Administrative Activities Review (AAR) Guidelines Due by August 6, 2018

I.   Basic Facts and Description of the Unit.
a. Mission and goals.
Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Accessibility (OA) is to empower the whole University community to ensure full access and inclusion for people with disabilities in the campus environment. The comprehensive mission is to provide students with full access to and the opportunity for full participation in the academic environment. We are advocates of social justice for students with disabilities and work to end oppression by examining the social, cultural and institutional barriers to inclusion of all students. We embrace the diversity of our student body and celebrate a culturally sensitive and accessible campus through outreach, partnership, and advocacy with many university departments.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Office of Accessibility at The University of Akron is to be the premier service organization devoted to students with disabilities in the state of Ohio. We will continue to develop as a premier institution by offering exceptional service through our professional staff, outreach services and workshops to students and faculty/ staff, advocating for campus wide access and components of universal design, and offering innovative programming to students. We strive for excellence in service provision to students, faculty and staff and work to empower and educate the university community around access and social justice issues.

b. Services.

The primary service of the Office of Accessibility is to coordinate and implement federally mandated accommodations, in order to provide students at The University of Akron the opportunity for full participation in the academic and university community setting.

> *Pursuant to the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, The University of Akron does not discriminate against any student, because of a disability and does not exclude any qualified student with a disability from participation in or from receiving the benefits of the services, program, or activities of the University.*

- **Critical partners –**

In order to effectively provide federally mandated accommodations to students across campus, the OA has developed partnerships with a number of offices on campus.

- **Counseling & Testing Center** – The OA partners with the Counseling & Testing Center in a number of ways
    - o **Testing Accommodations** – The Counseling & Testing Center provides space for students with disabilities to utilize their federally mandated testing accommodations, as the OA does not have enough functional testing space to provide this accommodation to all students who request this accommodation.
    - o **Learning Disability/ADHD Assessments** – The Counseling & Testing Center provides low cost learning disability and ADHD assessments to current students. The OA refers students who have not been formally diagnosed with a learning

disability or ADHD, or students who need updated documentation in order to qualify for classroom accommodations.

- **Residence Life and Housing** - The OA evaluates requests for housing accommodations for students with disabilities on behalf of the Office of Residence Life and Housing, as the OA is the only designated office on campus qualified to review and make recommendations for student accommodations. RLH then implements the recommended housing accommodations in the residence halls. In the past FY, the OA has reviewed documentation for 43 students (16 FA, 27 SP) and recommended 55 housing accommodations (19 FA, 36 SP).
- **Physical Facilities Operation Center (PFOC)** – personnel in PFOC place specialized furniture in classrooms for students who have requested this accommodation. Furniture includes tables, chairs, and stools that PFOC keeps in storage until needed. In the past FY, the OA and PFOC have worked together to place furniture in 200 classrooms across campus (102 FA, 98 SP)
- **University Scheduling** - The OA works with University Scheduling to move classes that are not accessible to students, and to "lock in" classes for students who have a fully accessible schedule and do not want classroom locations moved. These relocations and lock ins ensure that students have full access to their academic program. In the past FY year, the OA and Scheduling have worked together to relocate or lock in 242 classes (139 FA, 103 SP).
- **Academic Departments** – The OA works with several academic departments on campus to identify appropriate and qualified lab assistants. These assistants provide necessary assistance in lab classes to ensure the student with a disability has equal opportunity to participate in required experiments (for example, a student utilizing a manual wheelchair may need assistance in transporting chemicals in a Chemistry lab). As labs often have specialized materials, the OA relies on the experts in the specific department to identify personnel who are most qualified to provide assistance.
- **Parking Services** – Parking Services coordinates and runs the Roo Express Alternative Service, which provides students with disabilities transportation to and from additional locations than the regular Roo Express provides.
- **Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (EOHS)** – The OA works with EOHS to ensure a safe and accessible environment for students with disabilities. The OA provides the schedules of students with mobility concerns to EOHS so that in the event of an emergency on campus, EOHS can respond with the necessary specialized equipment to those locations for safe evacuation.
- **Office of General Counsel** – The OA partners with the Office of General Counsel to ensure that the University is in legal compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, the OA consults with General Counsel on disability-related issues that arise on campus to determine the most appropriate solution and course of action.
- **Human Resources/Community Partners** – The OA works with Human Resources and other Community Partners (Greater Akron Deaf Services, Greenleaf Family Center) to hire qualified personnel to provide services, namely Sign Language Interpreters and Transcribers. These staff are necessary to provide the federally mandated accommodations for students with hearing loss in the classroom.

- **Design and Development/captioning vendors** – The OA relies on the technical expertise of staff in Design and Development to assist with questions related to accommodations on university online portals (Brightspace, Panopto, etc.), including how to implement testing accommodations, and using 3rd party vendors to produce captions for multimedia used in classrooms and in online classes. In the past FY, the OA has captioned 8,042 minutes of multimedia for classroom use (3199 FA, 4843 SP).
- **ZipCard office** – The OA works with the ZipCard office each semester to post the payments for notetaking services. Notetakers are paid at the end of each semester, and are an essential piece of the implementation of the notetaking accommodation. The past FY, the OA worked with the ZipCard office to provide payment for 246 notetakers (30 SU, 126 FA, 90 SP).
- **Printing Services** – The OA works with Printing Services to assist with the implementation of the alternative media accommodation. Printing Services has the necessary equipment to split book bindings and rebind books after scanning. The OA would not be able to produce this mandated accommodation in an efficient manner without the assistance of Printing Services.
- **Accessible Information Management (AIM)** - AIM provides the OA with an accessible web management information system, STARS. STARS is designed specifically for the OA and assists staff in the following: documentation record management; accommodation and service request processing (including but not limited to alternative media, note taking, testing, interpreters and transcribers); trend analysis, forecasting and assessment; communication with students, staff and faculty through email; in interfacing with data management systems including PeopleSoft.

- **Customers or end-users of your services.**
  Our largest customer/end-user base would be students with disabilities. Currently the student population consists of 1728 students with various disabilities (Table 1, Appendix B). Our goal is to provide reasonable accommodations and a supportive, well-resourced environment to students with disabilities in order to promote student success in the university environment. This mission goes well beyond the legal requirements, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and supports the University's commitment to create an accessible and welcoming environment for all students.

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Accommodations and services at the Office of Accessibility are determined by using a collaborative process that considers documentation from the diagnosing professional,

the disability specialist's perspective and student input. Accommodations are designed to ensure access to your academic career at The University of Akron.

The result in providing federally mandated accommodations and services leads to working collaboratively with campus and community wide partners.

- **Key performance analysis.**

Every year since 2009, with the exception of 2015 and 2016, there has been a significant increase in the number of students registered with the Office of Accessibility compared to the Fall enrollment of students to The University of Akron (Table 1, Appendix A). Though there was a very slight decrease in the OA population during 2015 and 2016, the decrease is not as significant as the University's overall decrease. Over the past six years, there has been a 7.1% increase in the number of students requesting accommodations an 12.5% increase in the use of accommodations, and a 10.72% increase in number of classes in which students have requested accommodations requests (Figure 1, Appendix A).

Additionally, OA staff members are also spending significantly more time in the coordination of services. During the past year the staff spent 9650.53 hours coordinating services. This is a 43.27% increase from the previous fiscal year.

- **Brief assessment.**

One noteworthy accomplishment was Disabilities Awareness Week (DAW) 2017 which took place from October 30-November 3, 2017. The purpose of this week is to raise awareness while creating and fostering an inclusive environment on campus and to honor and support students, staff and faculty with disabilities and their advocates. A total of 1654 individuals participated in the various events throughout the week, making this the most successful Disabilities Awareness Week to date!

A noteworthy strength within the office is the highly trained and experienced staff. Due to the highly skilled staff the office continues to make great strides in the area of disability services and continues to be a leader within the field and the state. The office staff provides consultation and educational presentations to other universities regarding our research, and policy and procedure development and implementation.

A significant challenge within the office is maintaining our current staff.

c. Resources.

- **Personnel.**

The Office of Accessibility when fully staffed is composed of six full time staff: one director, one associate director, three disability specialists, a program assistant, and ten part-time staff members: one adaptive technology coordinator, six sign language interpreters and two transcribers. Currently the director, associate director, one new disability specialist, and one program specialist comprise the full time staff. See Appendix C for chart and title descriptions.

As the University continues to address the financial stability of our enterprise and not providing competitive salaries the office faced a significant setback when 3 Disability Specialists resigned from the department during the last fiscal year. The university has been supportive in pushing the requests to fill the open positions. The quality of candidates has decreased however due to salaries that are lower than regional norms. This along with the recent staffing instability has led to additional training time for new employees who may lack experience in this area. Salary levels have

unfortunately also negatively impacted employee retention. This significant setback has caused the office to run with two experienced and one new staff member addressing the needs of the entire population.

- **Financials.**

   The largest improvement of the Office of Accessibility budget came with the creation of the ADA budget (201699) during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. This budget has allowed the office to track expenditures accurately and continue to be good stewards of funds and allocated resources. See Table 2 for line-item summary

- **Equipment and technology.**

   The Office of Accessibility has equipment and adaptive technology for students to use on campus. Adaptive technology is any object or system that is specifically designed for the purpose of increasing or maintaining the capabilities of people with disabilities. The university provides site licenses for five different types of adaptive technology throughout campus. These programs include Dragon Naturally Speaking, a Voice recognition program that "types" what is spoken; Inspiration, a Graphical outliner/organizer that combines objected-oriented drawing with electronic outlining; JAWS (Job Access with Speech), a Screen reader for students with visual impairments; Kurzweil 3000, a reading, writing and study platform aimed at people with learning disabilities or other disabilities that make reading or writing difficult; and ZoomText, a Magnification and screen reading software. Additionally, the office purchases equipment for students to loan out and use each semester.

- **Space.**

   Beginning in 2009, the Office of Accessibility and Counseling & Testing Center, Testing Services (CTC-TS) partnered to meet the increasing need for accommodated testing services for students with disabilities by allowing students with disabilities, who receive a time extension accommodation, to take exams in the Counseling & Testing Center. This partnership was due to lack of sufficient space in the Office of Accessibility. With only 6 possible testing rooms in Simmons 105, where the Office of Accessibility is located, the issue of limited space will present a greater concern over time with the increased request for readers and scribes, as well as adaptive technology, as these students require a private room and extended testing time. The space restrictions facing the Office of Accessibility present concerns regarding the effective and efficient coordination of testing accommodations, as requests for testing space, technology, and proctors continue to increase.

II. Future Plans.

a. Potential changes.

Due to staffing challenges and legal requirements, the office is not planning to make major changes to the unit as a whole. The office staff will continue to seek out methods in which we can provide outstanding service and support to our students in nontraditional ways, such as through email correspondence or through our online request system STARS.

b. Trends.

One of the most prevalent trends in disability services is online web accessibility. Many universities have had to respond to both private litigation and Office of Civil Rights complaints related to web accessibility. Web accessibility would consist of the University's web pages and all online systems (i.e. Brightspace, forms, applications, etc.). The university has taken a proactive approach in addressing web accessibility with the creation and implementation of the University Counsel Web Accessibility Ad Hoc committee. The Office of Accessibility is looking forward to working with campus wide partners to address the unique challenges that come with creating an accessible digital environment for end users and students.

Appendix A
Charts and Tables

Year	OA increase in active students	UA increase in Fall enrollment
2009	14.0%	7.6%
2010	13.4%	4.8%
2011	10.8%	1.5%
2012	17.7%	-3.1%
2013	9.9%	-5.9%
2014	14.7%	-4.5%
2015	-4.8%	-2.7%
2016	-0.12%	-8.4%
2017	0.45%	-4.5%

Table 1: This table compares the increase in total enrollment for the Office of Accessibility and the University.
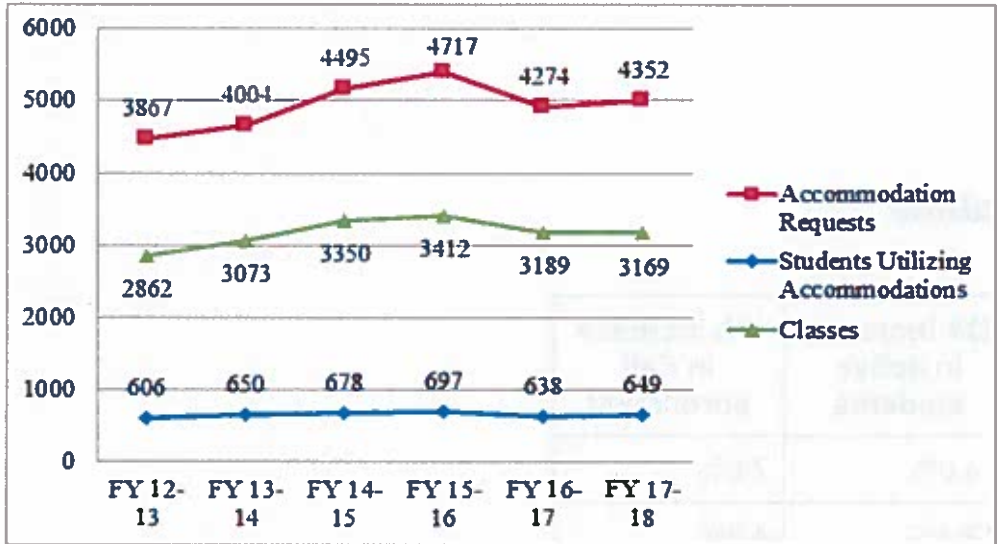
Figure 1: This chart compares the number of accommodations requested, amount of students utilizing accommodations, and number of classes that have accommodations requested from the OA over a six year period. Over the past six years there was an increase of 12.5% in accommodation requests, a 7.1% increase in students utilizing accommodations, and a 10.7% increase in the number of classes in which students requested accommodations.

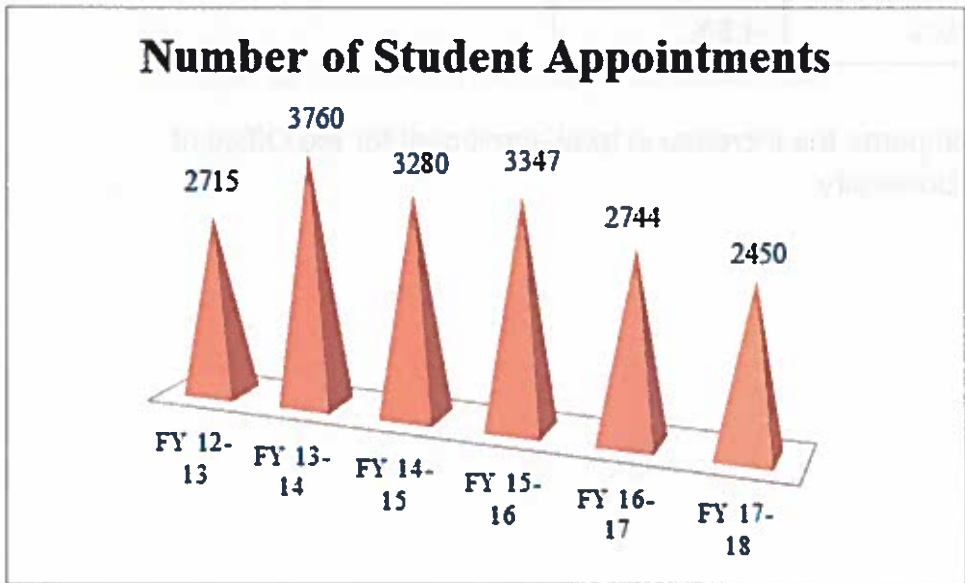**Number of Student Appointments**

Figure 2: In the last six years, there have been a fluctuating number of student appointments. This can be attributed to the fluctuation in our overall population. This

more significantly speaks to the needs of our current population who prefer to rely on email/phone communication versus in-person meetings.

200621 budget

	FY 13-14		FY 14-15		FY 15-16		FY 16-17		FY 17-18	
	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses
Personnel (FT, PT)	$273,069.00	$424,013.99	$261,223.24	$385,870.32	$388,422.00	$360,007.45	$527,896.81	$442,081.19	$429,274.55	$354,239.36
Graduate Assistant		$12,202.22	$12,500.00	$12,202.22	$ -	$13,571.24	$3,452.00	$13,035.55	$13,512.00	$13 2
Student Assistants	$39,800.00	$40,654.47	$38,640.91	$39,568.25	$ -	$48,758.24	$11,917.55	$40,701.18	$40,000.00	$45,0...21
Supplies and Services	$24,000.00	$95,341.72	$39,800.00	$12,985.24	$97,200.00	$15,864.48	$74,594.38	$49,208.47	$30,488.00	$15,349.11
Open commitments: Vendors (Interpreters, transcribers,			$96,900.00	$94,595.50	$380,700.00	$331,056.75	$ -	$7,086.00	$ -	$ -
Travel and Hospitality, Notetaking	$15,000.00	$59,707.51	$15,000.00	$54,407.02	$5,000.00	$44,010.75	$5,000.00	$1,200.00	$5,000.00	$626.97

201699 budget

	FY 13-14		FY 14-15		FY 15-16		FY 16-17		FY 17-18	
	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses	Budgeted	Expenses
Supplies and Services	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$59,040.93	$ -	$78,500.00	$16,104.79
Open commitments: Vendors (Interpreters, transcribers,	$ -	$ -	$30,000.00	$22,245.00	$62,000.00	$29,457.65	$526,000.00	$260,852.95	$296,500.00	$17,792.08
Travel and Hospitality, Notetaking	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$38,125.75	$38,000.00	$28,890.83

Table 2: These tables illustrate the line-item summary of budgeted and actual expenses for the Office of Accessibility budgets over the past five years.

Appendix B
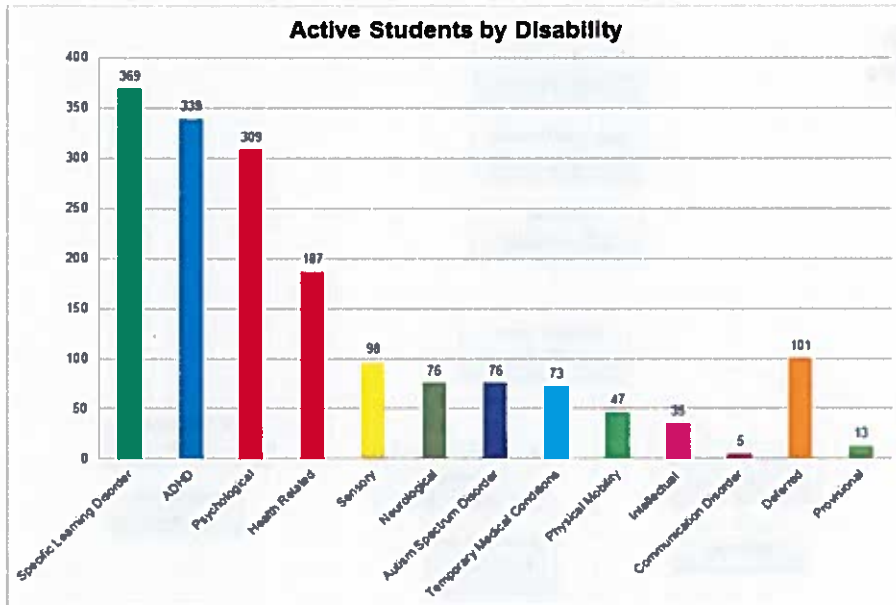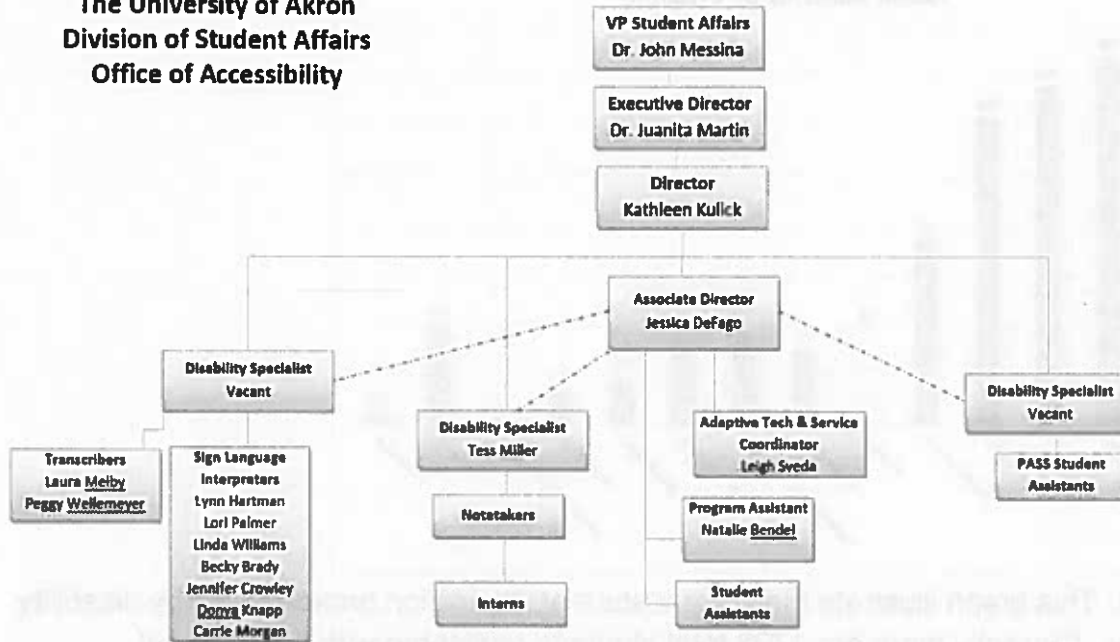# Snap Shot of OA Population

Active Students by Disability

Figure 1: This graph illustrate the current student population broken down by disability category. Currently there are 1728 total students registered with the Office of Accessibility.

Appendix C
Personnel

The University of Akron
Division of Student Affairs
Office of Accessibility

VP Student Affairs
Dr. John Messina

Executive Director
Dr. Juanita Martin

Director
Kathleen Kulick

Associate Director
Jessica DeFago

Disability Specialist
Vacant

Disability Specialist
Tess Miller

Adaptive Tech & Service Coordinator
Leigh Sveda

Disability Specialist
Vacant

Transcribers
Laura Melby
Peggy Wellemeyer

Sign Language Interpreters
Lynn Hartman
Lori Palmer
Linda Williams
Becky Brady
Jennifer Crowley
Donya Knapp
Carrie Morgan

Notetakers

Program Assistant
Natalie Bendel

PASS Student Assistants

Interns

Student Assistants

Title	Description
Director	Supervise full time staff; analyze student documentation; conduct student appointments; represents office in division-wide meetings
Associate Director	Directs the daily activities; Develop office programming; coordinate office outreach; Supervise and advise office employees; Develop, maintain and evaluate office policies and procedures; analyze student documentation; conduct student appointments
Disability Specialist & Service Coordinators	Analyze student documentation; conduct student appointments; Act as an advocate for students with disabilities; provide outreach to University and community partners; Oversee employment, training, and supervision of sign language interpreters, transcribers, notetakers, interns, student assistants for PASS program
Program Assistant	Gather information and conduct research to assist in development of programs; schedule program activities; data and record reporting; evaluation of current programming
Adaptive Technology & Service Coordinator	Administration and maintenance of office databases; coordination, administration and implementation of the provision of alternative textbooks and classroom materials; Develop and implement data collection strategies; Supervises cross trained office and adaptive lab student employees; Researches current trends in adaptive and campus technology.
Sign Language Interpreters	Provide sign language interpreting services for students in the classroom and university programs
Transcribers	Provide transcribing services for students in the classroom and for university programs