to have extended time to complete exams. The current study confirms that most faculty respondents at the U of S were supportive of these specific accommodations. The consistency of this faculty support across studies from different years and settings, suggests that these accommodations are common within the post-secondary setting and reasonably accommodate students without impairing academic integrity.

Previous research has also consistently found faculty unwilling to provide copies of their lectures notes, to not penalize for spelling and grammatical errors, and have students with disabilities complete alternate assignments or exams (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Byrd, 2010; Houck, Asselin, Troutman & Arrington, 1992; Nelson, Dodd & Smith, 1990; Skinner, 2007). In contradiction to previous studies, a majority of faculty respondents at the U of S (61%) reported willingness to provide copies of their lectures notes to students. However, less U of S faculty reported willingness to provide students with lecture notes compared with allowing students to audio-record their lectures (88%) or negotiate extensions for assignments (82%). The current study was consistent with previous research in that faculty ranged from reluctant to unwilling to have students complete an alternate format assignment or exam, and to not penalize students for errors in their spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The consistency of these results suggest there is something about these particular accommodations that faculty find objectionable.

In order to explore why faculty are more willing to make or allow for certain accommodations compared to others, the faculty responses from the optional comment section of the survey were examined. Several responding faculty discussed their belief in making accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities, but clarified that these accommodations needed to be fair to all students in the class, and must not allow the student with

a disability to bypass an essential requirement of the course. The faculty surveyed by Carroll, Landrum, and McCarthy (2012) also echoed these specific concerns. In terms of fairness to their peers, faculty reported the need to assess all of their students on an equal scale. Some of the accommodations that were queried in the survey, such as having extra time to complete exams and/or assignments, audio-recording of lectures, or writing an exam in a low distraction environment, have the student with a disability complete the same assessment as their classmates, but with an adaptation made to compensate for disability-related factors. Accommodations such as completing an alternate assignment or exam, would have the student with a disability complete a different form of assessment than their classmates, which would therefore be difficult to assess on an equal scale. In regards to the accommodations of not penalizing for spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors, some of the faculty respondents expressed concerns that one of the primary objectives of their course was for students to learn and demonstrate effective written communication skills. In some of these classes, the focus is on correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and therefore, to not penalize these mistakes would be allowing a student to not meet the essential requirements of the class.

Faculty respondents within the current study reported somewhat more belief in the importance of exam accommodations (84% agreeing or strongly agreeing) compared with classroom accommodations (78% agreeing or strongly agreeing) for students with disabilities. This may be related to the more high-stakes, evaluative nature of exams compared with daily classroom functioning. However, this pattern of faculty responses may also be related to the way classroom and exam accommodations are provided at the U of S. Previous research has found that in general, faculty are more supportive of accommodations that involve their putting in minor rather than major time and effort (Bourke, Strehorn & Silver, 2000; Murray, Wren &

Keys, 2008; Skinner, 2007). On the U of S campus, while they can collaborate with the DSS office, the individual faculty members themselves are responsible for the provision of classroom-based accommodations. The responsibility for the provision of exam-based accommodations also falls to faculty. However, for exams students registered with the DSS office from most of the colleges at the U of S make accommodation arrangements with the DSS Exam Program. This program was established to assist faculty members on campus with meeting their responsibility to provide exam accommodations to their students. The technical arrangements and staffing involved in the provision of these accommodations are managed through the DSS Exam Program, which contacts faculty to submit the needed exams. This program allows faculty members to meet their exam accommodation responsibilities with less direct time and effort spent on their end. Therefore, the somewhat greater support for exam versus classroom accommodations found in the current study may be related to differences in the amount of time and energy directly spent on the part of faculty.

In the investigation of whether faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to accommodate students with disabilities are dependent on factors such as gender, age, years of experience, and academic department, the current study found mixed results. No significant differences were found based on their years of experience teaching at the post-secondary level. Younger faculty members (50 years of age or younger) were significantly more likely to question whether an accommodation was fair to students without disabilities, and were more likely to believe that adequate accommodations for students with disabilities were unrealistic due to time constraints, than were older faculty members (over the age of 50). While these types of questions or perceptions do not necessarily translate into willingness to provide an accommodation, these results suggest that younger faculty may be less familiar with certain

accommodations and thus are more likely to question their fairness, or that students may make larger accommodation requests of younger faculty compared with older faculty. These results also suggest that younger faculty may perceive a greater need of support from the DSS office, their departments, and the university in the provision of reasonable accommodations.

The current study found there were several differences based on gender. Female faculty reported significantly greater belief in the importance of making adjustments to their teaching and/or testing strategies to provide an accommodation, greater willingness to make classroom accommodations when needed, and greater likelihood that they would include information about DSS in their course syllabuses. Female faculty were also significantly more comfortable allowing extra time or the assistance of a reader and/or scribe to complete exams, with creating an alternate exam for a student with a disability, and were somewhat more willing to provide extensions for assignments than male faculty. These gender results are consistent with previous research, which has found female faculty members more willing to make accommodations than male faculty members (Byrd, 2010; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Murray, Wren & Keys, 2008; Skinner, 2007).

The current study found some significant differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities based on academic department. Specifically, faculty within the College of Education were less likely to question the fairness of accommodations for those students without disabilities than faculty within the Colleges of Arts and Science, Engineering, and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). Education faculty reported more comfort with creating an alternate exam than faculty within Arts and Science, Engineering, and the Edwards School of Business. They were also more willing to create an alternate assignment than faculty with Arts and Science and Engineering, and were more

comfortable allowing students extra time to complete exams than faculty in the College of Engineering. Engineering faculty were less likely to believe in the importance of adjusting their teaching and/or testing strategies to provide an accommodation than faculty in Education, Arts and Science, and the WCVN, and were less likely than faculty in Arts and Science, Education, and the Edwards School of Business to include information about DSS in their course syllabus. Engineering faculty respondents reported significantly less belief in the necessity of classroom accommodations, and expressed less comfort at having students write their exams in a low-distraction environment than faculty within both Education and Arts and Science. They were also significantly more likely than faculty in the College of Education to express that providing adequate accommodations to students with disabilities was unrealistic due to time constraints.

While results detailing differences in faculty attitudes and willingness to make accommodations based on academic department have varied, the results from the current study are consistent with some findings from previous research. Overall, faculty from within the College of Education tended to report more support for and willingness to provide accommodations compared to the other colleges. This is consistent with the work of Houck, Asselin, Troutman, and Arrington (1992), Lombardi and Murray (2011), Murray, Wren, and Keys (2008), Nelson, Dodd, and Smith (1990), Skinner (2007), and Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Brulle (1999), who found that faculty within Education were significantly more willing to make accommodations than faculty within the fields of Business, Humanities, and Science. Students within the College of Education are teacher candidate who are preparing to become classroom teachers within the elementary, middle years, and high school settings. In their classrooms, these future teachers will encounter and be responsible for supporting the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities. As they are training their post-secondary students to

responsibly support the needs of students with disabilities in their future classrooms, it is not surprising that Education faculty would be more aware of disability-related needs within the academic setting, or for the need to provide reasonable accommodations, than faculty in some of the other college disciplines.

The current study also found that faculty from the College of Engineering generally reported more reluctance towards accommodations than faculty within the other colleges. Bourke, Strehorn, and Silver (2000) found that faculty within the areas of science and mathematics were significantly less supportive of accommodations and less willing to make them than faculty within the areas of humanities and fine arts. As engineering is a very math and science-based program, the findings from the current study are consistent with previous results. The professional colleges (with the exception of Education) tended mainly to report less belief in the necessity of classroom accommodations. Several of these faculty respondents expressed concerns, via the optional faculty comments from the survey, that some accommodations do not reflect what students with disabilities will have access to in the professional work environment. With the belief that accommodations are not available to students with disabilities once they enter their careers, these faculty argued that these students should practice operating in high stress, high demand classes without the use of accommodations to better prepare for the vocational setting. These beliefs regarding workplace accommodations may influence their reported attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations at the post-secondary level.

The observed differences between the responses of faculty within the College of Education and the College of Engineering may also have been influenced by the gender of the faculty respondents. Previous research and the current study, suggest female faculty members have more supportive attitudes and are significantly more willing to make certain types of

accommodations than male faculty members. The majority of faculty respondents from the College of Education at the U of S (80%) were female. The distribution of gender was the opposite in faculty responding from the College of Engineering, with 81% male respondents. These groups were more skewed by gender and this, in addition to differences based on the nature of the programming, may have contributed to the more positive or negative beliefs and willingness reported by each college. Faculties from the College of Arts and Science, Edwards School of Business, and the WCVL had faculty respondents more balanced by gender and would have been less affected (47% female and 53% male; 36% female and 64% male; and 43% female and 57% male respectively).

5.1.2. Research Question Two

Overall, most student respondents registered with the DSS office at the U of S (62%), perceive faculty members to be willing to adjust their teaching and/or testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation, with only 17% of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this perception. However, many students also reported examples of negative experiences when seeking an accommodation from faculty. These results are consistent with previous research which has found a contrast between students perceiving the majority of faculty being willing to make accommodations, but reporting negative experiences with certain professors (Baker, Boland & Nowik, 2012; Beilke & Yssel, 1999; Byrd, 2010; Hill, 1996; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Reed, Lewis & Lund-Lucas, 2006). These findings suggest that the perception of students is that the majority of post-secondary faculty accept the need for accommodations and are willing to assist in the provision of these accommodations, but there is some reluctance or resistance on the part of others.

The current study found 39% of the student respondents at the U of S reported having at least one negative experience when seeking accommodations from a professor. This is similar to but slightly less than the numbers reported by Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) who found that 44.7% of the students they surveyed felt that their post-secondary professors were not receptive to making accommodations, and Reed, Lewis and Lund-Lucas (2006) who found that 43% of their student respondents reported that faculty either did not respect the accommodation process, or refused the accommodation request. In the optional student comment box of the survey, the vast majority of students reported that faculty were understanding, supportive, and willing to assist in the provision of accommodations, with some reports of faculty who went above and beyond to help them with an accommodation need. Of students who reported more negative experiences, most discussed that they perceived faculty to be either ambivalent to or reluctant to participate in the accommodation process. In more extreme situations, some students reported that they had been refused an accommodation which significantly impaired their mark or ability to complete the course. Others reported having been spoken to in a condescending manner or sent rude emails in response to a request, some felt that faculty had deducted marks on their exam because they had additional time to complete it, and others reported being singled out and degraded in front of the class while requesting an accommodation. A few student respondents also indicated that they had experienced faculty discourage registration with the DSS office, telling the class that if students registered with DSS or used accommodations this would show up on their official transcript and would affect their future entrance into other programs, employability, and financial/family applications. These statements are not true and perpetuate misconceptions that can negatively impact the decision to disclose or seek accommodations. Of the students who reported a significantly negative experience with a professor regarding

disability accommodations, some reported dropping the class as a result while others tried to forgo their accommodations in order to have better interactions with the professor, which ultimately negatively impacted their grades. Some students reported feeling inferior and less confident in their abilities after such interactions and others felt they would have obtained a higher grade had they not disclosed their disability or sought accommodations.

The current study also found a significant difference in the student perceptions of faculty attitudes and willingness to provide exam accommodations as compared to classroom accommodations. When asked if they felt faculty were willing to make or allow for classroom and/or exam accommodations, 80% of student respondents perceived faculty willingness for exam accommodations compared to 48% for classroom accommodations. However, although a vast majority of students felt faculty were willing to make or allow for exams accommodations, only 51% reported that they perceived faculty as encouraging students to use these exam supports. This discrepancy between student perceptions of faculty willingness to make or allow for different types of accommodations versus faculty encouragement to use them, may influence students with disabilities in their usage of these supports. Of the student respondents, 72% reported that they regularly request and utilize their exam accommodations, compared with only 40% who regularly request and utilize their classroom accommodations. As most students reported faculty to be less willing to make or allow for classroom accommodations, this likely impacts their decision to make these types of requests and use these supports. Another influencing factor could be how these types of accommodations are requested. For classroom accommodations, students with disabilities are expected to negotiate the accommodations directly with faculty. For exam accommodations, students make their requests to write with the DSS Exam Program, which then collaborates with faculty and the student. It may be easier for

some students with disabilities to use accommodations that involve this intermediary, rather than approach instructors on their own. Despite overall positive perceptions of faculty attitudes towards accommodations and their willingness to provide them, some students expressed personal worries that faculty might see accommodations as unfair to the other students in the class (43%), may feel as if they did not actually need accommodation but were trying to take advantage of the system (48%), or worried that their professors would think differently of them after making an accommodation request (51%).

The current study found mixed results in terms of whether student perceptions of faculty attitudes towards accommodations and their corresponding willingness to provide them were dependent on factors such as the type of disability reported, or the student's college of study. Due to issues involving significantly varied student response rates based on college and concerns for the anonymity of individual DSS students within smaller programs, differences in perceptions based on the student's college were not examined. Regarding perception differences based on disability-type, some significant results were found. Students with medical-based disabilities perceived greater faculty belief in the necessity of accommodations and greater faculty encouragement to seek out accommodations and supports, than students with neurological-based disabilities. Students with mental health or neurological-based disabilities were more likely to believe that professors thought differently of them after an accommodation request than students with medical-based disabilities. Students with mental health disabilities also perceived less faculty willingness to make or allow for classroom accommodations, and expressed greater reluctance to disclose the nature of their disability than students with medical-based disabilities.

These differences in perception may be related to the visibility of the disability experienced by the student respondents. Students with medical-based disabilities included students who reported the nature of their disability was sensory, physical, or health-related. These types of disabilities tend to be more associated with traditional definitions of disability which focus on the medical model. They have been associated with disability in research, the media, and advocacy campaigns since the 1960s. With a more physical foundation, medical-based disabilities tend to be more concrete in nature and can be more widely observed and recognized. People tend to have an easier time understanding and believing in things that are tangible or visible. On the other hand, mental health disabilities and the types of neurological disabilities reported by the students (i.e. ADHD, learning disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder), are more invisible in nature. Individuals with these types of disabilities often experience some symptoms that common to general human struggles (e.g. anxiety, difficulty focusing attention, depression, etc.). However, these symptoms are experienced at a considerably elevated level compared to the general population and cause significant impairment in daily living and academic functioning. These types of disabilities are not as readily apparent, and therefore their diagnosis and research into them has been relatively recent when compared with more visible disabilities. Hill (1996) found that students with invisible disabilities were more likely to perceive negative faculty willingness to accept their disability and offer them supports than students with more visible disabilities. While people with disabilities have generally reported experiencing stigma as a result of their disability, those with invisible disabilities tend to express significantly more concern about it, as they tend to be less widely understood (Mullins & Preyde, 2013).

5.1.3. Research Question Three

Within the current study, when students' perceptions were compared with faculty self-reports, significant differences were found on five of the shared survey items. Students with disabilities at the U of S reported greater perceptions that faculty thought differently of them after a request for an accommodation, and perceived more faculty expressing that making adequate accommodations is unrealistic given the constraints of time and other job duties, than the faculty respondents themselves reported. The faculty respondents reported greater belief in the necessity of accommodation and more encouragement on their part for students with disabilities to seek out and utilize both classroom and exam accommodations than the students reported perceiving from faculty.

These results are consistent with previous research. Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) also found that faculty tend to respond more positively when asked how receptive they are to accommodations in the classroom, compared with the perceptions of the students themselves. They also found that faculty perceive an overall more favourable campus climate for students with disabilities than perceived by these students themselves. These differences between faculty self-reports and the perceptions of students with disabilities may be the result of different factors impacting faculty and student perceptions. With increased research, awareness, the work of advocacy groups, and the inclusion movement within education, much more is known about the capabilities of students with disabilities. It has become politically incorrect and socially unacceptable to not express support for the needs of individuals with disabilities. Therefore, due to the social desirability of expressing such support, faculty may report more positive attitudes and beliefs than they would otherwise express. Despite increased awareness, individuals with disabilities still face stigma and discrimination. Post-secondary students are well aware of this

societal stigma and are likely to have personally experienced it at some point in their education. Therefore, these students may be more attuned to any perceived stigma or judgment on the part of faculty, which may result in stronger perceptions that this is occurring. They may also be more likely to worry that they will experience such stigma in the post-secondary environment, and this concern may serve to impact their responses in the current study even if they have not yet personally experienced such stigma.

5.2 Limitations

When interpreting the results, the limitations of the current study must be considered. One such limitation was the uneven sample sizes between respondent groups, some of which were small. While groups with uneven sample sizes can be compared with ANOVA when the differences in the variance between the groups is not too great, the power of the statistical analysis is based on the smallest sample size (Field, 2013). Therefore, when comparing the unequal groups, when one has a small sample size this decreases the power of the analysis and increases the risk of committing a Type II error (Field, 2013). As a result, when examining faculty responses based on their academic department, there could have been additional significant differences that were not identified as a result of less statistical power. The College of Arts and Science at the U of S is significantly larger and more diverse in its' programming compared with the other colleges included in the current study. More effective results would likely have been produced if faculty within this college were asked to provide information on department. This information could then have been used to distinguish the faculty respondents within this large college into smaller groups based on their specific academic department, and would have decreased the large discrepancy amongst sample sizes. A combination of significantly uneven sample sizes, small groups, and concerns over protecting student

confidentiality, prevented the analysis of differences in student perceptions based on their college of study. This was specific information that was sought as part of the current study, but could not be investigated due to the size and demographics of the student respondent group.

The current study sought to evaluate whether differences were present in faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities on a number of different variables. In order to accomplish this, a series of one-way between group ANOVAs was run on the survey data collected from the 137 faculty participants and 229 student participants. Conducting multiple comparisons on the same data set increases the familywise error rate, and therefore increases the chance of making a Type I error (Field, 2013). Therefore, it is possible that significant differences amongst faculty and students perceptions based on specific factors were found that were not actually present. The large number of ANOVAs was conducted in order to analyze each survey item individually. The familywise error rate, could be reduced in further studies by determining if the organizational sections of the survey produced reliable enough responses to constitute a distinct factor (e.g. if one could examine perceptions on ‘classroom accommodations’ as a whole, rather than individually analyze perceptions on notetaking, extensions, alternate assignments, etc.).

Another limitation of the current study involves the generalizability of the results to the University of Saskatchewan faculty as a whole. As only faculty from five selected colleges at the U of S were invited to participate in the online survey, the results cannot be generalized to represent the attitudes and willingness to accommodate of faculty at the U of S as a whole (Groves et al., 2009). More information than was collected in the current online surveys would need to be sought in order to make such broad determinations, particularly since concerns over confidentiality limit the analysis of student perceptions based on college of study. The faculty

and student respondents were all part of the U of S, and therefore these results are representative of this campus (and the particular colleges surveyed) and cannot be generalized to a wider Saskatchewan or Canadian context.

5.3 Implications for Practice

From the information gained through the current study, several implications for practice can be determined. Overall, the majority of students with disabilities and faculty perceive faculty as supportive of most types of accommodations. However, the pattern of faculty responses and student perceptions, as well as the optional comment responses provided by both participant groups suggest the need for: more awareness about the nature of disabilities, rationale behind accommodation, the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved in the accommodation process, greater promotion of the available services and supports, and the need for more resources to support the reasonable accommodation of post-secondary students.

5.3.1. Need for greater awareness regarding the nature of disability.

The current study indicates a need for the greater promotion and awareness of the nature of disabilities, the social model of disability, and how the impairment of disability comes from societally-imposed limits (Shah, 2010). As the medical model of disability suggests that the disability and impairment are internal to the individual, it often leads to negative assumptions about what a disability looks like, as well as the capabilities of the individual (Shah, 2010). Previous research has found that due to the prominence of the medical model of disability, in many cases people have a hard time conceptualizing the label of disability to include success (Erten, 2011; Paetzgold et al., 2008; Roberts & Hoff Macaan, 2006). These misunderstandings can lead to the assumption that individuals with disabilities are less capable of achieving the same levels of success, and therefore perceptions of unfairness when accommodations assist a

person with a disability in doing well (Paetzgold et al., 2008). In particular, misunderstandings about the capabilities of students with disabilities can arise in the post-secondary setting, because in order to reach this educational level a certain amount of academic success needs to be achieved. This can often lead to the assumption that the student's disability is mild or is not a hindrance to his or her academics (Erten, 2011).

Within the current study, while the majority of faculty indicated their belief in the need for accommodations for students with disabilities, in the optional comments, some clarified that it was easier for them to determine an actual need for accommodation with visible disabilities as opposed to invisible disabilities. Because the essential features of invisible disabilities are not obvious to faculty, they may be more likely to assume that the disability is mild and therefore less likely needing accommodation support. When given the opportunity to provide some context to their survey responses, both faculty and student respondents raised questions about the fairness of accommodations to other students. Some faculty reported that their DSS students were outperforming the other students in the class which made them question their need for accommodations. These reports confirm the pattern of misunderstanding and assumption found by Paetzgold et al. (2008) as a result of the prominence of the medical model of disability. Therefore, with greater promotion and awareness of the nature of disability and the social model, faculty and students will be more aware of the strengths and capabilities of individuals with disabilities, as opposed to focusing on the presumed limitations.

5.3.2. Need for greater awareness regarding the rationale behind accommodations.

The current study also indicates the need for more education and awareness about the rationale behind accommodations. Some faculty respondents raised questions regarding the fairness of accommodations to other students and the potential for accommodations to create an

unfair advantage. Results of the study found that faculty within the College of Education were significantly less likely to question the fairness of accommodations than faculty within the colleges of Arts and Science, Engineering, and the WCVU. Student respondents within the current study also reported some concerns that their non-disabled peers may question the fairness of accommodations. In the optional survey comment box, some faculty respondents reported concerns that accommodations can serve to allow students to bypass essential skills and requirements of their program of study, which thereby impairs the academic integrity of that program. These concerns, taken together, suggest the need to more actively communicate what an accommodation actually entails and to more strongly promote the purpose and rationale behind the use of reasonable accommodations to support students with disabilities.

As defined in Chapter One, an accommodation is the tailoring of a conventional way of doing a task to support the specific and unique needs of an individual with a disability (Shah, 2010). Accommodations use some differential treatment in order to compensate for inequities that arise due to impairments from the societal limits placed on disability (Shah, 2010). Post-secondary students with disabilities are not only having to put their efforts and resources into maintaining their daily living, social, and academic performance, but must also manage and cope with symptoms of their disability which can cause significant impairment in a traditional academic setting. The purpose of accommodations is not to lower academic standards, omit the student from developing the essential skills or requirements of a program, or to provide an advantage to individuals with disabilities, but to create a more equitable learning environment by working to balance out the negative impacts of additional disability-related factors (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004). The current study suggests there is some misunderstanding about the rationale and purpose of accommodations among some faculty

members and students at the University of Saskatchewan. Greater awareness and promotion of the true intention of these supports would be beneficial in helping with these misperceptions and misunderstandings.

5.3.3. Need for greater awareness regarding rights and responsibilities.

The current study also suggests the need for greater awareness and education of both faculty and post-secondary students about the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved in the accommodation process. In the optional survey comment box, some faculty respondents, particularly from professional colleges, expressed concerns that accommodations do not reflect the “real world” of work. They reported that careers within their professional fields are high stress and high demand environments in which individuals with disabilities will not be accommodated. Similar concerns were found from faculty surveyed by Skinner (2007). These faculty members felt that students with disabilities should be informed in the post-secondary environment that these supports and accommodations will not be present during their careers and that they should therefore be encouraged to complete their degree without the use of these supports so they are better prepared. These concerns and comments do suggest that faculty respondents are trying to think about the needs of all of their students and what is best for them in the long term. However, they also indicate a lack of awareness about the right to reasonable accommodations that are present for individuals with disabilities, within both educational and vocational settings.

As a result of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* (2015), students with disabilities in Saskatchewan have a right to education and a right to have their unique learning needs supported through reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations must therefore be provided so that individuals

with disabilities have equitable access to programs and activities, although these accommodations do not go beyond what would compromise the academic integrity or standards of that program (Alberta Human Rights & Citizenship Commission, 2004). Accommodations and support for individuals with disabilities, up to the point of undue hardship, are considered human rights and are requirements of both the educational and workplace environments. Therefore, concerns expressed by faculty within the current study regarding accommodations not being provided in a student's future career are based on a lack of information and understanding of these rights. Post-secondary students requesting and utilizing accommodations based on disability within their academic programs, are also entitled to request and receive reasonable accommodations in their place of work. Greater education of post-secondary faculty on the accommodation rights in both the educational and workplace settings would be helpful in resolving this misunderstanding and resulting reluctance to provide accommodations within their programs.

Within the current study, some faculty respondents also expressed concerns about situations in which students were making and expecting the provision of unreasonable accommodation requests, or were not capitalizing on an accommodation made by faculty. These faculty responses also highlighted the lack of awareness of a policy at the U of S dealing with accommodations and outlining the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. Faculty reported that when they were faced with an unreasonable accommodation request, they were unsure of their rights and responsibilities in the process. The U of S does have an *Accommodation and Access Policy*, by which it pledges to adapt its programs and make reasonable accommodations as outlined in the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). This policy details what constitutes a reasonable accommodation and

outlines specific responsibilities of the individual stakeholders involved in the accommodation process. Instructional staff are responsible for helping foster a supportive environment for all students, and providing all reasonable accommodation requests (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). If faculty members have questions regarding the provision or refusal of an accommodation request, they are to consult with their department head as well as the DSS office (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). Through this policy, in order to access accommodations students with disabilities are required to register with the DSS office by providing appropriate documentation of disability, provide sufficient notice of accommodation needs, follow DSS policies and procedures involved with accommodation requests, and actively participate in developing and implementing strategies for their academic success (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). The *Accommodation and Access Policy* was originally approved in 1997 and was amended in 2011. It can be accessed along with other University of Saskatchewan policies online (<http://policies.usask.ca/policies/student-affairs-and-activities/students-with-disabilities.php>). Despite this, concerns expressed by some faculty suggest a lack of awareness of the presence of this policy. As it deals with very important issues, it will be important that more attention is given to this policy and its existence. Greater awareness may also lead to a stronger push by individual colleges to complete their own policies regarding essential skills and accommodation in line with the overall U of S policy. This is an important goal moving forward. When a college's essential skills and requirements for the program have been clearly outlined in policy, it guides which accommodations can be considered reasonable within that program. This would help to reduce fear from faculty, that an accommodation being granted would allow the student to bypass these essential skills.

5.3.4. Need for greater promotion of accommodations, services, and supports.

The current study also reveals the need for greater promotion of accommodations as well as the services and supports available for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. Many of the student respondents who provided context to their survey responses, indicated they were originally unaware of the DSS office or that their disability qualified them for accommodations. These students either found out on their own or from a friend about DSS and available accommodations, but often, only after experiencing negative impacts on their academics as a result of their disability. Some efforts have been made to better advertise the DSS office and the available supports through the inclusion of information about DSS in course syllabuses. The majority of faculty respondents in the current study reported that they include this information in their course syllabuses but are somewhat less active in encouraging students to register with the DSS office in order to utilize accommodations (e.g. connecting with students who are struggling in class to determine what support or referral may be needed). Many students with disabilities reported encouragement from faculty or other university personnel to register with DSS, but also expressed the perception that some newer professors often lack knowledge of DSS and available accommodation supports. Improved education of all parties on campus about the DSS office and greater advertising of its available resources would be beneficial for both students with disabilities and faculty on the U of S campus.

5.3.5. Need for more resources to support reasonable accommodation at the U of S.

The need for more resources to support the reasonable accommodation of post-secondary students at the U of S is also revealed by the current study. Part of these additional resources would be necessary for the greater promotion and advertising of the DSS office, and the available supports, services, and accommodations for students with disabilities. This would be

an important endeavor to support the needs of all students with disabilities on campus, as well as support faculty in the provision of these reasonable accommodations. However, responses from students with disabilities also indicated some areas where additional resources could benefit their access to appropriate accommodations and supports. Student respondents indicated difficulties in accessing current DSS supports (e.g. restrictions of the DSS exam booking deadlines, being refused an accommodation and having ready access to support, accessing DSS supports as an off-campus student) and they suggested some additional programs that would improve their post-secondary experiences as students with a disabilities. In terms of current programming, students reported that at times they perceive DSS staff as dealing with so many students that they can be too busy to help and follow up with all of the students individually. There were also some procedures to access accommodations that students felt could be streamlined to be more efficient. If the DSS office had more resources, they would have greater ability to hire additional staff to facilitate more follow up with individual students in need, provide greater education and support to both university faculty and students, and make accommodation processes more efficient. Previous research, as well as the current study, have found that faculty are more willing to provide accommodations that involve less direct time and effort on their part. Therefore, with increased resources the DSS office could provide faculty with greater assistance in the provision of accommodations, which could positively impact faculty willingness to provide accommodations. In terms of new programming, students with disabilities suggested that having access to a mentor program, support groups for students with disabilities, and education for faculty on individualizing instruction would be of particular assistance to bettering their educational experiences.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The current study found some statistically significant results when comparing faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to provide accommodations based on factors such as gender, age, and academic department. Significant differences were also found in the perceptions of students with disabilities based on the type of disability they reported experiencing, and between faculty self-reports of their attitudes and willingness when compared with the perceptions of students with disabilities. However, only faculty members from five colleges within the University of Saskatchewan were surveyed, which is not representative of the whole faculty. Therefore, future research could survey faculty members from all colleges at the U of S, in order to gain a better perspective on overall faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to accommodate students with disabilities on this campus. Within the current study, the response rates from students throughout the various colleges were not high enough to analyze student perceptions by college of study. Due to the smaller number of students registered with the DSS office in some colleges, issues of protecting respondent confidentiality also prevented this type of analysis. Further research into any potential differences in student perceptions based on their college of study could provide valuable information that would help target information, advocacy and supports. Based on the preventing circumstances identified in the current study, future research into the perceptions of these students could conduct a similar survey if a practical way to group related colleges could be found, or this investigation could be done qualitatively through in-depth student interviews.

The current study provides information on current faculty attitudes and the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding faculty attitudes at the University of Saskatchewan. Future research could investigate these faculty attitudes and student perceptions again in a year, five

years, or ten years in order to provide information on how such attitudes and perceptions have changed over time. Although, a longer period between studies could impact student reporting as the students surveyed within the current study would likely have completed their post-secondary education. However, a more longitudinal study could provide valuable information, particularly if efforts toward promoting awareness and education about the nature of disabilities and accommodations are implemented for faculty and students at the U of S. Any future evaluations could be used to provide information on the effectiveness of these awareness and education efforts.

Previous research into accommodations for post-secondary students with disabilities has emphasized the positive impacts to academic outcomes and graduation rates of using such supports and services. However, this research has also found that many students with disabilities are reluctant to disclose their disability or utilize accommodations and will only do so when faced with an academic crisis. No studies have been conducted at the University of Saskatchewan investigating why students with disabilities do or do not access the DSS office and the available accommodations. Future research into what factors influence the decision of U of S students specifically in whether to seek out and utilize these supports could assist in making any awareness or education campaigns regarding disability and accommodations more effective.

The current study investigated only the perceptions of students with disabilities and faculty at the University of Saskatchewan. Future research could also investigate the perceptions of students without disabilities at this institution to determine their beliefs about disabilities, accommodations, and the fairness of accommodations. Future research could also investigate attitudes towards disabilities and provision of accommodations, at other Canadian universities and post-secondary institutions. It would be of interest to determine if faculty attitudes and their

corresponding willingness to provide accommodations to students with disabilities differ by the type of post-secondary institution (e.g. university, community college, polytechnic, etc.).

5.5 Conclusion

The fear of facing negative faculty attitudes and willingness towards accommodations is one of the influential factors involved in whether students with disabilities disclose to their post-secondary institution and utilize accommodations. Despite research demonstrating the positive impacts on successful program completion when post-secondary students with disabilities are well-supported and have appropriate accommodations in place, many of these students are reluctant to seek out or utilize these supports. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the existing faculty attitudes and corresponding willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan. The perceptions of both faculty members and students with disabilities were sought to gain a stronger understanding of the current environment for students with disabilities on this campus. Overall, the majority of faculty and students reported a general willingness to make accommodations. There were some significant differences found in faculty attitudes and their corresponding willingness to make accommodations based on factors such as gender, age, and academic department. Significant differences were also found in the perceptions of students regarding their experience seeking accommodations based on the type of disability they reported. While the majority of students perceived faculty willing to make or allow for accommodations, faculty reported greater belief in accommodating and encouraging the use of accommodation more than the students respondents reported perceiving from them.

Based on the information gained from the current study, several implications for practice are suggested. In particular, faculty and student responses to the online survey indicated the

need for awareness campaigns to educate all involved parties about the nature of disabilities, rationale behind accommodation, and the rights and responsibilities of parties involved in the accommodation process. Greater promotion of the available services and supports through the DSS office and the need for additional resources to support the reasonable accommodation of post-secondary students were also identified as important future objectives. Limitations of the current study included uneven sample sizes between groups, some of which were small. The power of the statistical analysis is based on the smallest sample size. Therefore, in comparing the unequal groups when one has a small sample size, this decreases the power of the analysis and increases the risk of committing a Type II error. As faculty from five selected colleges at the University of Saskatchewan were invited to participate in the online survey, the results cannot be generalized to represent the attitudes and willingness to accommodate of faculty at the U of S as a whole. Future research into the post-secondary accommodation experience for students with disabilities could include a wider study at the University of Saskatchewan targeting the perspectives of all faculty on campus, and could also include the perspectives of students without disabilities. It would also be valuable to determine, through a longitudinal study, if any education or awareness campaigns regarding accommodations have any future effects on faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate. Finally, it would be important to determine faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate at other Canadian universities and post-secondary institutions, as well as to delve into specific reasons or barriers that Canadian students face in accessing disability services and utilizing available accommodations.

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Appendix A – Faculty Survey

Demographics

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

2. What is your rank at the U of S?
 - a. Professor
 - b. Assistant Professor
 - c. Associate Professor
 - d. Instructor
 - e. Sessional Lecturer
 - f. Other

3. How many years of experience do you have in teaching at the post-secondary level?
 - a. < 1 year
 - b. 1-10 years
 - c. 11-20 years
 - d. 21-30 years
 - e. >30 years

4. For which academic department/college do you teach?
 - a. Arts and Science
 - b. Education
 - c. Edwards School of Business
 - d. Engineering
 - e. Western College of Veterinary Medicine

5. How old are you?
 - a. 20-30 years old
 - b. 31-50 years old
 - c. 51-70 years old
 - d. >70 years old

6. How much experience do you have working with students with disabilities?
 - a. No experience
 - b. Very little experience
 - c. Some experience
 - d. Significant experience

For the following questions please rank your agreement or disagreement on the 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree):

Personal Beliefs about Accommodations

7. I feel it is important to make adjustments to my teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.
8. I believe in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.
9. Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.
10. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.
11. I sometimes question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to my students without disabilities.
12. Some students with disabilities may not really need accommodations but take advantage of the system.
13. I think of students differently after they approach me about a need for accommodations.
14. Making adequate teaching accommodations for students with disabilities in my courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.
15. I feel it is important to include information about DSS in my course syllabuses and invite students with disabilities to register with the DSS office so they can receive accommodations.

Classroom Accommodations

16. I am willing to provide lecture notes to a student with a disability.
17. I am willing to let a student with a disability record my lectures.
18. I am willing to not penalize a student with a disability for occasionally missing class.
19. I am willing to wear a microphone in order to allow a student with a hearing impairment to hear my lecture.
20. I am willing to provide extensions on assignments for a student with a disability.
21. I am willing to allow a student with a disability to complete an alternate format assignment.
22. I am willing to not penalize students with disabilities for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

Exam Accommodations

23. I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on tests.
24. I feel comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low-distraction environment
25. I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.
26. I feel comfortable having a student with a disability write an exam proctored by an individual rather than myself.

27. I feel comfortable allowing students with disabilities to use technology (e.g. computer without internet access, calculator, or spellchecker) to complete an exam, even when such technology is not permitted for the rest of the class.
28. I feel comfortable having students with disabilities write an exam with the use of a reader and/or a scribe.

Optional Comment Box: If you wish to provide any context or explanation for how you answered any of the previous questions you can use this space. This space could also be used if you would like to make any comments on your experience with the current accommodation process or if you have any concerns with the current accommodation practices that you would like to raise. Any information shared within this section will be compiled with all of the comments or concerns raised by all faculty participants. In order to protect your own confidentiality and the confidentiality of others, please refrain from including any specific information which would identify particular individuals.

*The majority of this current survey has been taken or adapted from the work of Byrd (2010) with the author's permission. In particular, questions 1-6, 9-10, 16-19, and 22-24 were used directly from Byrd's (2010) faculty survey. Questions 7-8, and 11-12 were adapted from Byrd (2010) and questions 13-15, 20-21, and 25-28 were adapted from the work of Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) to better fit the specific context of the University of Saskatchewan and the current research questions.

Appendix B – Student Survey

Demographics

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

2. In which academic department/college at the U of S do you study?
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Arts and Science
 - c. Education
 - d. Edwards School of Business
 - e. Engineering
 - f. Medicine
 - g. Nursing
 - h. Pharmacy & Nutrition
 - i. Western College of Veterinary Medicine
 - j. Other (Comment Box)

3. In what year of study are you?
 - a. 1st
 - b. 2nd
 - c. 3-4th
 - d. 5-6th
 - e. >7th

4. In what level of program are you currently studying?
 - a. Undergraduate
 - b. Graduate
 - c. Other (Comment Box)

5. What is the nature of your disability?
 - a. Sensory
 - b. Physical
 - c. Learning Disability
 - d. ADHD
 - e. Mental Health
 - f. Other (Comment Box)

For the following questions please rank your agreement or disagreement on the 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree):

Students Perceptions of Faculty Willingness to Accommodate

6. My professors are willing to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.
7. My professors express belief in the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.
8. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize classroom accommodations to support my success.
9. My professors have encouraged me to seek out or utilize testing accommodations to support my success.
10. I feel my professors sometimes question whether making an accommodation for a student with a disability is fair to their students without disabilities.
11. I believe my professors think that some students with disabilities may not really need accommodations but take advantage of the system.
12. I believe my professors think differently of me after I approach them about a need for accommodations.
13. My professors express that making adequate teaching accommodations for students with disabilities in my courses is unrealistic given time constraints and other job demands.
14. My professors include information about DSS in their course syllabuses and invite students with disabilities to register with the DSS office so they can receive accommodations.

Personal Accommodation Experiences

15. I am reluctant to disclose the nature of my disability to my professors.
16. I approach my professors at the beginning of the semester to discuss accommodations rather than wait until being faced with an academic crisis.
17. I regularly use my classroom accommodations.
18. I regularly use my exam accommodations.
19. I have had a negative experience seeking accommodations with a professor at the U of S.
20. My professors are willing to make or allow for classroom accommodations.
21. My professors are willing to make or allow for exam accommodations.
22. I am satisfied with my experience as a student with a disability at the U of S.

Optional Comment Box: If you wish to provide any context or explanation for how you answered any of the previous questions you can use this space. Please refrain from including any specific information which would identify yourself or any other particular individuals.

*Much of this current survey was adapted from the work of Byrd (2010) and Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012). In particular, questions 5-10 were based on faculty survey questions adapted from Byrd (2010) and questions 11-13 were adapted from Baker, Boland and Nowik (2012) to fit the context of surveying students with disabilities on their perceptions of faculty attitudes.

Appendix C – Faculty Consent Form



Participant Consent Form *Faculty*

Project Title: An Examination of Faculty Attitudes and Willingness to Accommodate Students with Disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan

Researcher: Kristin Koo, M.Ed. Candidate, Educational Psychology & Special Education, University of Saskatchewan, 306-260-1456, kgk444@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Tim Claypool, Ph.D., Educational Psychology & Special Education, 306-966-6931, tim.claypool@usask.ca

Purpose of the Research:

- This project is a thesis study necessary to fulfill the researcher's requirements of a Masters degree in School and Counselling Psychology.
- The purpose is to discover faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities at the U of S from both faculty and student perspectives.

Procedures:

- You are being asked to participate in an online survey that will attempt to measure your willingness to make different types of accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as your beliefs about accommodations.

- This survey concludes with an optional comment box where you can discuss your experiences or raise any concerns you may have with the current accommodation processes.
- The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
- Participants are not requested to do any type of preparation for the survey or any type of closure afterwards.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

Potential Risks:

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits:

- Information collected from this study will provide valuable insights into the current perceptions on accommodations for students with disabilities at the U of S. These insights could be used to inform future directions for educational sessions and further policies regarding accommodations on campus.

Confidentiality:

- Although some demographic data will be collected, the individual survey responses of participants will be anonymous.
- Your confidentiality will be protected because any individual responses you submit to the survey questions will not be able to be tied to you.
- If within the comment box you include information which could identify you or any other individuals, this identifying information will not be included in the publication of results and will be securely stored by the thesis supervisor.

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Should you wish to withdraw, simply discontinue the survey and do not submit your answers.
- Since the survey data will be collected anonymously, your right to withdraw your participation from this study will apply until you submit the results of your completed survey. After your survey has been submitted it will be pooled with

the information from other respondents and there will be no way to identify which data is yours and it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

Follow up:

- To obtain results from the study, please contact either Kristin Koo or Dr. Tim Claypool (at the contact information listed on page 1) for a copy of the completed thesis paper. The final paper is a Masters thesis and will therefore also be available by searching under the researcher's name in the Electronic Theses & Dissertations database on the University of Saskatchewan library website.

Questions or Concerns:

- If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Kristin Koo or Dr. Tim Claypool using the information at the top of page 1.
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent:

By completing and submitting the online questionnaire, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

Appendix D – Student Consent Form



Participant Consent Form *Student*

Project Title: An Examination of Faculty Attitudes and Willingness to Accommodate Students with Disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan

Researcher: Kristin Koo, M.Ed. Candidate, Educational Psychology & Special Education, University of Saskatchewan, 306-260-1456, kgk444@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Tim Claypool, Ph.D., Educational Psychology & Special Education, 306-966-6931, tim.claypool@usask.ca

Purpose of the Research:

- This project is a thesis study necessary to fulfill the researcher's requirements of a Masters degree in School and Counselling Psychology.
- The purpose is to discover faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities at the U of S from both faculty and student perspectives.

Procedures:

- You are being asked to participate in an online survey that will attempt to measure your perceptions about U of S faculty willingness to make different types of accommodations for students with disabilities.
- The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
- Participants are not requested to do any type of preparation for the survey or any type of closure afterwards.

Potential Risks:

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. If any of the questions causes negative memories to resurface and you need someone to talk to, you could contact:
 - U of S Student Counselling Services – (306)-966-4920
 - Disability Services for Students (DSS) – (306)-966-7273

Potential Benefits:

- Information collected from this study will provide valuable insights into the current perceptions on accommodations for students with disabilities at the U of S. These insights could be used to inform future directions for educational sessions and further policies regarding accommodations on campus.

Compensation:

- Participants have the option of entering their NSID into a draw to win 1 of 10 gift cards to their choice of Tim Horton's or Starbucks (10 x \$30 denominations).

Confidentiality:

- Although some demographic data will be collected, the individual survey responses of participants will be anonymous.
- Your confidentiality will be protected because any individual responses you submit to the survey questions will not be able to be tied to you.
- If within the comment box you include information which could identify you or any other individuals, this identifying information will not be included in the publication of results and will be securely stored by the thesis supervisor.

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Should you wish to withdraw, simply discontinue the survey and do not submit your answers.
- Since the survey data will be collected anonymously, your right to withdraw your participation from this study will apply until you submit the results of your completed survey. After your survey has been submitted it will be pooled with the information from other respondents and there will be no way to identify which data is yours and it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

Follow up:

- The final paper is a Masters thesis and will therefore also be available by searching under the researcher's name in the Electronic Theses & Dissertations database on the University of Saskatchewan library website.

Questions or Concerns:

- If you have any questions or concerns about this study please feel free to contact Kristin Koo or Dr. Tim Claypool using the information at the top of page 1.
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent:

By completing and submitting the online questionnaire, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

**Department of Educational Psychology & Special
Education
University of Saskatchewan**



**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR SCHOOL & COUNSELLING
PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH STUDY**

We are looking for students registered with the Disability Services for Students (DSS) office to complete a **10-minute** study on the current faculty attitudes and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities at the University of Saskatchewan.

The study will involve completing an anonymous online survey which will ask you questions about your perceptions of faculty attitudes towards accommodations and how willing you believe faculty are to provide these supports.

In appreciation for your time, you can enter your NSID into a draw to win one of ten \$30 gift cards to your choice of Tim Horton's or Starbucks.

To volunteer your participation for this study, please follow the link below:
(Insert link to online study here)

For more information about this study please contact:

Kristin Koo, M.Ed. Candidate
Educational Psychology & Special Education
at 306-260-1456 or
Email: kgk444@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Tim Claypool, tim.claypool@usask.ca, 306-966-6931

**This study has been reviewed by, and received approval
through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan.**

Appendix F – Letter to College Deans to Invite Participation

(name of Dean)
(name of college)
University of Saskatchewan

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to consider the following request.

My name is Kristin Koo. I am a Masters student in the School & Counselling Psychology program within the College of Education. I am currently working on my Masters thesis which is investigating faculty beliefs about accommodating students with disabilities and their willingness to make certain types of accommodations.

As part of my thesis research I will need to survey faculty at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) to determine their current willingness to make accommodations, their beliefs about the accommodation process, and if there are any comments or concerns they would like to raise about accommodations at the post-secondary level.

Faculty members from the (name of college) were selected to be potential participants of this survey because (name of college) has one of the highest percentages of students registered with the Disability Services for Students (DSS) office at the U of S. In total, faculty from five colleges at the U of S will be surveyed.

In order to survey the faculty within the (name of college), an involuntary email list would have to be established. This email list will be considered involuntary because faculty members will not have subscribed to the email and the list will be compiled due to their association with the university. Therefore, because I am seeking to survey the faculty within your college I need to: clearly identify myself and my department as the sender of the email; ensure that the recipients cannot determine the other email recipients; and obtain your permission, as the Dean of the college, in order to proceed with email invitations to my research survey. Would you approve of an invitation to participate in my thesis research study being sent through email to the faculty within the (name of college)? I am also wondering if you and your office would be willing to provide a current list of faculty members and sessional lecturers within your college.

If you would like more information on this study, please feel free to contact me at (306) 966-3281 or kgk444@mail.usask.ca or my thesis supervisor Dr. Tim Claypool, R.D. Psych. at (306) 966-6931 or tim.claypool@usask.ca.

Thank you again for your consideration of this request,

Kristin Koo (M.Ed. Candidate)
Department of Educational Psychology & Special Education
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan

**Department of Educational Psychology & Special
Education, University of Saskatchewan**



**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
SCHOOL & COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
RESEARCH STUDY**

We are looking for faculty within the (*name of college*) to complete a **15-minute** study on current faculty beliefs about and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to complete an anonymous online survey which will ask you questions about your willingness to provide accommodations to students with disabilities and your beliefs about accommodation supports.

As part of the survey you would have the option of including comments on any relevant experiences or concerns you may have with the current accommodation process.

To participate in this study, please follow the link below:
(*Insert link to online study here*)

For more information about this study please contact:
Kristin Koo, M.Ed. Candidate
Educational Psychology & Special Education
at 306-966-3281 or
Email: kgk444@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Tim Claypool, tim.claypool@usask.ca, 306-966-6931

This study has been reviewed by, and received approval
through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan.

Students with Disabilities: Academic Accommodation and Access Policy

Student Affairs and Activities

Responsibility: University Registrar

Authorization: Board of Governors

Approval Date: Mar 1, 1997

Reformatted: Mar 30, 2001

Amended: Sep 1, 2011

1. Purpose

To foster diversity, inclusiveness, and student success by providing that students with disabilities are not discriminated against; and that they receive equal opportunities for academic success and personal development at the University of Saskatchewan.

For the purposes of this policy, disabilities are those defined as such in Section 2(1)(d.1) of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (hereafter called the “Code”).

For purposes of this policy, the home college for undergraduate students is the college to which the student has been admitted, and for graduate students is the college responsible for the program to which the student has been admitted.

Additional definitions and abbreviations are as follows:

- The University of Saskatchewan: “University”
- Disability Services for Students: “DSS”
- Sessional lecturers, instructors, practicum supervisors, teaching assistants, and lab instructors: “instructional staff”
- Reduced Course Load: “RCL”

2. Principles

2.1 As stated in The University of Saskatchewan Strategic Directions: Renewing Our Dream (2002) the University is committed to “principles of human dignity and fairness in all we do, including strategies for equity and diversity in education, employment, and all our activities.”

2.2 The learning vision articulated in the University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter (2010), states that the University is seen as a “unique community of learning and discovery, where people can embark on a process of development through which they grow, create, and learn, in a context characterized by diversity—of academic programs, of ways of knowing and learning, and of its members.”

2.3 Respect for all members of the University community will be upheld at all times. Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

2.4 All members of the University community, including students, will contribute to achieving a social and physical environment that is diverse, inclusive, and accessible to all. Physical accessibility should always be ensured when designing new space, renovating existing space, and managing facility accessibility.

2.5 The needs of students with disabilities will be taken into consideration when planning and executing admission requirements, courses, course requirements, assessment methods, examination dates, scholarships and awards, programs, services, and informational material. Colleges are encouraged to have disability accommodation policies that align with and are a supplement to this policy, but outline essential skills and requirements and accommodations specific to their College. Such policy development should be done with assistance from the DSS manager or designate.

2.6 Students with disabilities will meet the same academic requirements and standards as all students, although the manner by which students with disabilities meet these may vary.

2.7 In recognition that ability is diverse in kind and degree, the University will adapt its services and programs to accommodate the needs of individual students, in accordance with the requirements of the Code.

2.8 Academic integrity, as defined by the University Council and Board of Governors, will be upheld by those providing and receiving academic accommodations.

2.9 All administrative, instructional, and support staff share the University's responsibility under the Code to accommodate students with disabilities.

2.10 While students with disabilities are encouraged to share information regarding their accommodations with instructional staff in their Colleges and academic units who would play a role in facilitating their accommodations, such information can be released only with the student's consent. See Section 4.2 for more information.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students with disabilities enrolled at the University. Its implementation is the responsibility of all members of the University community, including students, support staff, faculty, instructional staff), and senior administrators. The University is ultimately responsible and committed to enforce the requirements of this policy.

4. Policy

The University will take all measures short of undue hardship to the University to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the University and the opportunity to succeed in their programs of study. Suitable academic accommodations are fundamental to support students with disabilities, but when provided, those accommodations shall not compromise the University's academic requirements and standards.

4.1 Reasonable Academic Accommodations

4.1.1 In accordance with the Code, reasonable academic accommodations must be provided to students with disabilities.

4.1.2 The University is required to make efforts to reasonably accommodate a student with a disability when the disability impairs the student's ability to fulfill the essential requirements of a course/program.

The essential requirements of a course/program are the knowledge and skills which must be acquired or demonstrated in order for a student to successfully meet the learning objectives of the course/program.

In the absence of College-level disability accommodation policies that outline essential skills and requirements as noted in Section 2.5 of this document, determinations of reasonable accommodations in courses and programs must be made in concert with DSS.

In some circumstances, the nature and degree of a disability may mean that no reasonable accommodation would enable an individual to perform the essential requirements of a course/program. Where no reasonable accommodation can be provided, the University may refuse admission or accommodations in order to preserve the academic integrity (meaning the essential requirements) of a course/program.

A person cannot be presumed incapable of performing the essential requirements of a course/program unless an effort has been made to canvass all reasonable options for accommodation.

4.1.3 Accommodations will be provided up to the point of undue hardship to the University. A number of factors are weighed when assessing whether or not the hardship associated with an accommodation is undue, including:

- a) the nature of the requested or required accommodation;
- b) the financial cost of the accommodation;
- c) the ability of the student receiving the accommodation to meet admission or program requirements;

d) the degree to which the accommodation might impact on or interfere with other students or faculty;

e) whether health or safety concerns would arise as a result of the accommodation; and

f) the reasonableness or cooperativeness of the student seeking accommodation. These factors are not listed in order of priority. The weight that will be given to these factors or any other relevant considerations will depend on the circumstances.

4.2 Confidentiality of Students' Personal Information

4.2.1 Confidentiality of all students' personal information will be respected at all times.

4.2.2 In accordance with the University's policy respecting the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, all personal information relating to the disabilities of students is to remain confidential. Information about a student's disabilities, including the fact that a student has a disability, will only be shared with staff and instructional staff who must be provided the information in order to investigate or implement an accommodation and only then on a confidential basis. Information about a student's disability will not be disclosed to anyone by DSS or by other University personnel without the express written consent of the student, except when permitted by The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, The Health Information Protection Act or required by law. Where information about a student with a disability is disclosed by DSS, the recipients of that information must be made aware of the confidentiality of the information.

4.2.3 While DSS accommodations may be discussed in general with colleagues who are not involved in teaching specific classes, care must be taken to not identify any student as having a disability without that student's consent. A procedural document, "DSS Guidelines for the Effective Provision of Accommodations" is available to assist instructional staff with understanding how best to support students with disabilities. See Section 7 for more information.

4.3 Reduced Course Load (RCL) accommodation and recognition of full-time status

Some programs and benefits offered by external agencies are limited to full-time university students. For purposes of clarity, students who receive an RCL accommodation, and who would otherwise be full-time students, are considered to be full-time students by the University.

4.4. Responsibilities in the Provision of Accommodations

4.4.1 Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students are their own best advocates, and must understand that a reasonable measure of self-reliance is necessary for academic success. Sometimes the nature of the disability itself makes it difficult for the student to be aware of the need for accommodation and to participate in the

design and implementation of the accommodation. Students, staff, or instructional staff who are concerned that a student may have such a disability should contact DSS. DSS will evaluate what steps, if any, are necessary to address the student's need

DSS is available to provide services and support to students who:

4.4.1.1 Register with DSS by providing current and relevant documentation from a licensed health practitioner.

4.4.1.2 Adhere to the policies and procedures of each DSS service accessed, as outlined in the "DSS Guidelines for the Effective Provision of Accommodations" document (see Section 7).

Regardless of whether accommodations are provided by DSS or by others in the University community, students with disabilities will:

4.4.1.3 Participate in developing and implementing strategies related to their own academic success, and be open to trying solutions proposed by DSS, instructional staff, and others.

4.4.1.4 Understand that sufficient notice must be given in order to receive academic accommodations. Numerous programs, departments, and individuals across campus may provide accommodations, and questions regarding what "sufficient notice" entails should be directed to the provider of accommodations.

4.4.2 Responsibilities of Disability Services for Students (DSS)

The role of DSS is to provide advice, information, and assistance to the University community and to provide services and resources to students with disabilities.

To fulfill its mandate, DSS will:

4.4.2.1 Encourage all students with disabilities to register with DSS. If a student discloses a disability to a person or office other than DSS, that student should be referred to DSS.

4.4.2.2 Assist students, staff, and instructional staff in understanding how to apply Section 4.2 of this document.

4.4.2.3 Approve appropriate academic accommodations for each individual student registered with DSS, taking into consideration the accommodations specified by the student's documentation, available resources, and academic integrity.

Accommodations will be approved through the joint DSS-College accommodation planning committee where applicable. Where no joint DSS-College accommodation planning committee applies, DSS will engage in appropriate consultations with the staff and instructional staff that would be impacted by the accommodation.

4.4.2.4 Coordinate the requests for, and assist in the provision of, academic accommodations; and provide advice and assistance regarding accessibility issues.

4.4.2.5 Provide and maintain programs and services that are necessary to support students with disabilities.

4.4.2.6 Provide appropriate and necessary exam accommodations when requested by students within published DSS deadlines, and assist instructional and support staff in the provision of exam accommodations. While the primary responsibility for exam accommodations lies with DSS, the entire University community has a responsibility to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are met, in accordance with the Code.

4.4.2.7 Provide assistance and advice to students regarding available options for redress wherever students with disabilities have complaints related to academic or non-academic matters.

4.4.3 Responsibilities of Instructional Staff

To help accommodate students with disabilities and facilitate their academic success while maintaining the University's academic requirements and standards, instructional staff will:

4.4.3.1 Foster a positive atmosphere for all students, including those with disabilities. Instructional staff will ensure that issues related to disabilities and people with disabilities are addressed and discussed in a fair, sensitive, and nondiscriminatory manner.

4.4.3.2 Make every reasonable accommodation to facilitate and foster the learning of all students. This may require course assignments and other methods of assessment, physical environment, instructional atmosphere, supplementary instruction, instructional tools, or other resources.

4.4.3.3 Consult with the Department Head (or Dean in non-departmentalized Colleges) in situations where necessary accommodations require resources beyond those that can be provided by instructional staff

4.4.3.4 Maintain confidentiality of information regarding students with disabilities in accordance with Section 4.2 of this document. Questions about how to apply Section 4.2 should be addressed to DSS or the instructor's department head or dean.

4.4.4 Responsibilities of Department Heads in departmentalized Colleges

Department Heads will:

4.4.4.1 Ensure that instructional and administrative staff are familiar with this policy.

4.4.4.2 Commit the resources of the department to implement the accommodations, and consult with the Dean in situations where necessary accommodations require resources beyond those that can be provided by the department.

4.4.4.3 Inform DSS and the Assistant/Associate Deans and Deans of their Colleges if they are concerned that their department may be unable to provide the approved accommodations.

4.4.4.4 Uphold and assist instructional and support staff with understanding how to uphold Section 4.2 of this document.

4.4.5 Responsibilities of Deans, Assistant or Associate Deans, Executive Directors of Schools, Directors of Centres offering academic programs or Designates

Deans, Assistant or Associate Deans, Executive Directors, Directors and/or their designates will:

4.4.5.1 Promote a positive learning environment for students with disabilities and consult with DSS as needed.

4.4.5.2 Ensure that the department heads and instructional staff under their jurisdiction are aware of this policy and understand their legal requirements to accommodate students with disabilities.

4.4.5.3 Maintain the confidentiality of student information and documentation in accordance with Section 4.2 of this document.

4.4.5.4 Review and decide disputes over accommodation requests in accordance with Section 5.

4.4.5.5 Commit the necessary resources of the College/Centre/School to implement the accommodations and, in exceptional circumstances, consult with the Provost where the College/Centre/School lacks the necessary resources to provide the accommodations.

4.4.5.6 In circumstances where the student is seeking accommodation in a University course or clinical activity outside the student's home College, the Dean who is responsible for the course or clinical activity in which the accommodation is being sought shall carry out the responsibilities under Section 4.4.5.

5. Dispute Resolution Process

5.1 A student who is approved for an accommodation by DSS, or where applicable by a joint DSS-College accommodation planning committee, shall not be denied accommodation by instructional staff. If an instructional staff member or a student with a disability has concerns and questions about interpretation and application of accommodations, these concerns and questions should be addressed directly to DSS staff or, where applicable, to joint DSS-College accommodation planning committees for an informal resolution.

5.2 If an instructor staff member or a student with a disability is not satisfied with an accommodation decision made by DSS or a joint DSS-College planning committee or with the outcome of the informal resolution process, he or she may ask the Dean of the College (or the Provost in place of the Dean in cases where the instructor is the Dean) to review the matter. The Dean will fully inform himself or herself of the circumstances. The Dean shall not refuse an accommodation until after consulting with the Provost or designate (normally the Associate Vice-President Student Affairs) and University legal counsel. The Dean's decision will be rendered in a timely fashion; normally within 30 days of the Dean receiving the request to review the accommodation. The decision of the Dean is final. The Director of a Centre will conduct the review in the case of a student of a Centre.

5.3 The Dean, in consultation with DSS, will determine whether or not accommodations should be made or continued while the matter is under review by the Dean, and a primary consideration will be whether the student will be irreparably prejudiced by delay in the matter being decided.

5.4 The provisions of section 4.2 will be respected and applied during and after the review process.

6. Non-compliance

Following due process, the University may take one or more of the following actions against anyone whose activities are in violation of any applicable legislation or of this policy:

- In the case of students, disciplinary action under the [*Regulations for Student Academic Misconduct*](#) and/or [*Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals*](#).
- In the case of employees, disciplinary action in accordance with the applicable collective agreement(s), up to and including termination.

7. Procedures

Procedures regarding the application of this policy are held at DSS, in the form of the "DSS Guidelines for the Effective Provision of Accommodations" document. These procedures will be reviewed annually by DSS and the DSS Policy Committee, with revisions made as necessary.

Related Documents

There are no other documents associated with this policy.

Contact Information

Contact Person: University Registrar and Director of Student Services

Email: registrar@usask.ca

Phone: 306-966-6723

Website: <http://www.usask.ca/sesd/about/dss.php>