What Sets UA DRC Apart?

A Long History…
Arizona Disability Resources has a longstanding commitment to disability access. The DRC was founded over 40 years ago, pre-dating the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by nearly twenty years.

Commitment to Universal Design
In addition to staff who respond to requests for individual accommodations, we have several dedicated positions to address systemic design. Our goal is for our campus environment to be universally accessible and reduce or potentially eliminate the need for individual modifications or accommodations.

Adaptive Athletics
Arizona hosts the most comprehensive collegiate wheelchair and adaptive athletics program in the nation. With six competitive teams and an adaptive fitness center, we recruit and support a diverse range of athletes.

Disability Cultural Center
One of very few in the nation, Arizona’s disability cultural center (DCC) is a space for students, faculty and staff to explore and celebrate disability identity, culture and community. The DCC offers a variety of events and programming that promote an authentic and intersectional perspective on disability.

Leadership in Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
With almost 4,000 American and international members, AHEAD is a professional organization for disability resources professionals. DRC staff often present at AHEAD conferences and have consistent representation on the Board of Directors.

International Outreach
DRC is committed to international outreach and has partnerships with the U.S. Department of State that have included invitations to join international delegations to Ukraine and China, as well as our appointment as a site for the U.S. Global Sports Mentorship Program.

Study Abroad
DRC collaborates with Study Abroad to increase opportunities for Arizona students studying abroad or engaging with international exchange.

Accessible Earth is an innovative credit-bearing course designed to fulfill a capstone requirement for geoscience programs, traditionally known as field camp. DRC and the Geosciences Department saw a need to provide a sustainable, equitable and inclusive alternative to the traditional field camp experience that often presents many barriers. Accessible Earth allows students an accessible and meaningful field camp experience in Orvieto, Italy.
The University of Arizona
Disability Resource Center

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the University of Arizona (Arizona) leads the University in a progressive and proactive approach to campus access. Our goal is to ensure that disabled students, employees and visitors have a similar, if not identical, experience to that of their non-disabled counterparts. In addition to facilitating individual accommodations, DRC works proactively to impact the systemic design of our campus environments to be seamlessly accessible, reducing or eliminating the need for individual accommodations or modifications.

**Vision:** We envision a campus that is not only accessible but welcoming to all disabled and non-disabled students, employees and guests where community members are invested in the inclusion, representation and equitable participation of all.

**Mission:** We ensure that Arizona curricular, workplace, physical, information, technology and policy environments are usable, welcoming, and accessible through individual consultation, strategic partnerships and consistent outreach.

What informs our work?

**Social Justice** – Disability is an aspect of diversity, integral to our society and to Arizona. All disabled students and employees are valued members of this community and should have equitable access to everything they want and need.

**Disability Studies** – An academic field of inquiry that defines impairment as naturally occurring on the continuum of human difference asserting that individuals are disabled by their environments, not their impairments.

**Universal Design** – A set of strategies that contribute to experiences that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for individual adjustments.

**Operationalizing Our Values**

We believe that to impact an inclusive and welcoming campus experience for disabled folks, we must use a multi-faceted approach. DRC has a unique organizational model that balances individual requests and systemic design by:

- Working individually with students, employees and community members on requests for accommodations.
- Collaborating proactively with partners to design inclusive campus environments that may not necessitate the need for individual accommodations or retroactive modifications.
- Infusing progressive messaging about disability and inclusion across campus initiatives.

**Access exists on a spectrum.**

- Individual
- Separate
- Consumable
- Compliant

- Universal
- Identical
- Sustainable
- Welcoming

**Areas of Influence**

**Curricular Design** – Disability Resources’ staff works proactively with instructors in re-imagining the design of their courses, using concepts from universal design for learning. Our goal is to encourage faculty to think broadly about all the different characteristics students may bring to the classroom and to create educational experiences that maximize engagement without compromising rigor. When we are successful in this partnership, students will have access without the need for individual accommodations. As staff examine disability-related barriers, they explore the most sustainable and seamless options.

**Built Environment** – Arizona employs design standards for all new construction and renovation that exceeds Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Arizona Design Standards encourage and require, when possible, the implementation of a universally-designed built environment. DRC staff consult on planning for new construction and major renovation projects, as well as deferred maintenance. We regularly assess campus spaces and solicit feedback from community members.

**Technology & Information** – Arizona is committed to the full accessibility of all electronic and information technology to ensure equitable experiences for everyone. DRC staff consults on major software purchases to ensure access and offers online resources and in-person training to support staff and faculty in creating accessible and usable materials.

**Campus Events** – Social and academic events are important opportunities for the campus community to connect. DRC is committed to supporting event planners in creating welcoming experiences that reduce or eliminate accommodations. DRC staff consults on major campus events and offers training and resources such as our Accessible Event Planning Guide.

**Workplace** – DRC supports the accessibility of campus workplaces. Staff consults with employees and supervisors on ways to ensure inclusive and accessible workplace environments and employment practices. We partner with Human Resources and other units across campus that support employees.