The Office Under the Parking Garage:
Disability and Accommodations at the University of Chicago

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Dedication

To my cousin Claudia — who may be down, but is never out.

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Abstract

Although the number of disabled students attending postsecondary institutions has increased in recent decades, the postsecondary graduation rate for disabled students is significantly lower than the graduation rate for their nondisabled peers. While research has identified certain obstacles that disabled students face in postsecondary education, this research has not focused on the experiences of disabled students attending elite institutions. Through the use of a qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews with current and former undergraduates at the University of Chicago who have applied for accommodations, I identify various challenges these students face in receiving accommodations and having them honored. Additionally, I explore student-perceived peer, faculty, and administration attitudes towards accommodations, as well as the cultural aspects associated with elite institutions that hinder disabled students in pursuing their academic goals. The findings of this paper reveal a need for the University of Chicago's Student Disability Services (SDS) to be allotted increased authority in order to enforce the implementation of both academic and housing related temporary and permanent accommodations, increased measures on behalf of the University's administration to make the campus more physically accessible, and more training for students, faculty, and staff members at Student Disability Services regarding ableism, accommodations, and disability issues. These findings contribute to efforts to make postsecondary education more accessible for disabled students by identifying institutional barriers at elite universities.

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Introduction

In recent decades, the number of disabled students attending postsecondary institutions has increased, with them making up approximately 19% of the undergraduate student population in the United States during the 2015-2016 academic year, compared to approximately 3% in 1978 (National Center for Education Statistics 2018; National Council on Disabilities (NCD) 2003). This growth has occurred due to a variety of reasons, and there has been a considerable amount of research aimed at exploring the impacts of the passage of legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), as well as the development of new technologies (Krebs 2019; Rath and Royer 2002, 353-381). The ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act mandated that reasonable accommodations be provided to disabled students who attend postsecondary institutions, thus granting those students access to a college education; in parallel, new technologies have increased the number of accommodations available to disabled students (Berry and Nees 2013, 101-109; Madaus 2005, 32-37). However, in spite of these advancements, disabled students still do not have access to an equitable education, leading to a lower college graduation rate than their nondisabled peers (Barrera 2019, 8).

Although literature documents the increase in disabled students attending college, this research tends to focus on primary and secondary education, and the transition between secondary education and postsecondary education (Rath and Royer 2002, 353-381; United States Department of Health and Human Services 2016). Due to this focus on the transition between secondary education and postsecondary education, little work has been done to understand the experiences of students who are diagnosed with or develop a condition during their time in college. Additionally, while substantial research has been done to understand the personality

characteristics, the interpersonal skills, and the knowledge of rights that are necessary for disabled students to have in order to be more likely to succeed in college (e.g. self-advocacy and the ability to explain their condition; see Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010 and Rath and Royer 2002), this work focuses on the burdens placed on the students in the process of obtaining and having their accommodations honored by their professors and other faculty rather than on the institutional policies that allow for lapses in accommodations to occur. Finally, studies that focus on the perspectives of disabled students tend to obtain their participant pools from non-selective universities that oftentimes have specific programs aimed at attracting disabled students (e.g., Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010; Ludwig, Speridakos, and Weis 2014; May and Plotner 2017).

By drawing on 19 semi-structured interviews with current and recently graduated undergraduates at the University of Chicago who have applied for accommodations for either temporary or permanent conditions, I will address the gaps in literature pertaining to accommodations policies at elite universities and the institutional failures that allow for students to not be properly accommodated at the University. The Findings section will address issues with the accommodations process prior to and during a student's intake meeting with the University of Chicago's Student Disability Services (SDS), issues with having academic accommodations honored, and issues with accommodations that pertain to campus and residential student life. I will then use these findings to propose policy recommendations at the federal level and for the University Chicago and the University's Student Disability Services. These recommendations will be aimed at addressing the issues highlighted by participants in the accommodations granting and honoring process in order to work towards creating an educational environment that is both equitable for and reflects the needs of students.

Background

Theoretical Framework: Models of Disability

Disability and its meanings are theorized according to different models of disability, which differ in how they interpret what disability is and how it interacts with society (Goering 2015, 134). The model that society prefers and adheres to can impact the types of institutional barriers and safeguards in place for disabled people, as well as their overall experience of living within society's norms. The model that has historically been dominant in the United States is the medical model of disability (Areheart 2008, 185-188; Goering 2015, 134-138). This model sees disabilities as being caused by illnesses, traumas, diseases, or internal biological conditions (Drum et al. 2005, 30-31; Evans et al. 2017, 60-62). Additionally, the medical model labels disability as "a personal, medical problem, requiring ... an individualized medical solution ... [and posits that] people who have disabilities face no 'group' problem caused by society or that social policy should be used to ameliorate" (Areheart 2008, 186). Thus, the "solution" to an individual's disability must come from medical intervention by doctors who aim to cure or treat the individual's disability, and not from societal and institutional changes (Dawodu and Reppel 2014). In the 1950s, the idea of disabled individuals taking on the "sick role" in society was introduced into the medical model of disability. Under the "sick role," disabled people are not subject to the same social obligations as others (such as housework and holding employment) (Varul 2010, 72-73). Furthermore, it is the role of others to care for disabled people until they are "cured" and can resume their normal societal role. The concept of the "sick role" places the blame on disabled individuals if they do not seek medical help, do not prescribe to the treatment provided by medical professionals, and/or do not respond to treatment (Evans et al. 2017, 60-63).

Disability scholars have criticized the medical model of disability due to its narrow focus on the biological aspects of disability instead of taking on a more holistic view that includes factors such as culture, environment, and politics, and the prejudice that disabled people face as a result of those factors (Evans et al. 2017, 60-63). Due to the predominance of the medical model, it is often the framework through which policy makers and health professionals think about disability (Griffin, Meister, and Mora 2017, 9). If a university's student disability services adheres to this model, they would focus on the student getting access to appropriate health care and accommodations that impact the student rather than enact change within the institution as a whole (Evans et al. 2017, 60-63). Furthermore, in assessing which accommodations would be appropriate, a school's student disability services would solely consider medical documentation from the student's health care provider (Evans et al. 2017, 60-63; Griffin, Meister, and Mora 2017, 9-11).

In contrast, the social model of disability, which arose out of the civil rights and social justice movements of the 1960s, was developed largely as a critique of the medical model of disability (Jackson 2018, 4-5). The social model posits that disability derives from society, and creates a clear distinction between an individual's disability, and the institutional barriers in place that fail to accommodate disabled people and the systemic societal exclusion of disabled people (Bricout et al. 2004, 50-52; Krebs 2019). These barriers exist in all aspects of disabled individuals' lives, including in "work settings, housing options, education opportunities, civil rights, transportation, and access to the architectural environment" (Evans et al. 2017, 62). As a result, under this model, disability is a socially constructed concept and disabled people are an oppressed group who are othered in a society that exists under ableist norms and expectations (Evans et al. 2017, 62; Krebs 2019). The social model of disability argues against the creation of

separate or adapted facilities for disabled people because they further propagate the notion of disabled people being an "other" who do not fit in with what is considered "normal" within society (Oliver 2004,18-24). Staff at a university's student disability services following the social model of disability would have a different focus from a staff that follows the medical model of disability. Under the social model, the student disability services office would aim to remove environmental barriers, such as inaccessible classrooms and housing accommodations, inaccessible technology, and a lack of captioning on videos for classes (Evans et al. 2017, 63). This approach can work towards fighting the stigma that disabled students face on campus by enabling them to be included without being seen as different.

Although the social model has led to changes in society in regard to access and inclusion for disabled people, this model has also faced criticism. One of the weaknesses of the social model is that it ignores the impact of an individual's condition on their lives (Shakespeare 2010, 266-273). For example, by removing societal barriers, a chronically ill individual could potentially be freed from being disabled by society, but their disability could still be affecting their body. Furthermore, by excluding individual experiences, the social model fails to account for the various ways that people can experience disability due to how other factors, such as social identities, historical time, race, or gender, interact with society (Owens 2015, 388-390).

Additionally, the social model focuses heavily on material barriers, while ignoring the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability. Psycho-emotional disablism can manifest itself in three ways: in responses to experiences of structural disability, in interactions with others, and through internalized oppression (Reeve 2004, 89-94). For example, exclusion from certain physical environments is a type of structural disability. This experience imposes an emotional burden on the disabled individual because they are subjected to moving through spaces that were

not made with them in mind. Interactions with others can also place an emotional burden on disabled people. Within these interactions, people often ask disabled people inappropriate and intrusive questions, and subject them to unwanted pity (Evans et al. 2017, 64; Reeve 2004, 87-95). Moreover, internalized oppression can often occur on a subconscious level, and stems from a disabled person being subjected to the prejudices held by the dominant group. These prejudices, whether explicit or implicit, can make disabled people feel powerless and devalued (Reeve 2004, 87-95). It is important to note, though, that disabled people experience psycho-emotional disablism in different ways and to varying degrees. Additionally, the social model fails to acknowledge that removing all barriers for people with one type of impairment might create barriers for individuals with other types of impairments, and thus simplifies the complexity of truly removing all barriers.

Other models of disability exist and they vary in their ability to adequately suggest ameliorations to the societal barriers that disabled individuals face. Theories such as critical disability theory and the social justice model have been favored by disability scholars. The social justice model centers around both dignity and fighting ableist implicit assumptions that disability is a "negative status" (Evans et al. 2017, 81-90). This model focuses on both oppression and liberation, and on the intersectionality between the experiences and identities of disabled people. On the other hand, critical disability theory (CDT) also sees disability as a social construct (Hosking 2008), but posits that thinking about disability as solely a form of oppression is an incomplete approach. CDT also critiques the dichotomous nature of impairment and disability, and explores themes such as emancipation and human rights. Similar to the social justice model, CDT considers how disability interacts with an individual's other identities (Evans et al. 2017, 81-90). Since most postsecondary institutions currently employ the medical model (Loewen and

Pollard 2010, 11-12), a full review of social justice model and critical disability theory is beyond the scope of this paper. Although I argue that the social justice model and critical disability theory are better, more comprehensive approaches to disability than the medical model and the social model, they are generally not employed or considered for implementation within postsecondary institutions. Institutions that are considering shifting away from the medical model are instead turning towards the social model (Griffin, Meister, and Mora 2017, 9). In this paper, I will explore whether Student Disability Services office at the University of Chicago adheres to the medical model of disability or if they have made efforts to implement policies that align with the social model of disability.

Disparities in Postsecondary Education Attainment and Outcomes

Although there were strides in providing education to disabled students in the 1800s with the creation of Gallaudet University,[1] disabled individuals were subjected to discrimination and stereotypes and were not seen as able to contribute to society, which often led to them being institutionalized (Harbour and Madaus 2011, 5-8). Attitudes towards disabled people began to change in the aftermath of World War I as many veterans returned to the United States disabled. This subsequently led to the passage of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1918, which enabled some disabled veterans to access vocational education upon their return to the States. Around the mid-20th century, two key events contributed to the mitigation of the stigma surrounding disability: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was disabled, and World War II, which further expanded the population of disabled veterans. In 1944, Congress passed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, which provided additional educational opportunities for veterans by providing them with up to $500 in funding for tuition, books, and supplies for up to four years of school,

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[1] Gallaudet University is the world's first and only university with programs and services that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students.

depending on their length of service (Lashbrook 1944, 124-133). Veterans took advantage of this opportunity and by 1946, they constituted 52% of the total college population in the United States. Consequently, the number of disabled people accessing an education increased. This increase necessitated an examination of the accommodations that would have to be granted to disabled students in order for them to be able to properly participate in educational activities. In 1950, the American Council on Education (ACE) conducted a study to identify the services that disabled students would need to "enable them to achieve maximum progress in academic work" (Harbour and Madaus 2011, 5-8). This study identified three key areas that needed to be addressed: classroom facilities, housing facilities, and transportation infrastructure. This work then aided the emerging programs that were aimed at providing an education to disabled students; however, large scale legislative efforts would not occur until the 1970s. I discuss these efforts in detail in the following section.

The number of disabled students attending college has steadily increased in recent decades, marking an important stride for disabled students since postsecondary education is becoming increasingly valued (Dugan et al. 2010, 151). During the 2015-2016 academic year, disabled students made up approximately 19% of the undergraduate student population in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2018). Accessibility in education has also generally increased not only due to legislation, but also due to the emergence of new technologies and widespread computer usage (Berry and Nees 2013, 101-109). There is an increasing availability of applications and programs to support reading, applications to compensate for writing abilities (i.e., speech to text applications), read-aloud functions for testing, visual tools, and captioning applications, all of which can aid disabled students in completing their coursework (Svensson et al. 2019, 1-2).

Although legislation has been passed to aid disabled students in primary and secondary education with the aim of them attending college, disabled students are still less likely to obtain a college degree than their nondisabled peers (Dugan et al. 2010, 151; Krebs 2019). The United States Department of Education found that the graduation rate from postsecondary education institutions for disabled students is 34%, as opposed to the 59% graduation rate for nondisabled undergraduates (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2018). Additionally, disabled students are more likely than their nondisabled peers to graduate in six years instead of in four years and are less likely to be employed after graduation (Barrera 2019, 8). This disparity in educational outcomes consequently limits disabled students' earning potential and access to employer pensions, health insurance, and general employment (Andersson 2018, 9-12; Thoma et al. 2010 175-176; Banerjee, Madaus, and Merchant 2011, 571; Dugan 2010, 151-152). Additionally, higher education is associated with an increased development of independence, self-esteem, and long-term friendships (Thoma et al. 2010, 175-176). By being limited in their ability to attend and successfully graduate from college, disabled students are functionally closed off from the benefits that are associated with a postsecondary education.

Legislation and its Impacts

Building off of victories of the Civil Rights Movement, disability rights advocates began to demand equal treatment and opportunities for disabled individuals. Lobbying efforts occurred on both the local and federal level, and activists pushed for Congress to take action. As a result, in 1973, Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act as a replacement for the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 29 U.S.C. § 701). Since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a piece of civil rights legislation, it prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies or receiving federal financial assistance, in federal

employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors (United States Department of Labor, n.d.). Furthermore, Section 504 of this legislation specifically protects the rights of disabled people, and requires that school districts provide a "free appropriate public education (FAPE)" and "reasonable accommodations" to all of the disabled students that reside in their district, regardless of the nature of their disabilities (United States Department of Education 2020). Section 504 currently applies to any college or university that receives federal funding (Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc 2018). A majority of U.S. postsecondary institutions receive federal funding, thus they are required to provide accommodations and not discriminate against disabled students during both the admissions process and their enrollment at the school. It is important to note, however, that the FAPE clause of Section 504 does not apply on the postsecondary level.

Additionally, in 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), which established educational rights for disabled children. The EAHCA required that, in order to receive federal funding, states would have to develop regulations and laws which ensured that disabled students would receive a special education and a FAPE. The EAHCA defined a FAPE as an education and services that:

- are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge
- meet standards of the State educational agency,
- include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved, and
- are provided in conformity with the individualized education program (Education for All Handicapped Children Act Public Law 94-142 (1975)).

In order to ensure that disabled students were receiving a FAPE, Congress required that every disabled student in primary and secondary education receive an individualized education program (IEP). An IEP is created by the student's school, the student's parents, and relevant

school staff who may know the student. After the age of 14, students are required to be invited to IEP meetings however, they can begin attending these meetings earlier if they and their parents decide to do so.

However, since Congress' definition of a free appropriate public education did not provide a substantive explanation of what exactly constituted a FAPE, various court cases and due process hearings ensued. In the landmark case *Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley* (1982), the United States Supreme Court held that the EAHCA was intended to provide disabled students with access to an education and that this education had to "be sufficient [so as to] confer some educational benefit upon the handicapped child" (*Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176 (1982)). This decision, however, did not establish that the education that was provided to disabled students had to be equal to the education that was provided to other children because the court found that Congress did not specify the level of education that was to be attained by disabled students in the EAHCA (Hazelkorn, Katsiyannis, and Yell 2007, 2-9). In subsequent cases, courts have applied a more robust standard for the quality of education provided to disabled students by ruling that schools had to provide special education programs which would allow disabled students to gain a "meaningful benefit" and make tangible progress (McAndrews n.d.).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has been modified in the decades since it was passed into law. As Congress intended for the act to be reauthorized every four to five years, it was ultimately renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. Substantive changes occurred in 1997 when Congress imposed requirements on IEPs that focused more on improving the educational outcomes of students as opposed to simply ensuring access (Hazelkorn, Katsiyannis, and Yell 2007, 6-9). The new IEP requirements mandated that the plans feature annual goals and a means through which a student's progress towards those

goals could be measured. This new mandate would serve as a check on the special education

services that were being provided to the student because it would assess their effectiveness for

each student's particular situation. The changes to the IDEA also focused on increasing

participation in the general education curriculum. Students would be included in standardized

tests administered by the state to ensure that they were on track to meet "the educational

standards within the jurisdiction of all of the public agencies that apply to all children"

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Public Law 101-476 (1990)). This new

standard meant that further personalization was needed when developing each student's IEP,

implicitly raising the standard for a free appropriate public education as well.

Then, in 2004, with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement

Education Act, the IDEA underwent additional changes which were again aimed at improving

educational outcomes for disabled students (Individuals with Disabilities Improvement

Education Act Public Law 108–446 (2004)). This improvement in educational outcomes for

disabled students was deemed an "essential element of [the United States'] national policy of

ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic

self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities" and reflected a more comprehensive look at the

potential benefits of an education (Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act

Public Law 108–446 (2004)). After these changes were passed into law, IEPs were required to

include reliable evidence that the program or service being offered to the student works, as well

as appropriate postsecondary goals for the student and the services that the student would need in

order to achieve those goals. The changes also required that schools conduct periodic

assessments of the student's progress towards annual academic goals and mandated the creation

of a Summary of Performance (SOP). An SOP is required for disabled students who are

graduating with a high school diploma or are aging out of the special education system and is

intended to provide both a summary of the child's academic achievements and recommendations for achieving the child's postsecondary education goals (Walter, n.d.). It is important to note that, unlike the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act does not apply to postsecondary institutions, meaning that the benefits and protections that the legislation provides do not extend to college students.

Another piece of relevant legislation is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which is a civil rights bill that was passed in 1990. The ADA prohibits disabled individuals from being discriminated against in all areas of public life (Americans with Disabilities Act 42 U.S.C. § 12101 (1990)). Title II of the ADA covers public schools, while Title III provides protections for students in private schools. Since the ADA's protections are less narrow than the ones provided by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, it extends coverage to disabled students across a greater number of institutions. Additionally, the ADA requires that schools provide "reasonable accommodations" for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are defined as "modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job" (U.S. Department of Education 2007). Furthermore, at postsecondary educational institutions, if a student identifies as disabled, schools are required to provide "appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that the institution does not discriminate on the basis of disability" and accessible housing if it provides housing to nondisabled students (United States Department of Education 2011). Although the ADA does not provide an exhaustive list of what could qualify as a reasonable accommodation, examples include, but are not limited to, extended time during testing, access to notetakers, and auxiliary aids. These aids and services are to be provided unless doing so would impose an undue hardship onto the institution or would fundamentally change the nature of the school's

program (Porter 2019, 2-4). Due to the differing legal standards for accommodations between the secondary level and the postsecondary level, not all students are eligible to receive the accommodations that they received in secondary education during their postsecondary education. Some improvement did occur, however, in 2008, when the ADA was amended to change its definition of a disability, which allowed a greater number of individuals to qualify under the definition of disabled, thus making them eligible for protection under the ADA. The amendment broadened the definition of a disability by specifying that a disability "includes any impairment that is episodic or in remission if it would substantially limit a majority life activity when active," prohibited the consideration of the effects of "mitigating measures when addressing whether an impairment substantially limits a person's major life activities," and expanded the definition of major life activities (Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act Public Law 110–325 (2008)).

The Transition from Secondary to Postsecondary Education for Disabled Students

Due to the 2004 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, high schools became responsible for conducting transition planning for a student's post-graduation life as part of the student's IEP, which has, in turn, helped increase the number of disabled students who are attending college (Madaus and Shaw 2010). This transition planning must begin prior to the student's 16th birthday and must include the student's preferences, the student's goals, and the services that would be needed by the child to achieve those goals (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Public Law 101-476 (1990)). The transition plan, however, does not require the school to work with the student to update their 2documentation before they either graduate or age out of eligibility for services nor is the school required to assess the student to see if they are eligible to be considered a disabled student at a

different educational institution (i.e., a college) (Banerjee, Madaus, and Merchant 2011, 571-576). Instead, schools are only required to create a Summary of Performance. This policy, in conjunction with the differing legal requirements between high schools and colleges, leads to "documentation disconnect," which is the disconnect "between the nature and extent of disability documentation generated during a student's public school career and the documentation required to access services at the postsecondary education level" (Ludwig, Speridakos, and Weis 2014, 565).

In order to understand what causes documentation disconnect, it is important to understand the differences between the legislation that applies to students in primary and secondary education and the legislation that applies to students in postsecondary education. One of the issues that disabled students face in the postsecondary transition process is the change in their legal rights and responsibilities **(**Banerjee, Madaus, and Merchant 2011, 571). The educational rights that are established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act do not apply to college students, as the IDEA does not extend to postsecondary education. Furthermore, the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which do apply to postsecondary institutions, are civil rights bills that do not contain explicit educational rights. One of the challenges that disabled students face regarding accommodations at a postsecondary institution as a result of the differences in these legislation is the process of requesting the accommodations on their own. In primary and secondary education, the burden of identifying a student as disabled falls on the school, but in postsecondary education, the student must take the initiative to disclose their disability to the appropriate office in order to apply for accommodations. Upon applying for accommodations, students are then responsible for providing proof of their disability, which is where students begin to experience documentation disconnect. Many students and parents are not aware that the student's IEP does not serve as sufficient documentation for receiving

accommodations in college, even though this document has been used to outline the accommodations and services that were deemed necessary by the student's previous school(s) (Shaw et al. 2010, 143-144). With regards to SOPs, secondary schools have been shifting away from quantitative documentation (i.e., standardized testing scores and cognitive ability tests) and instead moving towards more qualitative documentation (Shaw et al. 2010, 143-148; Ludwig, Speridakos, and Weis 2014, 565). Postsecondary institutions, on the other hand, often require and solely rely on quantitative measures such as comprehensive psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluations to establish disability.

Additionally, colleges often require that the documentation submitted for the accommodations process be from the past three years; however, many students lack such documentation because schools are not required to complete a retesting of a student's disability and needs unless the condition changes (Shaw 2006, 110). Furthermore, secondary school districts often do not have the resources to be able to provide the accommodations documentation that postsecondary institutions require (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities 2007, 266-267). As a result, obtaining the documentation that is necessary for postsecondary institutions could impose a financial burden on the student and/or their parents, which could potentially bar students from being able to receive the accommodations that they would need to succeed. Socioeconomic status also impacts health outcomes, as people of lower socioeconomic status may have more limited access to healthcare due to costs and either lack of or limited insurance coverage (Arpey, Gaglioti, and Rosenbaum 2017, 169-170). This limited access to healthcare can thus impact a student's ability to receive accommodations at their postsecondary institution as they may not be able to afford or access medical care or the diagnostic tests that would be required for new documentation of their disability.

The process of applying for accommodations is also more comprehensive on the primary and secondary levels, as the school district is required to provide an "assessment of disability, [a] classi[fication of] disability, and involve the parents" (University of Southern Indiana, n.d.). Furthermore, assessments by the school district are made by professionals and school staff who are familiar with the student, with the school determining which accommodations and services the student needs (Madaus 2005, 32-37). On the postsecondary level, however, such a process does not exist, and students are required to request specific accommodations on their own (Stodden and Conway 2003, 4). Additionally, staff at postsecondary institutions are not legally required to be trained to understand different disabilities and accommodations, with many student disability services staff members expressing that much of the training happens on the job (Behling and Cioffi, n.d.; Madaus 2005, 32). This lack of training can limit the effectiveness of such personnel because they may lack both an understanding of students' various conditions and the expertise necessary to understand accommodation documentation (Shaw 2006, 111). As a result, students may lack the guidance that they need to navigate the accommodations process.

The new process that students must follow to receive accommodations on the postsecondary level also allows for students with certain skill sets to be more successful at doing so than others. Students who are more aware of their legal rights are often more likely to seek and obtain accommodations because they are aware of what they are entitled to under the law (Bolt et al. 2011, 171). Additionally, self-advocacy plays an important role in a student's ability to obtain accommodations, as the burden to obtain documentation and explain to the postsecondary institution's student disability services personnel which accommodations they need falls on the student (Roper 2016, 9-10; Stodden and Conway 2003, 4). Upon receiving accommodations, it is also the student's responsibility to inform professors of these accommodations and to speak with them to identify a plan for how to implement these

accommodations within the context of the professor's specific class (Roper 2016, 9-10). These new responsibilities make the ability to self-advocate crucial as the student will not only have to fully understand and explain their needs, but they will also have to demonstrate how their accommodations can be adapted to meet the requirements of their courses (Madaus and Shaw 2010).

Having the ability to self-advocate can depend on when the student is initially diagnosed, with students who are diagnosed earlier in their academic careers tending to have better self-advocacy skills than those who are diagnosed later (Cano-Smith 2009, 38). One explanation for this phenomenon is that students who are diagnosed earlier are more familiar with the specific academic needs of their disability and have had more time practicing explaining their need for accommodations in a school setting. Moreover, although the benefits of a student having the ability to advocate for themselves have been studied extensively, there is little research regarding the ability of students to self-advocate after they are diagnosed with a condition during college (Bolt et al. 2011; Cano-Smith 2009; Dugan et al. 2010; Stodden and Conway 2003; Thoma et al. 2010). This gap in the literature grows when examining the ability of students to self-advocate at elite universities, where they may face challenges that are different from the ones faced by students at other institutions due to the highly rigorous nature of their work.

The need to self-disclose a disability also impacts whether a student will apply for, and eventually utilize, accommodations when they attend a postsecondary institution. Since postsecondary institutions are not required to identify disabled students, students may choose to not disclose their disability for multiple reasons. The literature has identified four factors that influence the disclosure behaviors of disabled individuals: the relationship between them and the nondisabled other, the relevance or appropriateness of disclosure dependent upon the context of

the situation, the appropriateness of the nondisabled person's response, and the perceived appropriateness of disclosure based upon the disabled person's own personal feelings regarding their disability (Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010, 413-414; Braithwaite 1991, 264-268). The first three factors are important to consider in regard to the process of disclosing a condition and accommodations to faculty members. Although students will have a letter of accommodations to present to the faculty member, the student needs to have a discussion with them about how to apply those accommodations within the requirements of the course. As a result, the questions that follow from the faculty member can be highly personal (Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010, 412-414). This situation can then create an uncomfortable experience for some students as they would be sharing personal information with an individual that they do not know, thus potentially dissuading them from disclosing all relevant information. In regard to the fourth factor, college students may hesitate to apply for accommodations due to a social stigma and a desire to maintain normalcy (Kranke et al. 2013, 41-43; Krebs 2019). As they transition to a new environment, students may not want to have to face the stigma associated with receiving accommodations, especially if their condition is an "invisible" disability (Cole and Cawton 2015, 170). Additionally, disabled students do not want to be seen as fragile or less competent, or have their peers believe that standards are being lowered for them due to their disability (Lyman et al. 2016, 127-131; Hong 2015, 213-220). The ability to overcome these stigmas may require that students have a level of self-acceptance about their condition (Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010, 421). Although the literature has identified these factors, there has been insufficient research regarding how they manifest at elite institutions. It is important to explore this aspect of disabled students' experiences because the aforementioned issues with disclosure may be amplified at these institutions, which could prevent more students from receiving and accepting the accommodations that they need in order to be successful.

Defining Group of Study

Although the term "disability" has various definitions depending on the legal standard being applied, for the purposes of this paper, I will be using the definition established by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). The ADAAA defines a disability, with respect to an individual, to be:

- "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
- "a record of such an impairment; or
- being regarded as having such an impairment" (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act Public Law 110-325 (2008)).

The ADAAA also defines the term major life activity as including, but not limited to, "caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working…[A] major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions." It also defines meeting the requirement of "being regarded as having such an impairment" as:

> an individual [who is able to establish] … that he or she has been subjected to an action prohibited under this Act because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity. [This] shall not apply to impairments that are transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act Public Law 110-325 (2008)).

This definition is utilized by the University of Chicago's Student Disability Services to determine eligibility for accommodations (University of Chicago Student Disability Services, n.d.). Additionally, for the purposes of this paper, the terms "disabled" and "disability" will also

refer to students who are chronically ill or who have a chronic illness. Furthermore, I draw a

distinction between different types of permanent conditions: chronic and non-chronic. This

distinction is necessary because of the differences in how chronic and non-chronic conditions

impact students' academics since this difference can necessitate different types of

accommodations. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, when I refer to an issue regarding

accommodations for a permanent condition, the situation described applies to students with

either chronic or non-chronic conditions.

Data and Methods

Data Sources

The data in this study comes from 19 semi-structured interviews with current and

recently graduated undergraduate students from the University of Chicago who have applied for

accommodations for permanent (either chronic or non-chronic) and/or temporary conditions. I

decided to make the interviews semi-structured because I thought that format could be easily

adaptable to students sharing varied stores. Current students from all divisions at the University

of Chicago were eligible to participate, as well as former students who had graduated in the past

three years. Students who had graduated more than three years ago were not eligible to

participate in this study because I wanted to ensure that the information my participants provided

about Student Disability Services' and the University of Chicago's administration's policies, as

well as faculty members' willingness to accommodate students, remained applicable to the

current context. Although I chose to recruit students from all divisions of the University in the

study in order to get a sample that was representative, only 1 of the participants belonged to a

division other than the College.[2] That participant, however, also attended the College prior to

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[2] The undergraduate division at the University of Chicago is the College.

attending the School of Social Service Administration at the University. As a result of the demographics of the participants, my findings pertain solely to the experiences of undergraduates at the University. Out of the 19 participants in the study, 6 identified as having a chronic illness, 9 identified as having a non-chronic condition, and 4 identified as either having or have had a temporary condition (Appendix A). From the 15 participants who applied for accommodations for a permanent condition, 13 self-identified as disabled and/or chronically ill. Although 2 of the participants who applied for accommodations for a permanent condition did not self-identify as disabled, their condition would fall under the ADA's definition of a disability.[3]

I recruited participants by posting recruitment information in both various Facebook groups pertaining to different University of Chicago communities and on Instagram, and by contacting Students for Disability Justice, an on-campus student organization at the University, and asking them to share my post with their members. The posts contained a link to a pre-screener survey (Appendix B), information on the topics and the approximate length of the interviews for my study, my contact information, and information regarding the monetary compensation that participants would receive for their participation ($10). The pre-screener survey allowed respondents to express their interest in participating in my study, indicate whether they had applied for accommodations for a non-chronic, chronic, and/or temporary condition, share demographic information, and indicate whether or not they would need any accommodations to participate in the study. If the respondent indicated that they had applied for an accommodation for a permanent or temporary condition, I contacted them by email to schedule a time for their interview and to ask them if they preferred to speak over Zoom or by

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[3] Although outside the scope of this paper, I direct interested readers to Evans et al. 2017 (155-157) for a discussion on disability and identity that explains the discrepancy between students' self-identification and the ADA's definition of a disability.

telephone. Once the date was selected, but prior to the interview, I sent the participants a consent form for both their participation in the study and for having their interview recorded. The interviews would still proceed if the participant did not consent to having their interview recorded.

All of the interviews were conducted through Zoom, with each of them lasting approximately an hour. At the beginning of each interview, I reminded the participant that they could stop the interview at any time and refuse to answer any questions. The interviews contained questions regarding the participants' experiences with the accommodations request process, the intake meeting with Student Disability Services, the accommodations approval process, having their accommodations honored, their general experience with Student Disability Services, any policy recommendations they had, and demographic information (see Appendix C for the interview guide). Additionally, the questions were structured in a way that followed the chronological order that students would follow to receive accommodations and have them granted. I chose to structure the interviews in this way to make the participants feel like they were telling a story, thus making the interview less formal and making the participants feel more comfortable. Depending on the participant's individual experiences, some questions were omitted. For example, if a student only had housing-related accommodations, questions regarding professors honoring accommodations were not asked.

I allowed each participant to share as much information as they were willing to share and made sure to ask them at the end of each section of questions if there was anything else about their experience that they felt was important to share with me. This follow-up question allowed me to gain a better understanding of the challenges my participants faced in receiving and having their accommodations honored. Additionally, by asking this question, I was able to identify

whether there were any gaps in my interview guide. Furthermore, since I had emphasized to my participants that their interview was an opportunity for them to share as much about their experience as they thought was necessary and for them to give as much information as they felt comfortable sharing, my choice of a semi-structured interview format allowed me to create that kind of interview experience for my participants.

Data Analysis

During the interviews, I took preliminary notes on the general themes that the participants emphasized. As I conducted my interviews, I narrowed in on specific themes to pay attention to, noting if certain themes were present in either each or most of the interviews, if a participant did not touch on a certain theme, and if a participant stated information that either went against my initial assumptions or varied significantly from the information provided by other participants. All of my participants consented to having their interview recorded, which allowed me to generate transcripts of the interviews by uploading the audio recordings into Otter.ai, a transcription service. Additionally, in order to protect the identities of my participants, I assigned each participant a pseudonym, and only their division at the University of Chicago and general categorization of their condition (non-chronic, chronic, or temporary condition) will be published.

After cleaning and reviewing the transcripts to ensure their accuracy, I coded them using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis program. First, I coded quotes according to the general thematic categories that my questions focused on. After completing that round of coding, I analyzed the quotes that fell into each thematic category to see if there were any subcategories that I could create based off of those themes. For the theme "policy recommendations," I coded the appropriate quotes into three smaller categories: "recommendations for SDS,"

"recommendations for the University of Chicago administration," and "recommendations for faculty." For the theme "having accommodations honored," I created three subcategories — "faculty," "housing," and "campus access" — to distinguish between different types of experiences with accommodations. Additionally, I created a category for various steps of the accommodations process ("prior to intake meeting," "intake meeting," and "receiving accommodations") and created the subcategories "positive," "somewhat positive," "neutral," "somewhat negative," and "negative" for each of those categories. I then compared my coding scheme to the initial notes that I took during interviews to ensure that my interpretation of the information remained consistent over time.

Limitations

The study's limitations stem from the participants I was able to recruit. Potential selection bias may have occurred since students who had a more negative experience with Student Disability Services, faculty members, and/or other University staff members may be more likely to participate in this study than students who had a positive experience. Due to their negative experiences, my participants might have felt a stronger desire to participate in order to feel like they are being heard, while also aiding in working towards illuminating the issues and barriers that disabled students face on campus and at postsecondary institutions in general, thus potentially skewing the data. I argue, however, that even if this skew in the data does exist, patterns of negative experiences found in a sample size of 19 participants indicate that issues with accommodations at the University of Chicago do occur and need to be addressed. Additionally, I was not able to obtain a varied gender distribution in my participants, as only one participant identified as male and only one participant identified as woman-presenting, while the rest of the participants identified as female. Although the University of Chicago does not release

a demographic breakdown of students who are disabled or receive accommodations, due to the demographics of the University as a whole and the lack of gender disparities in the demographics of disabled students receiving a postsecondary education, it is unlikely that this is a representative sample.[4]

Researcher Positionality

Initially, I did not plan on disclosing to my participants that I was a part of the disabled community at the University of Chicago because I wanted to remain as neutral as possible throughout the interviews. However, during the interviews, disabled participants would often detail the emotional burden that they faced when describing the experience of explaining navigating daily life as a disabled individual to the staff at Student Disability Services, faculty members, and their peers. They expressed that there was a level of understanding that people who are not a part of the disabled community could never achieve, and that this contributed to their feeling of discomfort when speaking to others about their experiences at the University. In order to make the interviews more comfortable for my participants, I decided to disclose information about my own identity to all of the participants when it fit naturally into the conversation. As a result, the data can be analyzed as a whole since there is no subgroup of participants who did not learn of my identity.

I noticed that this allowed participants to speak more openly with me as they often referred to our mutual understanding of the disabled experience. Consequently, participants spent less time detailing the procedural aspects of applying for and receiving accommodations because they knew that I understood the process, and instead shared more details about their personal

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[4] Statistics surrounding gender distributions of disabled students attending postsecondary education generally have assumed binary categories and have only allowed participants to identify as either male or female.

experiences, oftentimes telling me information about specific situations and how those situations made them feel. As a result, I gained an even greater understanding of the emotional toll the institutional issues placed on my participants than I would have achieved had I not disclosed my identity. Additionally, although I had emphasized that participants did not have to share any information about the specifics of their condition, nor did I ask any questions that focused on ascertaining that information, most of my participants did volunteer information about their specific condition as well as a detailed explanation of the accommodations that they received after I disclosed information about my own condition. This willingness to be more open seemed to stem from my own openness, and thus allowed me to obtain more detailed and meaningful data, which I describe in-depth in the subsequent section.

Findings

Students at the University of Chicago have faced issues throughout various stages of the accommodations approval process and in having those accommodations honored. Students' experiences tended to vary based on the nature of their condition and either the faculty member's or the University staff member's understanding of it. Students with accommodations for temporary conditions were more likely to have a positive experience with their accommodations than students who were applying for accommodations for a permanent condition. Furthermore, issues with accommodations extended to various aspects of the college experience, including housing, classrooms, and study abroad programs. Although students have undertaken various approaches in resolving issues relating to their accommodations, they have been limited in doing so due to institutional policies and attitudes. In this section, I will first provide an overview of the processes through which students can apply for and receive accommodations. Then I will discuss issues that participants faced prior to their intake meetings with Student Disability Services,

during their intake meeting with SDS, and when communicating the accommodations that they had been granted to faculty. Next, I will detail issues that participants encountered with having accommodations honored and the subsequent steps they took to rectify those situations. Finally, I will discuss issues with campus related accommodations and campus accessibility, as well as how students handled the difficulties they faced regarding these accommodations.

The Accommodations Request Process

In order to receive accommodations from SDS at the University of Chicago, students must fill out a form in order to begin the process of receiving accommodations. This form requires the student to provide contact information, select the accommodations that they used in high school from a provided list of accommodations (if applicable), select the accommodation(s) that they are requesting from a provided list, and answer questions regarding their condition and the accommodation(s) that they are requesting. After the student completes this form, they must upload documentation of their disability from a medical professional. Additionally, SDS provides guidelines for documentation for different types of disabilities and has created four distinct categories of disabilities: ADHD, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and psychological disabilities. This is a new system, introduced in the Autumn Quarter of the 2020-2021 academic year. Under the old policy, however, in order to begin the process of receiving accommodations, a student had to contact the director of SDS or a staff member at SDS. Under both the old and new systems, upon receiving the student's request to begin the process, SDS would instruct the student to create an AIM Student Portal Account, which the student would then use to complete a request form detailing their disability and the accommodation(s) that they are applying for. Students would also be instructed to upload documentation of their disability. This required documentation can include:

- A completed Provider Report and/or a copy of a medical provider report of any physical disabilities (if applicable);
- A completed Clinical Verification Form and/or documentation of any psychological or learning disabilities, which may include a neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation (if applicable);
- A copy of correspondence from the College Board/ACT/GRE (if applicable)
- A copy of accommodation records from a previous institution, such as a high school IEP Plan, or a University accommodation letter (if applicable).

Furthermore, for students who have learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and psychological disorders, either the Director or a staff member at SDS would identify required diagnostic tests and would provide the student with contact information for local testers, if needed (University of Chicago Student Disability Services, n.d.).

After the required documentation is submitted, the student has to meet with a staff member at SDS to discuss their condition and the accommodations that they would need. This meeting could occur over the phone or in-person at SDS' office, which is located underneath a parking garage on the north end of campus (Appendix D). In certain circumstances, SDS might have had to consult with external medical professionals to review the accommodations request either before or after this meeting. After the student met with a staff member at SDS, the staff member would then discuss the student's request with a committee of SDS staff members, who decide which accommodations to ultimately granted the student based on:

- The functional limitations caused by the disability;
- The essential requirements/elements of the academic program, course and/or University sponsored student life activity;
- The student's past performance with and without reasonable accommodation;
- The student's history of disability-related difficulties in participating in academic and/or University sponsored student life programs.
- Previous modification(s) or adjustment(s) received by the student in an educational setting; and
- A review of the recommended reasonable accommodation by the appropriate professional (University of Chicago Student Disability Services, n.d.).

Once a decision is reached, the student would be given an Accommodations Determination Letter, which states the accommodations the student was granted.

In order to then have the granted accommodations honored by faculty members, the student must send each of their professors and/or instructors their accommodations determination letter through the AIM Student Portal. After doing so, the student must speak with the faculty members to discuss the implementation of their accommodation(s). The faculty member is not informed of the student's disability and is only made aware of the granted accommodations that the student chooses to use for that particular course.

SDS also offers provisional reasonable accommodations, which are generally only used for the duration of one quarter. Students are eligible for provisional reasonable accommodations if they have requested reasonable accommodations, have received educational accommodations previously, and the accommodations request process cannot be completed before the quarter begins. Although these accommodations may be extended, this extension is not guaranteed, and a subsequent request for long-term accommodations could either result in different accommodations or in the student being deemed ineligible for accommodations.

It is important to note, however, that applying for accommodations is not a guarantee of being given the opportunity to go through the full process of obtaining accommodations. One participant, Paige, got in contact with Student Disability Services to begin the process of receiving accommodations after taking a leave of absence from the University. During her conversation with SDS, Paige was told that she could not apply for accommodations at the time because her condition was not impacting her to the fullest extent that it could, and that she had to wait to apply until her symptoms worsened:

> They told me to apply again later. So basically, I'm bipolar … And so after I got that diagnosis, I called the school and I was like, "hey, I think it's fairly light, or I'm worried that I'll get depressed again [in the] winter. Like, is there any way that I could apply for

accommodations, knowing that that might happen? And they could even be like, contingent or something, but just have [the accommodations] because it takes ... it's a long process, and it takes a long time." And I was thinking like, well, this is a chronic illness, I am disabled, even if my symptoms aren't bad, but they just basically were like, "you can't apply right now. You have to wait till you're more depressed before you can apply for accommodations."

Some participants did not receive accommodations by going through SDS. One of the participants, Zooey, went to her advisor to receive informal accommodations for a temporary condition because she did not know that she was eligible for accommodations through SDS, nor was she ever informed that she could apply for accommodations through SDS. Unfortunately, since the accommodations that she received were neither formally documented nor approved by SDS, Zooey's professors were under no legal obligation to honor them. In other cases, students who received accommodations through Student Disability Services did not utilize SDS to receive other accommodations. For example, Sandy, who has academic accommodations through SDS, did not apply for housing accommodations through SDS, and instead spoke directly with Housing & Residence Life (Housing). In some of these cases, this occurred because students were not aware that SDS could aid them in getting accommodations that extend outside of the classroom, while others did not want to formally go through the process of changing or adding additional accommodations through SDS due to either the length of time that it would take or due to a negative previous experience with SDS. When some students opted to not get SDS involved with changing or adding additional academic accommodations, they attempted to create informal accommodations by making agreements with faculty members, which consequently ran the risk of faculty members denying them accommodations.

Ultimately, both the new and former accommodations request processes are reflective of the medical model of disability, as they define students' conditions through the documentation provided by healthcare providers instead of by centering on students' experiences with disability

or their temporary condition(s). The processes further adhere to the medical model because the accommodations that can be provided will solely impact the particular student applying for them rather than lead to change within the institution itself (Evans et al. 2017, 60-63; Griffin, Meister, and Mora 2017, 9-11). Below, I describe the issues that students faced with accommodations which, in part, arise due to SDS' ascribing to the medical model of disability.

Prior to the Intake Meeting

Lack of Information

Students who are diagnosed in college often do not know that they can receive accommodations through Student Disability Services. Six of my participants did not know they were eligible for accommodations at the University of Chicago due to a lack of information about the work that the office does and whether their conditions would qualify as something that could be accommodated by the University. Participants, such as Kit, learned that they could be eligible for accommodations through informal conversations with other students who have applied for accommodations, or through faculty members or other mentors with whom they discussed their condition. Kit explained that she "heard [about eligibility for accommodations] through a grad student in the lab [she] worked for. [The graduate student] works with SDS and disability advocacy." Even after this interaction, Kit was still not sure if she would be eligible for accommodations as "the wording [on Student Disability Services' website] seemed too vague." Similarly, Madelyn and Beverly were both "wellness czars" for their respective houses while they lived in the University's dorms, which provided them with information about Student Disability Services. In spite of that, both Madelyn and Beverly relied on information from others to know that they were eligible for accommodations. Beverly dealt with symptoms from her

condition for an entire academic quarter before a professor suggested she obtain accommodations:

> I went into her office, I'm like, "I am really not doing well. I'm having a lot of issues … I keep running out of time." I knew the stuff [but] I left half of an exam blank. And all the stuff that I answered I got right. But with half of it blank like there's no way to do well. And so I told her like, "I just can't do it quick enough, you can ask me the rest of these questions. I will tell you the rest of these answers, but I just cannot move quickly anymore. And I think I'm having, you know, concussive symptoms and I think you would understand that [since] you're teaching the workings of the brain." [And] she did understand that, and she was like, "you know, I'm really sorry this is happening to you, the grades are gonna stand, but like, I really want you to go to SDS."

As seen in Beverly's case, a lack of knowledge regarding eligibility for accommodations can subsequently lead to consequences other than a delay in applying for accommodations, such as academic consequences. Although Beverly eventually was able to apply and receive accommodations, her academic performance was already impacted:

> Winter Quarter, first year, I took stat[istic]s … I was submitting things late, constantly, bombing on the exams, partially because I didn't have enough time to get through half the questions. It was the same thing. The first half questions I could do, the second half I ran out of time … I missed a lot of assignments. And then with my completely inaccurate perception of time I did not budget my time well for readings and I couldn't stay focused on anything for a long time. So I felt like all I was doing was school and like never having any time to relax because it took me so long to get through everything … I withdrew from [a class in] fall of 2017 … So yeah, there was a lot of stuff I was not doing very well on. And same in the spring, things were late, things were half finished.

This sentiment was echoed by Cleo, who "graduated late because [she] could not pass [her] classes because [she] did not have accommodations." Not only can the academic consequences resulting from a lack of knowledge about accommodations have a permanent impact on a student's academic standing at the University, but the effects can extend beyond a student's time at the institution since many job applications and applications to graduate school require an examination of academic records. In addition to the academic consequences, students who were not aware that they qualified for accommodations dealt with campus accessibility issues. For

instance, Avery was not aware that she was eligible for transportation accommodations through SDS, leading to her not filing for those services, resulting in her walking on an injured foot for three weeks before receiving campus transportation accommodations.

Many participants who had accommodations prior to enrolling at the University of Chicago also reported issues applying for accommodations due to a lack of information about the process. These participants had to take it upon themselves to search for information about Student Disability Services, and some enlisted the help of their parents and peers who had previously gone through the process to obtain the necessary information. In particular, Charlotte noted that while she had some information on how the accommodations process would work because she had accommodations in high school, she felt that she got most of her information through her mother, who insisted on reaching out to SDS on Charlotte's behalf due to the lack of information about accommodations provided by the University and SDS. At times, however, even participants who had additional support from others faced difficulties. Isabella, whose parents were involved in the process, detailed the lengths she had to go to in order to receive information about how to apply for accommodations during her first quarter at the University of Chicago:

> So, I Googled where the office was and then I called the office, and they didn't take my call. And so I kept calling for the entire afternoon, because I had like my first exam at the University and I got through a page of the exam and everyone else was like, done with it. It was like a seven-page exam. And so I just kept calling. And anytime I called, I would be like, you know, a mess. And then I showed up at their office, and I kept crying. And I did that for about a week. And then they helped me.

Due to this lack of information on how to initiate the accommodations process, participants expressed a desire for the University or Student Disability Services to be more upfront about how the process to apply for accommodations works. Some participants, like Charlotte, felt that this information should have been provided very early in the college

matriculation process, stating that "I think it, it just would be so simple to include, like a little letter in the welcome packet that students get, you know, like, we get scarves and hats and whatever, like, just include a letter saying, like, if you need accommodations, reach out to these people by this date." Other participants felt that it would have been helpful to include information about SDS during the orientation meetings that the University mandates for incoming first years throughout the week before they attend classes (colloquially known as O-week).

The lack of information regarding the accommodations process caused issues for participants when they reached out to their medical providers to receive the documentation that Student Disability Services requested, with some participants having to handle confusion on behalf of their doctors. In Harper's experience, her doctor was not sure which documentation they would need to provide to SDS, even though they had consulted Student Disability Services' website:

> [The doctor was] confused as to what [Student Disability Services] wanted. And the documentation, the website explanation of the required documentation, is really not like clinical at all. I sent my psychologist the link, and he was like, "this is just not okay." I mean, he has the tests he runs, but there's no way to know whether they're the test that UChicago wants.

Harper's doctor attempted to receive more information from SDS and "reached out to UChicago specifically to ask a couple clarifying questions and didn't really get responses." This lack of information led to delays in receiving accommodations due to the need for additional communication between students, doctors, and the staff at Student Disability Services.

Participants also reported a lack of information regarding the types of accommodations that the University offered. Participants who obtained accommodations under the old policy felt that there were no resources from the University or SDS where they could obtain information

regarding the kinds of accommodations that were offered. Participants like Isabella expressed that this lack of information left her questioning which accommodations she could be eligible for: "I didn't know if they'd be able to give me more time … I didn't know that they'd give me anything." Participants who went through the new process, on the other hand, were able to receive more information about the types of accommodations that were offered as there is now a list of possible accommodations on SDS' website, however, these participants still faced issues. Tyler, who went through the process after the changes on the SDS website were put in place, stated that "[SDS] lists accommodations that they have available, but the accommodations I was applying for, flexibility with writing papers, was not listed … so I didn't even know if that was an accommodation that I could be granted." Kit echoed these sentiments about the limitations of the accommodations that SDS listed on their website: "I knew which accommodations were offered. But most of the ones that were listed on the SDS website didn't necessarily apply to my condition." Due to this lack of information regarding the types of accommodations that are available, some participants delayed applying for accommodations, while others did not apply for all of the accommodations that they felt they needed, out of concern that they would not receive the aid that they requested.

This lack of information regarding the accommodations that were available at the University led to some participants relying on their doctors. One of the participants, Ella, reported that her doctor had to adjust the way that she usually fills out the documentation of disability in order to deal with the lack of information about which accommodations the University offered:

> [My audiologist] was like "what accommodations does your school offer?" And I was like, "I don't know." So, on the form that she filled out for them, she put down every single accommodation that she knew other schools in the area or other schools had …

Because I was never told "here are the things we offer, what ones do you feel comfortable using?"

Even though Ella was given information on various types of accommodations by her audiologist, she faced difficulties when communicating them to SDS and felt that they "probably hadn't heard of some of the things [she] was mentioning," even though those accommodations were common protocol at other institutions. Cleo's healthcare provider, on the other hand, directly spoke with SDS to aid her in the accommodations request process:

My therapist called Student Disability Services, and was like, "can you give me a comprehensive list of all of the accommodations that you can do?" And they sent him that list and then the next time that I went to therapy he was like, "okay, let's talk this through," and we spent the entire therapy session [going over accommodations] instead of actually doing therapy.

Although Cleo's healthcare provider was able to help her obtain more information, it came at the expense of receiving treatment; a situation that could have been avoided had SDS provided more information about accommodations from the start.

Students with accommodations for temporary conditions and students with conditions that were diagnosed during college faced additional challenges. Participants who had accommodations prior to postsecondary education mostly requested the same accommodations that they previously had, which made navigating the accommodations request process easier. Participants who were diagnosed during their time at college with either a permanent or temporary condition, however, were often tasked with navigating their new condition while guessing what kinds of accommodations they might need. This led to them being especially reliant on the information regarding accommodations that their doctors provided and the accommodations that SDS offered to them either on their website or during the intake meeting. Madelyn explained that a lack of information can be frustrating for a student who is trying to perform well academically while also understanding their new diagnosis:

When you have a temporary condition that's maybe going to get better, and maybe not, or maybe going to get worse, and it has come on very suddenly, and you barely know how to function in your everyday life with it, let alone like in your academic life. It's hard to know what you need. And so my professors were really nice and they were all like, "tell me what you need. What do you need?" and I was like, "I don't know what I need, actually. I know that whatever is going on isn't working. But that's the extent to which I know what I need."

As a result of this lack of information from the University and SDS, Madelyn faced delays in receiving accommodations. Similarly to other students who face issues with identifying the types of documentation they need to submit to SDS, students like Madelyn, who faced a lack of information regarding accommodations, may necessitate increased amounts of communication between themselves and their doctors, between themselves and SDS staff members, and between their doctors and SDS staff members before the completion of the accommodations approval process.

Given the pace of the University of Chicago's academic calendar under the quarter system, delays in the accommodations process can be detrimental to the academic success of students. Many of the participants that faced delays in the process cited the stress that the wait time caused, as they were not sure if their accommodations would be approved before assignments were due or midterms had to be taken. Ava remarked that "it's definitely very hard because you have to send [faculty members] the accommodation letters first week or before that, and then it's like, well, if you don't get [the accommodations] by second week, there's already an assignment. And so it's just a very stressful process." Some participants reported not getting their accommodations approved either until a few days before or the day before they would need to use them for an assignment. Although students, such as Harper, made Student Disability Services aware of these upcoming deadlines, SDS' process for reviewing and granting accommodations remained inflexible:

When I asked about whether or not they thought that [my accommodations] would get rejected, they said that they couldn't tell me and it would take up to three weeks … at the time I was in calculus, and I was like "I cannot, if you're not going to give [the accommodations] to me I need to drop the class and take it next year.[5] I can't … it's not gonna work for me to be in it." And they were basically like "yeah, sorry," and that "if it takes three weeks, it takes three weeks."

Although Harper was able to receive her accommodations and did not have to drop her class, not all of the participants shared the same experience. Madelyn was unable to get her accommodations approved until the end of the quarter despite the fact that her condition was temporary, and her healthcare provider believed that the accommodations were straightforward and would most likely only be needed for the quarter. Due to this delay, Madelyn dropped one of her classes and ended up withdrawing from another since she was not able to complete her work without accommodations. This led to Madelyn facing larger academic consequences outside of the damage to her transcript that withdrawing from a class would cause:

When I was talking to my academic advisor about withdrawing from a class, she was like, "well, we're gonna put you on academic probation." And I was like "well, but this isn't an academic thing. It's a medical thing. I haven't failed a class." And she was like, "well, that's how this works."

These delays often leave students with limited options as they wait to get approved for accommodations. The inflexible accommodations process and the quarter system's timeline, which makes the deadline to drop classes occur relatively early in the quarter, combined with how quickly assignments are due, force students to take a gamble on receiving accommodations in time to complete their work. This is an especially onerous burden to place on students as, out of 19 participants, 11 reported not knowing if they were eligible for accommodations when they were applying. If a student ultimately is not accommodated and it is past the deadline to drop a class, they are often left with the option of withdrawing from the course, taking it pass/fail instead of for a letter grade, or taking a medical leave without receiving credit for any of the

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[5] Students at the University of Chicago are able to drop classes until the end of the Friday of the third week of the quarter.

work already completed for their courses. Participants felt that these options were severely restrictive and ultimately did not provide the opportunity for a student to succeed in a class in the same way that they could if their accommodations were approved in a more timely manner.

Issues with Documentation

After starting the process of receiving accommodations, students are required to submit documentation of their disability to Student Disability Services before a meeting with SDS can occur. Many of my participants experienced needing to obtain documentation from their medical provider that they did not already have, while others experienced documentation disconnect (Ludwig, Speridakos, and Weis 2014, 565). Harper was diagnosed in elementary school, and all of her documentation of the testing that was done to diagnose her was from 2010. Although this documentation was sufficient for her secondary education institution, it was not recent enough to grant her permanent accommodations at the University of Chicago, resulting in her needing to get retested. Since Alex also was diagnosed at a young age and was never told by her high school that she would have to get new documentation for the University of Chicago, she did not expect that she would need to do so: "there was documentation I've been using since the end of elementary school. So I'd had it for like my entire life, but [SDS] was like, 'nope, you got to do it again.'"

Similarly to the students discussed by Banerjee, Madaus, and Merchant (2011), participants who experienced documentation disconnect were not aware that neither the documentation they submitted at previous schools nor their Individualized Education Plans would suffice for SDS until they went through the process of applying for accommodations. As a result, participants faced delays in having their accommodations granted while they obtained new documentation or underwent additional testing. Luna discussed that, despite having easy

access to doctors, she still faced a delay in getting the documentation that she needed after she

began the accommodations request process in Autumn Quarter of her first year:

> I went to the neuro-behaviorology thing in January sometime during Winter Quarter of
> my first year because there was a fairly long wait time. Also, I'm from the Chicago
> suburbs. So I was able to go home and I think my mom came and picked me up ... It
> was pretty difficult. Even though I had a lot of, you know, things [that were] very
> convenient, local family, local doctors, etc. it was still fairly difficult for me to get all of
> that. So I don't think I got all the documentation until at least a full quarter later, if not
> more.

While a majority of participants did not report that obtaining new documentation or

testing placed a financial burden on themselves or on their families, some students did report that

these costs prevented them from receiving some or all of their accommodations or caused a delay

in receiving their accommodations. Luna attended a private high school that did not have strict

requirements for documentation, and instead had a more informal accommodations request

process since they were not legally mandated to create an IEP. Due to this, Luna did not have the

documentation and record of testing that Student Disability Services was requesting, which

resulted in them asking her to complete new testing: "my high school sent over a letter and the

University gave me accommodations sort of pending on that exam, which cost like $3,000, and

they tried to get my parents to pay it." Although Luna's parents were able to work out a way for

her to obtain the documentation that she needed, this is not always the case. Alex was not able to

receive all of the accommodations that she had in high school at the University of Chicago

"without extensive new testing because of the testing timeframes." Since the testing that the

University of Chicago was requesting would have cost several thousand dollars, Alex did not

request some of the accommodations that she had in high school, instead applying only for the

accommodations that she could receive with documentation that did not pose such a financial

burden on herself and her family to obtain. Cleo, on the other hand, did not have any of the

documentation that the University requested because when she was initially applying for

accommodations, SDS told her that she "needed a psychological evaluation and [she] couldn't afford one." In order to attempt to receive some accommodations, Cleo had her college advisor email her instructors to inform them that she had a disability and to ask them to accommodate her. Thus, the decision to either accommodate Cleo or not was solely at each faculty member's discretion. Although the University's documentation requirements underwent changes that would have allowed Cleo to obtain accommodations two years after she initially applied for them, she was not informed of this change:

> I found out through a professor, who was basically like "I'm not going to give you accommodations." And I'm like, "why not? This has worked for all my other professors. Why can't you just get an email from my advisor? She's a trusted advisor." And the professor was like, "no, I'm only going to take Student Disability Services paperwork."And I'm like, "why?" And the professor said, "oh, because you don't even need a psychological evaluation anymore to get disability services from the university"… So, I rushed to apply… I literally got my accommodations letter [providing] my accommodations, at the end of spring 2016. It was eighth week, the end of Spring Quarter.

Due to the length of time it took Student Disability Services to amend their documentation requirements and their lack of communication to students regarding those changes, Cleo was not able to pass enough classes by what should have been her final quarter, which initially prevented her from being able to obtain her degree.

Intake Meeting

After the documentation of disability that students provide to Student Disability Services has been deemed adequate, a meeting is scheduled to discuss the student's condition and the accommodations that they would need. Most of the participants had an in-person meeting with SDS; however, due to the pandemic, SDS has recently transitioned to conducting intake meetings over the phone or through Zoom. Some of my participants reported having issues with scheduling their intake meeting after submitting their documentation. Isabella detailed the

lengths that she had to go to schedule a meeting with SDS: "I would call them pretty much every single day. The minute I sent in my stuff, I was like 'Hello, when can we meet? I'm free now. Are you in the office?' So, I was very pushy." Although Isabella was able to schedule a meeting shortly after that, others had to wait longer. For example, Ava was "forgot[en] about for a couple [of] months," and had to reach out again in the Spring Quarter after originally filing during the Autumn Quarter to apply for other accommodations.

During the intake meeting, a staff member from Student Disability Services asked each participant a series of questions about their condition(s), including how it/they impacted their life and their academics, as well as the types of accommodations that they would need. Although all of the participants felt that in at least one of their meetings, the SDS staff member they spoke to gave them enough time to explain their condition, 12 of the 19 participants felt that the staff member did not understand the impact of their condition on their lives and academics, especially within the context of the University's rigorous academic requirements. Mia described a particular instance that illustrated a lack of understanding of her condition by a SDS staff member when she was trying to get off the dining hall meal plan due to its lack of gluten free options and the potential for cross contamination between gluten-free food and food that contains gluten:

> It was simple things like, okay, here's a big example of cross contamination that can happen. There's a salad bar at every dining hall. And sometimes people use tongs for the croutons and then they go use it for the spinach, and I'll go for the spinach, but then oh my god, there's crouton crumbs on the thing. So, one of [my suggestions] was getting a separate tong thing for everything. So you only take the croutons with this one, you only take the spinach with that one. Everything just gets its own [tong]. It's pretty simple, in my opinion… And [then] she asked me "would you feel more comfortable if you were wearing gloves? While you were getting your food?" And I was like, "no, that does not stop the cross contamination"… she was like, "do you want your own tongs or something like your own way to serve yourself?" And I was like, "I mean, the spinach and crouton thing again, there could still be crouton left on the spinach. So, I don't think that would be a solution either."

Ava tells a very similar story when she detailed the conversation that she had with an SDS staff member asking her about the impacts of her condition on her life:

> There are some times when they're like, "well, how does that impact your schoolwork?" when I was talking about how I go to the ER sometimes and have to get epinephrine for allergies, because it's really connected to asthma. And they're like, "well, how does it impact your score?" And I'm like, "well, if I'm in the ER and I'm on epinephrine and all these other drugs, it takes a couple days not to feel horrible after epinephrine. So, I don't know why you're asking me that question." So, I feel like there was just maybe a lack of understanding of the most obvious medical conditions and their effects.

In general, participants who were applying for accommodations for a temporary condition reported that Student Disability Services had a better understanding of the impacts of their condition on their life and academics. Beverly, one of the participants who was applying for temporary accommodations, felt that the staff at SDS was able to help her in receiving the appropriate accommodations because her condition was fairly common. She was not sure, however, if she would have had the same success if she were applying for accommodations for a more "complex" condition. On the other hand, students who had conditions that were chronic were more likely to encounter a staff member who did not understand their condition. For example, when Kit requested attendance flexibility accommodations, the "staff at SDS wanted an approximation of how many days [she] thought [she] would need extended absences or how many days [she] thought [she] would need extensions on assignments." Although Kit tried to explain that she could not provide that information because her condition was unpredictable, they still pushed for her to quantify how often she expected to miss class or would need extensions on her assignments.

Most of the participants who spoke with SDS felt that the staff did not understand how their condition impacted their ability to succeed at an elite university renowned for its high level of academic rigor, even if the staff member was able to understand how the condition impacted

their lives. Harper noted that the staff member that she spoke with understood her condition "on an intellectual level. In the sense [that] they know what [it] is. But [she didn't] think that they understand actually what it means in terms of how much it could affect [her] GPA and studying." Alex noted that this lack of understanding impacts the type of accommodations SDS is willing to provide students since staff members are not focused on catering to the goals of students at an academically rigorous institution:

> There's always this mentality of like, oh, if you struggle so much, why don't you just do less? Why don't you just take your course load down? … It feels like people are tempted to explain away the problems with "oh, you're just doing too much." Especially since, I don't know, I thrive on a busy schedule, and I like to do a lot. I want to make the most of this time [at the University], to the best of my ability … It always felt like I was being judged for making poor choices for myself, when in reality, I just wanted to take harder classes. I would need that [accommodation] regardless.

These findings are consistent with the literature that has found that staff members at student disability services at postsecondary institutions do not have to be trained in how to accommodate students in a way that specifically addresses the needs that arise from their disability and their coursework (Behling and Cioffi, n.d.; Madaus 2005, 32-37; Stodden and Conway 2003, 4-5). This potential lack of training can limit staff members' effectiveness at identifying and granting the accommodations that students need to be successful at the University.

The lack of understanding of conditions and their impacts on students' lives at times creates an uncomfortable situation for students as they attempt to find ways to bridge the gap between the SDS staff members' knowledge of their condition and getting the accommodations that they need. Participants reported developing various strategies for how to approach their meetings with SDS in order to mitigate some of the impacts of staff members not understanding their condition. The most common strategy was employed by participants like Mia, who prepared what to say in advance of the meeting:

> When you're talking about an accommodation, you really need to be able to get what you want. I think that once I learned how it was the first time around in Autumn 2018, when I went in Autumn 2019 to ask to be released from the meal plan, I had sort of like, I think I was more prepared and had written out specific experiences that had happened.

Alex also felt the need to prepare what she was going to say prior to meeting with SDS. She thought that the best way to prepare would be by targeting what she perceived the staff member was looking for: "I had prepared my spiel ahead of time... It definitely felt like I had to, like, perform for them, where they were like, 'yes, show us how miserable you are if you don't get these accommodations.'" Alex was not the only participant that felt that an emotional appeal was necessary in order to receive accommodations. When describing her intake meeting, Isabella emphasized the effectiveness of an emotional appeal:

> I did drop the "D-word" a lot, which really helped … If you drop the word "disabled" over and over and over again, and if you say, you know, "I just wish I was neurotypical, I just feel so disabled …" They're a lot nicer, especially if it's with tears, and if you remind them that you're a child.

Participants who had a strategy for their intake meeting or a speech prepared beforehand were also more likely to have had accommodations prior to attending the University of Chicago. Many of these participants had expressed that they learned to explain their condition and their needs to audiences that were similar to the University of Chicago's SDS during meetings with school staff throughout high school, and therefore felt more prepared going into their meeting with SDS. These findings support previous literature that has found that students who receive accommodations at a younger age often learn various skills that allow them to effectively communicate their needs and express why their accommodations are necessary and beneficial to their success at the University (Barnard-Brak, Lan, and Lechtenberger 2010).

Communicating Accommodations

In order to have accommodations that have been granted through SDS honored, students must submit their accommodations to faculty members for each of their classes through the AIM portal. Most of my participants reported that SDS did not inform them of how to use the AIM portal, which resulted in difficulties with using it initially. After sending the accommodations to faculty members through the portal, students are then supposed to speak with their instructor in order to inform them of their accommodations and discuss how to make those accommodations work within the context of that specific class. Most of the participants also reported not knowing how to approach faculty members regarding accommodations. Some participants wished that they were given more guidance from SDS. Ava stated that she did not "know if there's a specific way [she] was supposed to explain [her accommodations] to [SDS because she] wasn't informed of that." Alex mentioned the same feeling as Ava, stating that "I feel like you can send this letter to your professor and you can request your exam time, but there was no guidance on like, how to talk to people about it. Like if I hadn't done it in high school [I would not have known how] ... to broach that subject."

Some of the participants felt uncomfortable when speaking with professors about their accommodations. For example, Isabella described her experience of having to publicly tell her professor about her accommodations as demeaning:

> So, I asked for extra time for the first exam. And I had to go up to the professor right after class, because he didn't have office hours. And so, I had to go up to him to ask for it with other students behind me waiting to ask their questions. And so within like a minute, every single person in the entire class knew that I had something, and nobody else had anything … But it felt very demeaning to have to like, wait for a time where you could, say it without too many people around and be like "hey, just so you know, I know, I sent you this, but I just want to make sure that like, you know, this is how we're doing it."

Students who had experienced having to ask for accommodations in high school were generally more comfortable with speaking to faculty about their accommodations. Charlotte, who had worked with various school personnel in high school to determine and implement her accommodations, felt that it had provided her with "good training" for speaking with faculty at the University. Students who had requested accommodations in high school were more likely to have the skills that are needed to explain to professors how to implement their accommodations within the context of that specific course and were more likely to know how to advocate for themselves, thus potentially explaining why students who have previously had accommodations feel more comfortable asking for accommodations than their peers (Cano-Smith 2009, 38; Madaus and Shaw 2010).

Other students faced issues with knowing how much information they needed to disclose to faculty. Participants, especially those who had not applied for accommodations during high school, found it difficult to find a balance between protecting their privacy and ensuring that faculty members believed them. SDS states that students have the right to choose when and to whom they will disclose their disability; however, approaching faculty members about accommodations often forces students to disclose personal medical information to them.[6] Martha, who did not receive accommodations before attending the University of Chicago, stated that she found talking to professors about accommodations to be "a weird balance of like, do I disclose? Like, how much do I disclose? Yeah, will he believe me if I don't disclose?" Many participants also expressed that they felt that some faculty members are not aware of students' rights surrounding accommodations and thus, through their actions, have forced students to disclose to their peers that they are disabled or receive accommodations. Luna described this

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[6] https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/about-3-2/rights-responsibilities/

forced disclosure as an issue that occurred most often when the person teaching her class was a graduate student:

> A lot of [the graduate students who teach] had never run into this before…. there were a lot of things where I was sort of like, I think that's technically illegal. You know, I think you're like, I know that you're not technically supposed to say anyone who needs extra time or anyone who needs disability accommodations, like, "come up. Talk to me now." I know you're not supposed to say that.

While telling students to come to the front of the room to discuss their need for accommodations does not force students to explicitly disclose their condition to other students, it does happen implicitly as other students can see and hear these conversations. Alex mentions trying to avoid this situation; however, the actions of faculty members can limit students' efforts to do so:

> Some professors are like, "oh, [I'm] not answering emails, like I don't do email." But like, I had a professor my first quarter here that's like, "you can talk to me after class, you can call me on the phone." I was like, "did you see my letter? [after I emailed it to you]?" So I physically handed him the letter [of accommodations] and I printed it out and brought it to him [because he would not respond to the email].

Although Alex was attempting to inform the professor of her accommodations through email instead of having to have an in-person interaction with them, her professor did not provide her with this option. Her professor's actions forced Alex to have the conversation regarding her accommodations with her professor "at the end of the class [where] people are like milling around talking, waiting to talk to the professor."

Provision of Accommodations

Although all of the participants who had academic accommodations went through the process of both emailing faculty their accommodations and speaking to them in person, many of the participants were either not provided their accommodations or were provided accommodations that were substandard. For example, Ava detailed the story of how her

accommodations were not granted for a midterm during her first year at the University when she

experienced health issues due to a chronic condition:

> I ended up with respiratory syncytial virus my first year, and I ended up going to the hospital because I fainted twice in one day. In the emergency room, I emailed Professor [redacted], I was like "I have full flexibility, can I take the test tomorrow?" [7] Like, I don't know how I would see anyone's like answers or anything. And he basically wrote back "no." And so like, my RA contacted SDS for me, and they were like "yeah, there's nothing we can do." And she was like "but she has full flexibility." And they're like "yeah, but [the professor], he makes his own policies."

Despite having a full flexibility accommodation, which allows Ava to take her exams at a

different time in situations such as the one described above, that was not the only instance in

which her accommodations were not honored:

> Then the same thing happened Winter Quarter with a math professor, because I had a kidney infection, because my autoimmune disease was like "hello," and I had to basically walk completely hunched over to a math test because they would not let me take it later.

In addition, other participants felt that some faculty members did not understand how certain

accommodations could be incorporated within the context of their own classes, leading to

students' accommodations either not being or not fully being implemented. Prior to the quarter

starting, Jennifer, who is blind, reached out to a professor for one of her classes to discuss the

accommodations that she would need for the graphs that would be displayed in class. In

response, the professor expressed that he did not understand how to accommodate Jennifer

within his class:

> I wanted to talk about the issue of graphs and making sure those were ... labeled with a description. And he was like, "okay, I understand that, but kind of the whole point of the class is to interpret the graph. So I don't really know how to do that." So I was like, "okay, well, if I don't have a description for the graph, I won't be able to interpret it. So yeah, but you can reach out to SDS, and ask them how they've done it in the past? Or, I can do it." And he was like, "Yeah, okay, you can reach out to them and see how

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[7]A full flexibility accommodation means that the student can miss class and make-up assignments, quizzes, and tests when their condition is impacting their ability to either attend class or complete their coursework on time.

they've done it." Like, isn't that your job, you know, to be talking to SDS, about how you're going to make your class accessible?

As a result of his unwillingness to contact SDS, the professor placed the burden of ensuring that Jennifer was accommodated on Jennifer herself, instead of on himself. In Charlotte's case, in addition to the professor not understanding his own responsibilities when implementing accommodations, the professor also did not understand how to implement accommodations within the constraints of SDS' policies surrounding the proctoring of exams. Since Charlotte has an extra time accommodation, if a professor would like SDS to proctor tests for her, SDS would have to be notified 7 days in advance; however, there was no way for Charlotte to be able to do this due to the nature of some of the examinations in his class:

> So the thing with him was that he was really into pop quizzes, which, as you know, you just, can't do that with accommodations. Because SDS needs at least a week to process the request. And so I told him, like, "do what you got to do, be in touch with SDS and leave me out of the conversation, arrange whatever you need to."

In this case, there were no means for Charlotte to inform SDS about the pop quizzes without her professor making an active effort to ensure that she was accommodated as he was the only one that would be able to give SDS a seven day advance notice about the quizzes. Although there was communication between SDS, Charlotte, and the professor about this situation, it was not resolved until the 7th week of the quarter, impacting Charlotte's grades and leaving her without many opportunities to improve her performance in the class.

Additionally, participants explained that there were many occasions where their accommodations would technically be honored, but honored in a way that made it difficult for them to perform to the best of their abilities. For example, Charlotte's professor would fail to provide her with the actual test questions before the start of her exam:

> I was in Physics 131 with [my professor], but he had never taught undergraduates before, let alone had to provide accommodations for students. So, he was not knowledgeable at all. And even, you know, I get separate locations for exams and

quizzes, and that was not set up. Or when it was, it was on another floor from the exam, or from the lecture hall. And I wasn't given a copy of the questions. So, I had to take time from my exam, to go up and down the stairs to get to the lecture hall. And then, by the time I would get back, I would only have like, five minutes left.

Isabella also detailed a situation in which her ability to succeed was hampered by a professor providing inadequate accommodations:

[The professor] just left me in the lecture hall to take my extra time … But, um, a couple of kids didn't think that I needed the extra time and thought that I was somehow like gaming the system and they didn't want me to mess up the curve … so the first couple times that I had to take chem[istry] exams in the lecture hall, they would come in, when I had to take that exam, and be as loud as possible, and take calls and just like, you know, be very rude and I would like turn around and say, "I'm taking an exam, please be quiet." Because sometimes the professor would leave a [teacher's assistant (TA)] to like, make sure I wasn't cheating, but the TA didn't make sure that it was quiet because technically my accommodations didn't say that I needed silence.

Another common complaint from participants was that faculty would often not provide students with a way to ask questions during exams if they were taking the test in a separate room from other students. As a result, some of the participants were consistently placed at a disadvantage during exams because they did not have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions nor would they be informed of any corrections to the exam that the professor made during its administration. For one of her classes where she took tests in a room separate from her peers, Charlotte was told by her classmates that they were afforded the opportunity to ask questions during the exam. She decided to address this with her professor who told her "'but you're not allowed to ask questions.'" Luna also had similar experiences during her time at the University and explained that this was a consistent issue rather than just one professor forgetting that she was taking the exam in a different room. Additionally, Sandy — like Charlotte —- attempted to address the issues caused by a professor not informing her of an exam correction:

One of my professors, who made a correction to the class about one of the problems, didn't even think to tell it to the students who were in a different [room]. And then I got the question wrong. He took off all the points. I said, "you didn't tell us that." And he said, "not my problem." Basically, he was like, "look with the information that you had,

you still didn't do it right." I was like, "that's because the information [which] you gave us [made the problem] *literally* impossible."

Additionally, participants who took exams in different rooms than their peers mentioned that the spaces that they were provided were not adequate locations for exams. One reoccurring issue was that outside noise posed a distraction during exams. Sandy mentioned that this was a consistent issue throughout her time at the University:

> The room in Ida Noyes, where most of my exams have been, is always loud. There is construction going on or something? I don't know. But it sounds like it's construction going on 24/7. I don't know what is happening in the basement of Ida Noyes. But they provide earplugs cause they're necessary. It's just so annoying. There's always clanging going on and like people shouting. Are they doing construction for four years?

Other participants also mentioned noise problems at different testing locations that stemmed from either ongoing construction or other students taking their own tests in the same room.

Many participants felt that faculty members were more focused on being able to claim that they were providing students with their accommodations instead of focusing on the quality of those accommodations. When asked about why they felt that professors were not willing to accommodate them or ensure that their accommodations were implemented properly, participants cited the fact that their conditions could be classified as "invisible illnesses," and that this created some semblance of doubt on behalf of faculty on whether students actually needed their accommodations. Additionally, many participants believed that professors did not understand their conditions, thus making it difficult for them to understand the students' need for accommodations.

The participants' hypotheses surrounding the reasons for why professors failed either to accommodate them or accommodate them properly is corroborated by the differences in experiences between students who are applying for permanent and often "invisible" illnesses, and students who are applying for temporary conditions, with the latter tending to be more

widely understood. Participants who had temporary academic accommodations all had positive

experiences with their professors. Beverly, who had temporary accommodations for a

concussion, found her professors to be very understanding, with some even relaying their

personal experiences with concussions and the migraines that occur as a result of them:

> My professors were so understanding, they were like, "oh, my god, like, my mom has migraines." Like, "I get it," you know, and some of them have migraines themselves. And they're like, "oh, yeah, like, what medications are you going on? Like, my brother actually did this." Like, people were so nice and so understanding, especially when I was like, "one of my triggers, I think, is screen time." They were like, "you have a place to print? Like, if you need to go video off, you can go video off." Like, I was really, really impressed with and thankful that my professors really understood.

Madelyn reflected upon her own experience and felt that her positive experience came from the

fact that, like Beverly, her professors had an understanding of her temporary condition:

> I think in my situation, I got by on their empathy and their kind of general understanding of a fairly common experience, like many of them had had concussions before and were like, "oh, I know what this is, like I know that you need, what you're asking for. I can give it to you." But, and I'm like, purely speculating here, but I would imagine that like, with less common conditions like, you can't squeak by on empathy.

Similarly to Madelyn, other participants reflected upon how an understanding of disabilities or a

personal experience with disabilities often changes the extent to which a faculty member is

willing to accommodate them. Martha noticed this pattern in her own experiences, stating that "it

seems like professors or TAs that also have a disability or a chronic illness are a lot more

accommodating." Jennifer found that the professor who was the most accommodating was a

professor who was teaching a class on the American deaf community. She detailed how the

discussion of her accommodations differed with this professor from others:

> I know the professor for that course was really interested in making sure the class was really accessible for me, like, she asked a million questions. I feel like the typical email that I send to my professors, like, a week or two before classes start is like, I'll just let them know like, "here are my accommodations attached below. If you have any questions about implementing them, just like let me know, I'm happy to answer any questions." … This professor, she had replied with like a list of like five or six

questions and just wanted to make sure that I knew that she was very willing to make this class as best of an experience as possible.

Additionally, participants believed that the culture surrounding the University of Chicago being an "elite" institution and the accompanying academic rigor and competitiveness prevented faculty members from accommodating students. Participants believed that due to the competitive nature of the students at the University, as well as the competition for good grades for highly coveted jobs or graduate school admissions, faculty members questioned students who received accommodations because they perceive accommodations as a way to gain an academic advantage instead of a genuine need. This attitude of skepticism and suspicion of students cheating was mostly concentrated around the science and mathematics departments. Alex detailed how the competitive culture surrounding admissions into elite medical schools created suspicion on behalf of professors towards students who have accommodations:

> But there is a culture of cheating that then makes the department kind of like, feel like they need to crack the whip. Because once again, it's a culture of just like sheer competition ... And then like, once again, the department is like, "oh, we have to crack down on cheating." Which means that for people that are just genuinely in the class, not trying to cheat, and that need that extra time, or need kind of any extra accommodations, they're just so much more suspicious of it.

Zooey, who majored in biology, noted that this suspicion of cheating led to her professor openly emailing her, questioning her need for accommodations. In these emails, the professor would say things such as "well, I just know that a lot of students, you know, they just want extra time to study and they want to ask friends for all the answers before they come take the test. So, do you have any, like proof of what your advisor was telling me [about your need for accommodations]?" This type of skepticism on behalf of professors, thus created an environment in which students had to become self-advocates in order to receive the accommodations they required.

Rectifying Unimplemented Accommodations

   While participants utilized various methods to attempt to rectify issues with being accommodated, they have been limited by institutional policies and processes. One of the options that participants reported using was reaching out to SDS to either have them advocate on their behalf or to help them identify ways to advocate for themselves. Participants such as Madelyn, however, felt that this aid was limited by SDS' own policies. Although Madelyn had applied for various accommodations, she was only granted two of them; one of those accommodations, additional time, was explicitly contingent upon a professor providing her permission to do so:[8]

> There was an element of like, you should survive on the bare minimum of what we give you … It's something that I've heard a lot from my friends who interact with SDS a lot. They really gave me the bare minimum of accommodations. They were like, "we gave you two accommodations." And I was like, "yes, one of the accommodations was 'you deal with it yourself?' 'We're gonna give you a letter thing, you deal with it'?" When it's like, wholly, your department's job to help me deal with it.

Since one of the accommodations that SDS gave Madelyn was explicitly subject to the professor's discretion, she was not given a basis from which she could fight her professors on their refusal to accommodate her, thus limiting her ability to advocate for herself and limiting the amount of aid she could receive from SDS.

   Another option for advocacy that is available to students is reporting to the Office for Access and Equity any faculty member who has either failed to accommodate them or was being openly discriminatory. However, this option is restrictive because the report cannot be filed anonymously and students often feel that they cannot report a faculty member due to fear of retaliation. Additionally, SDS will not file reports on behalf of students who fear the

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[8] Although faculty members do not always need to honor accommodations under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, accommodation letters generally do not explicitly state that the accommodations are subject to the faculty member's discretion.

consequences of filing a report. Isabella expressed that she did not see the option of reporting a

faculty member to the Office for Access and Equity as a practical form of self-advocacy:

> I was so tempted to report [the professor], but I knew that she would know that it was me reporting … They say that you can say something when a professor is being awful. But if you're the only disabled kid in the entire class, and you say something, they're gonna know it's you. And then you're gonna get punished double time, except they'll cover their ass and be like, "oh, it was because her writing was bad and not because she's disabled," when it's clear that it's that they hated you because you reported them. So I have never and will never report anyone.

Isabella's feelings regarding the impracticality of reporting professors is shared by Charlotte,

who attempted to start the process of reporting a professor, but ultimately decided not to due to

her fear of the potential consequences. When Charlotte was trying to understand why her physics

professor was not aware of his responsibilities in regard to accommodations, SDS told her that

the individual responsible for training undergraduate physics professors on how to honor

accommodations was the director of the undergraduate physics program. The following quarter,

however, as she was considering filing a complaint with the University against this professor, the

director of the undergraduate physics program became her professor. The fear of retaliation and

comments made by the director himself prevented Charlotte from seeing filing a complaint as a

viable option:

> I went up to him after class, you know, to ask a question, and I was like, "my name is [Charlotte]" and he goes, "oh, I know you." And I was like, no, that's not what I want to hear. Like you hate me already … I think it impacted how he thought of me at first, which I wasn't super appreciative of, but it also did impact my decision not to file the formal complaint with the school. Because yeah, that's just not okay not to give people the accommodations that they are entitled to. But I didn't file the complaint, because he was my professor and he would have been the one to get in trouble because he was [my previous professor's] supervisor who didn't educate [him]. And I just thought, like, well, I'm not gonna cut off my nose to spite my face.

While reporting a faculty member is a potential method of self-advocacy, doing so is not actually

a viable solution for many students, thus limiting students' ability to protect themselves.

Although participants reported hesitation with getting SDS involved in an accommodations

dispute due to a previous negative experience with them, a lack of options can force them to do so.

Even in circumstances where SDS gets involved, however, there is no guarantee that a student's issues with their accommodations will be resolved. Charlotte felt that SDS lacked the proper authority to undertake the actions that she needed from them in order to force her professor to accommodate her:

> And I guess the other thing is that primarily, they helped me advocate for myself, they didn't really do much. Besides, like, speaking with the professor, when, you know, it was something as big as like, "oh, you didn't allow her to ask questions, but other people were allowed to, like, that's not okay." But, yeah, other than that, it was mostly me who was like, you know, communicating my needs, to the professors and trying to elevate my concerns to the appropriate higher up people.

Due to SDS' limited ability to enforce accommodations, some students resorted to other members of the University for help. While studying abroad through the University of Chicago, Martha was having difficulties with having her accommodations honored; consequently, she reached out to her TA because the Study Abroad office told her that he was the point person for all of the issues that arose during her time abroad, and so she was unaware that she could contact SDS if any problems were to arise. While Martha hoped that her TA would work with her to implement her accommodations or identify a way to explain the situation to one of her professors, the TA forwarded her email to this professor instead:

> So I sent this email to the TA thinking that it was in confidence to the TA and so it was a little more ... not what I would have said to the professor directly, it was kind of like, because I thought he was a resource for support and not like a final say, like professor wise. But he ended up forwarding the email that I sent directly to the professor, causing a lot of issues and the professor got very mad at me, and thought I was criticizing her as a professor, when I was actually just saying, like, the way that the room is set up is not accommodating and that is a problem as a student that needs accommodations.

Martha was ultimately not able to receive the accommodations that she needed, and the situation was left unresolved.

Participants also reported that if they were not able to receive accommodations either through self-advocacy, through SDS, or through other personnel intervention, they would sometimes attempt to rectify the situation through their course selections. Multiple participants mentioned that they chose to drop or withdraw from a class because they were not being accommodated and thus did not feel like they were being put in a position where they could succeed academically. For instance, although Jennifer reached out to SDS prior to the first week of classes regarding a course that would require her to interpret graphs, she was not accommodated in time and ultimately had to drop the class:

> SDS was going to send me like, tactile, like images of the graphs and the different diagrams that we need for the course. But that first day, I didn't have it, the first day of class, and there were a bunch of graphs and a bunch of questions about the graph. So it's like, I couldn't and it ended up being that I couldn't answer any of the questions on the pset, because I couldn't see the graph. So I ended up dropping that class.

Additionally, students who had experiences of not being accommodated tended to adjust their future course selections by opting for faculty members who they felt would be more likely to be accommodating or courses with structures that were more conducive to their accommodations and their medical needs. Madelyn chose not to take a class because of the policies that a professor outlined in their syllabus:

> I was reading what felt like a contract for one of my classes, which was just the syllabus and all of the various rules of this, like complicated bureaucratic class. And one of them was like, we can't accommodate anything without a letter. We need a letter to accommodate any kind of need, aside from like, an occasional extension. But like, if you miss class, for medical reasons, we need a letter, you miss class for a doctor's appointment, we need a letter. And that, I don't know, that felt disheartening to me … I don't know, I have this experience very often, where I'll be in a doctor's office, and I'll have a million questions. And then just like the moment passes, and I'm like, "oh, my god, I forgot to ask for a letter to excuse me from class."

The University's culture of academic rigor that stems from its position as an elite university also limits the options that students have in rectifying issues with being accommodated. The University's administration has expressed to participants, either explicitly or

implicitly, that accommodations are incompatible with the academic standards of the institution. Paige recalled an interaction that she had with a University administrator when she was going through the process of returning from a leave of absence regarding how students with accommodations did not fit into the culture of academic rigor that comes with an institution like the University of Chicago:

> Dean [redacted] was saying about, like, this is an elite institution, like, just the culture is a little bit every man for themselves, like, I don't know — cutthroat. And there's no room for someone to need extra time in that culture. Because that's just like, everything's unfair.

Cleo, who was told she could not graduate because she did not reach the required number of course credits by the end of her 12th quarter at the University, also spoke with a University administrator in order to petition for additional quarters in order to graduate.[9] Cleo believed that she had a strong case because she had difficulty passing classes due to an inability to receive accommodations because she was not able to afford the diagnostic testing that SDS had required at the time that she applied for accommodations. Although SDS did change their documentation requirements, by the time Cleo was informed of this change and received accommodations, it was too late to enable her to graduate within the 12 quarter requirement. Despite this, Cleo's initial petition to enroll for additional quarters was denied:

> I was emailing Dean [redacted]. And he was telling me that I couldn't come back to school. Before I got lawyers involved, he told me that I didn't perform well enough to go to the University of Chicago anymore and that's why he wasn't approving me to come back to school, at which point I said, "I interact with class material in a different way, because I'm disabled." And he told me, "well, why don't you transfer your credits and go somewhere else, because you don't perform to the level that we demand here at the University of Chicago."

This conversation ultimately led to Cleo suing the University of Chicago in order to be able to continue to attend and complete her degree. Although she was eventually able to return to the

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[9] Students can petition the Dean of Students in the College to be exempt from the 12 quarter requirement, however, they can only be granted 1 additional quarter to complete their degree requirements (University of Chicago Advising, n.d.)

University and subsequently graduate, this conservation with the University administrator made her feel as though she did not belong at the University of Chicago. Cleo felt that the University's attitude towards disability and how it interacts with academic rigor was not solely a product of the institution itself, but was also a phenomenon present at other elite universities. She stated that she was "aware that UChicago has this thing where they want to be Harvard and they want to be like a fancy Ivy League school" and that this influences University administrators and their actions. Cleo notes, however, that this was not a valid justification and hopes that the University will abandon those attitudes to become more accessible for students.

Campus Related Accommodations and Accessibility

Students at the University of Chicago can receive accommodations that cover various aspects of college residential life, such as housing assignments, meal plans, and general mobility aids. Accommodations that relate to residence life can be requested through Student Disability Services and/or through Housing & Residence Life. Accommodations that relate to campus accessibility can be obtained through Housing, and although none of the participants in this study utilized this option, students can reach out to Facility Services in order to receive information about campus accessibility.

Almost all of the participants who requested residence life-related accommodations expressed having a negative experience with doing so. Jennifer, the sole participant who had a positive experience with Housing & Residence Life, stated that she "was able to look at Snell-Hitchcock and Max P[alvesky dorms]" with someone from Housing when she was in the process of returning to school after taking a leave of absence following the diagnosis of her disability. Jennifer was able to receive a dorm room that was more accessible than the one she previously had. Other participants however, such as Sandy, did not find the staff at Housing to be

as accommodating as Jennifer did. Sandy applied through Housing for a window air conditioning

unit in order to make her dorm room more accessible:

> I was having breathing problems because I was in [Burton-Judson Courts (BJ)] which had no air conditioning. And so [Housing & Residence Life] say on the[ir] website "no air conditioning unless for special medical accommodations, reach out to us if you have that." And so I talked to my pediatrician and was like, "do you think that would be a good idea?" And she was like, "yes, you can't breathe." And she was like, "I will write a letter." So I found on the website, they're like, just send us a letter from your doctor. And so I asked her to do that and she sent it to them.

Housing, after receiving a letter from her doctor, approved Sandy for her accommodation and

said that the air conditioning unit would be in her dorm room before the day that she was

scheduled to move in. When Sandy arrived, however, the unit was not in her room. Although

Sandy was able to have this issue resolved fairly quickly, she once again faced difficulties with

Housing at the end of her first year when she was preparing to select her dorm room for her

second year:

> I reached out to SDS and I said, "I have this housing accommodation, do you know how I go about dealing with that in the fact that I'm switching dorm rooms next year?" And they said, "reach out to Housing." And so I did, because you know, we were going to do the whole housing lottery dorm room thing. And I was like, "how do I go about moving the unit to my new room? Do I tell you guys?" And they said, "oh, you can't switch rooms." And I went "what? What?" And they're like, "yeah, we're not going to move it again, we feel like we've given you the accommodation, stay in your room" … That's not great. And no one told me that. And that might have affected which dorm I went with, if I had to stay in the same, first year room the whole time. And they were like, "we've accommodated you. You have been accommodated, now shut up."

In order to have this issue resolved, Sandy reached out to SDS and her dorm's Resident Head,

both of whom reached out to Housing on her behalf. Ultimately, she was able to reach a

compromise with Housing: they would move the air conditioning unit only once more, and she

would have to stay in that dorm room for the rest of her time at the University if she chose to

continue to live in on-campus housing. However, this compromise took weeks to reach and was

not agreed upon until right before the housing lottery, causing additional stress for Sandy. While

Housing did agree to accommodate Sandy, she does not believe that this occurred out of a desire

to ensure that she was accommodated and having a positive housing experience:

> I heard later that they had to ask the school's lawyers. And I was like, wow, [I] did not think it was gonna go that far… [that] really wasn't my intention, but okay. Because they were like, "are we successfully complying with ADA if we don't let her switch rooms?" and I was like, "that escalated quickly."

Similarly to Sandy, Martha also faced issues with housing related accommodations that took an

extended period of time to be resolved. When Martha lived in Campus North Residential

Commons, one of her windows broke, which essentially left Martha without heat in her room

from the end of Autumn Quarter until the beginning of Spring Quarter:

> I was without heat for the whole Winter Quarter, during second year, and I sent in requests to maintenance, like, every week, being like "my room is too cold, this is broken, please fix it." And it also made my chronic conditions worse, so like, I was having to sleep with a heated blanket cranked up. And [heated blankets] weren't allowed in the dorm rooms, but I was like, well they're not accommodating me, I'm not accommodating them.

Ultimately, Martha was able to get a space heater placed in her room after she reached out to the

director of Housing with information about Chicago's regulations for appropriate temperatures

for housing in the city. Although a lack of heating in a dorm room is problematic for any student,

because the lack of heat exacerbated Marsha's condition, the situation became an

accommodations issue:

> It affected my ability to do my work and like my basic functioning, kind of, it was a really rough time … I thought I had developed another chronic condition because of it. I was having to go to a lot of doctor's appointments, and then it was like, oh, this could be an effect of [the lack of heat in the dorm room].

In addition to issues with Housing providing accommodations, participants reported issues with

Housing understanding various disabilities, which, in turn, impacted students' residence life

experience. Kit was informed by Housing that she would have to vacate her dorm room within

24 hours because both the Housing & Residence Life staff and the staff at Student Health

Services misunderstood her disability:

> They thought that I was contagious. I have a chronic illness that puts me at risk of developing other illnesses that are essentially only contagious to other extremely immunosuppressed people or the extreme elderly. I had already been to an emergency room and wasn't isolated. Doctors said I didn't need to be isolated. But Housing felt that I needed to be isolated. And Student Health felt that I needed to be isolated. Even though none of them [were] my doctors.

Unlike the aforementioned participants who attempted to receive accommodations

directly through Housing, Mia tried to receive residence life accommodations through Student

Disability Services. She was requesting an apartment-style dorm room in order to have access to

a semi-private kitchen, as she had gotten off of the University meal plan due to her

aforementioned issues with cross-contamination:

> I was trying to get an on-campus apartment and have access to a semi-private kitchen so I can just have fewer gluten around, things like that. And so I had asked them if I could pick my roommates, all three of them, just because when you're sharing a kitchen, I think it's important to be with people who are very aware of your allergies. I mean, even better if they have the same one, so you don't have to worry about that at all. And myself and other people have had issues with that in the past, cross contamination from roommates … And they said, "no, we cannot override housing policies."

Under Housing's current policies, Student Disability Services cannot allow a student who needs

accommodations to reserve a room prior to the housing lottery opening up for all students, and

thus they would still have to participate in the housing lottery with the rest of the students who

are living in housing. Mia explained the process as well as the potential detrimental effects of

Housing's policies:

> I would still have to participate in the housing lottery as normal. And [Student Disability Services] couldn't change anything about that. Like, the way that I thought it should have been done was before the housing lottery starts, you come to me and you're like, "okay, pick one of these apartments or whatever, like disability-accessible rooms that are right for you." They put your name down for that, and they let you have your first pick. And then you go and let number one on the housing lottery get the apartment that they've always wanted. But no, it's done after the fact, in the way that what they

> sort of guaranteed is that they always keep, I think, one apartment open, one, like, extra large single, I think for people who are in a wheelchair or something, things like that, they keep a few of those rooms open … so that later on, they can move those students into it who need it. Um, but yeah, then it's just another game of oh, who's your roommate gonna be [in that apartment] and things like that?

These policies created a stressful situation for Mia, as she was not sure if she would be placed into an apartment where she could cook for herself in order to accommodate her dietary restrictions or have roommates who would adhere to those restrictions. Additionally, Ella also faced issues with SDS being able to help her in obtaining housing accommodations. Ella's main concern was ensuring that her dorm room had equipment that would allow her to hear the fire alarm and/or wake her up in the case of a fire since she is hard of hearing; however, she was not sure which accommodations Student Disability Services could grant her for that. Through email communication with SDS, Ella was able to send them the recommendations for accommodations that her healthcare provider provided, as well as inquire about which of those accommodations the University offered. Through these email exchanges, Ella states that SDS "determined that there was no need for the devices that shaked [her] bed, because [she's] not actually deaf." Although Ella did not have a formal in-person intake meeting, she did have a phone conversation with a staff member from SDS to further discuss her accommodations. Despite this communication with SDS, Ella never received a letter determining her accommodations nor did she receive any confirmation that her accommodations would be implemented. Additionally, she was not able to find any indication that her room was equipped with the devices that would help alert her to the need to evacuate due to a fire. Ella described her lack of accommodations as a safety issue due to instances in the past where she did not hear alarms in her own home and was thus forced to identify her own solution:

> I'm like best friends with my roommate and we just kind of decided we're like, okay if there's a fire like I'm gonna wake you up … all of my friends were from my house [in

my dorm] ... So it's like, all of my friends just kind of agreed, they're like, "if there's an emergency, we're just going to come get [Ella]."

Issues with accessibility and accommodations are not only limited to Housing & Residence life, but rather they extend to the University of Chicago's campus itself as well. After an injury caused Avery mobility issues, she applied for transportation accommodations that would allow her to get around campus easier. Although she was able to get this accommodation and was never denied a request for the transportation service, she did face issues with utilizing the accommodation:

> There just were times where I should have gotten a ride. But because I had to schedule it like, it was either a day or I think it was like two days in advance at least, I didn't always know exactly when I would need a ride. So, sometimes I had to figure something else out.

Avery did not believe that this policy of having to schedule a ride so far in advance was well suited to the nature of student life at the University. Oftentimes, meetings with professors, study sessions with students, and the length of time that would be necessary to spend at an on-campus library could not be predicted two days in advance. Additionally, the transportation service only ran until 7PM, which, in conjunction with the advance scheduling policy, made the accommodation incompatible with student life. Since Avery did not feel that SDS understood the accommodation's incompatibility with student life, she did not pursue the issue with them further.

Although the transportation service accommodation was useful, ultimately, it did not solve all of Avery's campus accessibility issues. Student Disability Services did not provide Avery with a campus map that had information about accessible entrances or walkways, nor did they explain to her how to navigate campus after her injury. Although she was able to find a campus accessibility map that supplemented her learning how to navigate campus, Avery still faced issues while attempting to get to class:

There were some times where I would be trying to find an entrance and it just wouldn't be labeled. And so I'd be crutching around and I'd be trying … I'd be like, I know, there's supposed to be a wheelchair entrance here. But it just wasn't labeled. Or it wasn't labeled clearly enough that I could see it before I walked over there.

Due to the lack of information she received from SDS, Avery relied on faculty members for information. However, faculty members were not always aware of the accessibility features on campus:

I had to get into Kent because I was taking chemistry. And I had an 8 AM lab on Thursday morning. And they gave me the wrong information … So they told me that I needed to go up the front steps even though I was on crutches. And they had a TA that met me there early [to open the door] so I could go up the front steps of Kent. But I figured out last year, like late last year, that there's actually a wheelchair accessible entrance that goes into the main part of Kent. And they just didn't know.

Similarly to Ella, the inadequacy of accommodations forced Avery to create her own solutions so she could more easily access campus:

It forced me to rely a lot on some of my friends and my housemates more than I wanted to. Because there just weren't the services that I needed. Like to get food in the dining hall, trying to juggle a plate with like, crutches was hard. So sometimes I would have to ask my friends to bring me a meal [and] to help me with other things…

Although Avery was able to receive some help in navigating campus by relying on the people around her, she often found herself unable to find other students who would be able to help her, especially in the mornings. Relying on the aid of others in the absence of accommodations, however, is not always possible due to other accessibility issues on campus. Currently, the University allows offices and program spaces to be located in buildings that are not physically accessible. Participants mentioned various buildings on campus with which they had issues accessing, with the most referenced building being the Pozen Center for Human Rights. The Pozen Center is located on the second floor of the building located at 5720 South Woodlawn, which does not have an elevator (see Appendix D). Consequently, the University of Chicago's campus map does not feature accessibility information for the building. Despite the building not

having an elevator, faculty members have offices in the Pozen Center and do hold office hours there. Additionally, the Pozen Center has a lounge for students to use. Since the building is not accessible, some disabled students, as well as some students who need temporary accommodations, cannot access the student lounge nor attend to certain professors' office hours. Furthermore, participants expressed that they were not aware of any accommodations that they could formally apply for that would address issues with campus buildings having accessibility issues.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that students faced challenges throughout every step of the accommodations process. A lack of clarity regarding eligibility for accommodations, the types of accommodations offered, and the steps for receiving accommodations led to confusion among students and their healthcare providers. Furthermore, the amount of discretion afforded to faculty and the lack of authority on behalf of Student Disability Services meant that even when students were granted academic accommodations, they were often either not fully honored or not honored altogether. Additionally, issues with campus accessibility and housing accommodations made it difficult for students to access all of campus and safely live in the dorms. Ultimately, the systems in place at the University resulted in negative consequences for disabled students. To prevent these consequences at the University of Chicago and the policies that enable them to occur, in the next section I propose amendments to federal legislation and policies that should be implemented by the University of Chicago to ensure that students do not experience these issues.

Policy Recommendations

Policy changes need to occur on both a national level and within individual universities in order to ensure that disabled students are adequately accommodated so that they are able to fully engage in the postsecondary educational experience. While the current policies in place empower

some disabled students to receive accommodations, they do not mandate that postsecondary education be fully accessible. The policy recommendations in this section that pertain to the University of Chicago are specific to the gaps in accessibility found at the University; however, these policies may be applicable to other universities that are of similar size and caliber as the University of Chicago or at other universities that have similar policies for their student disability services and student accommodations.

Federal Policy Changes

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act need to be amended or replaced in order to increase the accessibility of postsecondary institutions and enable students to receive the accommodations they need. Since these pieces of legislation create a lower standard for accommodations than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, they lead to issues for students as they transition from secondary to postsecondary education (Evans et al. 2017, 106). This shift in the legal framework, from one that ensures student success to one that only provides access, leads to some students not being able to receive the accommodations that they had on the secondary level (Evans et al. 2017, 106). These differences not only delay the accommodations process (as students are not always aware of adequate substitute accommodations that could address the same needs as the accommodations they were provided at their secondary educational institutions), but they also act as a barrier for other students who assume they cannot receive accommodations since past accommodations they were granted may not be listed as a possible accommodation at their postsecondary institution. In order to remedy these difficulties, the standard for accommodations at the postsecondary level in both the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act needs to be elevated from "reasonable accommodations" to the standards found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Since this would entail substantive changes to both of those pieces of legislation, amending the laws may be difficult, potentially necessitating a new law altogether. It is important to note that the expansion of the IDEA to the postsecondary level is not an adequate solution since it contains processes that should not be applicable on the postsecondary level. For example, as a result of the IDEA, in secondary education, parents are involved in the accommodations process, can advocate for students, and have access to school records (Evans et al. 2017, 108). Although students should be given the option to have their parents involved in the accommodations process on the postsecondary level, this policy should not be mandated in order to protect student privacy since these students are no longer minors. While some participants did note that the involvement of their parents aided them in navigating conversations with Student Disability Services, this is not always the case. Allowing students to choose the level of involvement their parents should have can enable students to receive the level of support they need while having their autonomy over their academic career respected.

Furthermore, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act currently do not provide standards for documentation, which allows individual schools to set their own standards **(**Evans et al. 2017, 102**)**. If a more comprehensive legislative alternative is not pursued, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act need to be amended to create a national standard for documentation that works towards addressing documentation disconnect and the exclusion of some students from receiving accommodations due to the financial burden of obtaining specific documentation. These new guidelines should be based on the Association on Higher Education and Disability's (AHEAD) documentation guidelines, which represent a shift from the currently used medical model approach to documentation to the social model, and are currently used at other comparable postsecondary

institutions, such as Barnard College. AHEAD suggests that there are three different types of acceptable documentation: a student's self-report (primary documentation), observation of and interaction with the student by a staff member at the institution's student disability services with the student by a staff member at the institution's student disability services (secondary documentation), and information from external or third parties (tertiary documentation) (Association on Higher Education and Disability 2012). AHEAD structures the accommodations process in this way because it allows for a staff member at a universities' student disability services to establish a student's disability, learn more about their condition and how it impacts them, and be able to make an informed decision regarding appropriate accommodation(s). AHEAD emphasizes that staff members at student disability services use their expertise to evaluate whether an accommodation is reasonable without outside documentation, regardless of whether or not the student has had accommodations in the past. AHEAD does recommend, however, that outside documentation can be used if students cannot express their need for accommodations and the barriers to accessibility they face on campus. Additionally, if staff members at a university's student disability services ask for documentation, the documentation must be accessible, and if it is not, then the accommodations request process must be flexible.

The implementation of these changes will work towards addressing some of the issues regarding documentation in the accommodations request process that were raised by participants. AHEAD's guidelines' focus on the importance of students' self-reports in this process would not only provide staff at universities' student disability services with information about the impact of a condition on a student's life that cannot be ascertained through reading medical records or documentation provided by a doctor, but could also act as a supplement to older documentation, allowing it to be accepted as proof of disability. This change would prevent students from being

forced to get updated paperwork and face delays in receiving accommodations while doing so, as in the cases of Harper, Alex, and Luna.

Additionally, providing flexibility regarding documentation will work towards addressing disparities in academic accessibility that directly correlates to socioeconomic status. Under the current documentation guidelines that universities utilize, students from wealthier backgrounds and with greater access to healthcare are more likely to receive accommodations since they will be able to afford the diagnostic testing that is necessary to fulfill their university's documentation requirements and will be able to consult with doctors regarding the various accommodations they will need and can potentially request (Arpey, Gaglioti, and Rosenbaum 2017, 169-170). AHEAD's documentation guidelines require a flexible approach to documentation which, in conjunction with student narratives, can work to prevent students from not receiving accommodations due to the financial burden of obtaining documentation or new diagnostic testing, as seen in Cleo's case. AHEAD's documentation guidelines also work towards fulfilling the goals of the ADA more so than the documentation guidelines that are currently in place. Although Congress, in passing the ADA, did not intend for the process of receiving documentation to be such a burdensome process that it prevents students from receiving accommodations, some participants noted that it was specifically the burdensomeness of this process (whether that be due to a financial burden or, as Alex noted, the "burden of proof" falling on the students) that prevented them from receiving accommodations (Association on Higher Education and Disability 2012; *Guckenberger v. Boston University* 957 F. Supp. 306 (1997)).

Furthermore, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act needs to be amended in order to mandate that secondary schools provide additional support to students prior to their transition to postsecondary education. Although the IDEA currently requires that a Summary of

Performance containing recommendations for achieving a child's postsecondary education goals be created and mandates that students receive transition planning, the quality of this transition planning varies on a school-by-school basis (Evans et al. 2017, 413; Walter, n.d.). Consequently, students enter postsecondary institutions with different understandings of their rights, the accommodations process on the postsecondary level, how to advocate for themselves, and the documentation that they would need to provide to their new institution's student disability services. Most of the participants who had accommodations on the secondary level reported experiencing issues stemming from one or more of those gaps in understanding and stressed that they wished that they had more support in the transition process.

In order to guarantee that students receive the information necessary to successfully transition to postsecondary education, the IDEA needs to be further amended to ensure that transition planning includes information regarding students' rights and how to start the process of applying for accommodations on the postsecondary level, as well as the differences between the process on the secondary and postsecondary level. Students should also be informed about the possibility of their documentation being too outdated for the purposes of applying for accommodations at their university and be given the option to have secondary school staff review any of the student's documentation to see if it needs to be updated. Review of the student's documentation and preparation for applying for accommodations should occur after the student has decided which college to attend to ensure that the information the student receives is tailored to their situation. Additionally, secondary institutions should provide disabled students with the option to receive training to develop self-advocacy skills that can help them in navigating their newly increased role in the accommodations request and honoring process on the postsecondary level. This training could go hand in hand with the presentation of information

on the differences in the accommodations process between secondary and postsecondary institutions. Although schools should be required to offer this type of training, students should be able to opt out of it since each student has a different level of confidence in their ability to advocate on their own behalf. Sandy felt that she had the skills to advocate for herself at the University of Chicago due to "conversations [she had] been having with [her] teachers since [she] was seven… [and] all throughout middle school and high school." Students like Sandy, who were diagnosed at an early age, may feel that they have developed the skills necessary to adequately advocate for themselves. Due to limited resources, schools could focus on implementing these training efforts for students who were either diagnosed at an older age or for those who indicate that they would like to receive the training. Additional funding for secondary school resource staff would be needed to provide students with this level of support, particularly in schools with limited financial and staff resources and where students generally receive less transition planning due to this lack of resources (Madaus, Grigal, and Hughes 2014, 50-59).

This additional funding can be obtained through Congressional action that fully funds the IDEA. When the IDEA was passed in 1975, Congress authorized federal spending to fund up to 40% of states' average per-pupil expenditures for implementing the requirements of the legislation (Smith 2020). The federal government has failed to reach that 40% threshold, however, as the funding percentage consistently hovers around 15% despite the number of disabled students being served under the IDEA increasing by 25% over the past two decades, placing an increasing, and unaddressed, burden on states and local school districts (National Center for Learning Disabilities n.d.). President Biden's administration estimates that fully funding the IDEA over a ten-year phase-in period would cost approximately $100 billion if implemented as part of his $850 billion education plan (Committee for a Responsible Federal

Budget 2020; Smith 2020). While strides have been made towards this $100 billion goal with the passing of the American Rescue Plan Act, which allocated $3 billion towards IDEA funding, this funding was a one-time allocation, thus necessitating further Congressional Action to increase IDEA funding for subsequent years (Yoch 2021). To address this need for increased funding, Congress should pass the Keep Our Promise to American's Children and Teachers (PACT) Act, which authorizes increased funding for the IDEA on a yearly basis, with the goal of reaching the 40% funding threshold within ten years (Siegal 2021). Although the Keep Our PACT Act was initially introduced in Congress in 2019, and subsequently reintroduced in both the House and the Senate in 2021, it has yet to be voted on.

University of Chicago Administration

Although there are efforts that can be taken on the federal level to make postsecondary education more accessible for disabled students, these efforts may take a long time as many pieces of legislation that focused on education and disability have failed to gain traction in Congress. Thus, the University of Chicago should implement various policy changes to bridge the gap in accessibility created by the legislation currently in place. These policy changes would move the University of Chicago's approach to disability from the medical model to the social model since it would involve removing various institutional barriers that impact disabled students.

The University of Chicago's administration should create a required training program for faculty members, staff members, and the student body that would be aimed at making the University a more accessible and welcoming environment for disabled students. The training should be required on a yearly basis, similarly to the annually mandated Title IX training. All of my participants felt that training should be mandated and also mentioned various topics that the

training should cover, including what a faculty member's legal responsibilities and rights are in regard to honoring accommodations and information on students' rights and responsibilities in receiving and having accommodations honored. This section of the training can be modeled after the information located on the University of Chicago's Student Disability Services' website.[10] Contact information for SDS should also be provided and faculty members should be encouraged to reach out to them to ask questions either on how to accommodate students during daily classroom interactions or how to implement specific accommodations.

Some participants, such as Ava, thought that the training should also include "general disability and chronic illness [information], what that can look like and … how you can respond in ways that are empathetic." Including information about different types of disabilities can provide the University community with the sense of understanding and familiarity that was seen with participants' experiences with temporary conditions and can lead to a greater acceptance and willingness to accommodate students. Although Charlotte echoed Ava's thoughts, she felt that the training could go even further by including information for faculty on "how to respond to a person who gives you a letter [of accommodations]" and the specific ways accommodations could be implemented in a classroom setting, such as by providing a student with lecture notes or by honoring a preferred seating accommodation in a classroom environment where assigned seating is not the norm. Furthermore, in order to address the ableist rhetoric used by some members of the University community, this training should include information about ableist language and information regarding how to respectfully discuss disability with both disabled and nondisabled students. Ella specifically mentioned that, in regard to "things that come out as slurs and stuff, we just need to educate on the history of it." Additionally, in order to address ableist

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[10] This information can be found on the Resources for Faculty section of SDS' website: https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/faculty/resources-faculty/.

rhetoric that is specifically targeted towards accommodations, the training should emphasize that accommodations are a right, and not a means through which a student can gain an "unfair" academic advantage.

In addition to mandating training, the University of Chicago administration needs to change their enrollment policies. Due to a recent policy change, undergraduate students at the University are not allowed to be enrolled in fewer than three classes (full-time student status) during the quarter (University of Chicago, n.d.). This represents a shift from previous policies which allowed undergraduates to take fewer classes while still being actively enrolled at the University (part-time student status). The University should make part-time student status an available option to undergraduates in order to allow disabled students to make progress towards their degree while also being able to receive medical care.[11] Madelyn expressed that this need for part-time student status is especially amplified for a student "that's trying to actively diagnose a condition," citing the numerous doctors' appointments and diagnostic tests that a student seeking a diagnosis would require while also having to balance their school work. Although the University currently offers students the ability to take a leave of absence for medical reasons as an alternative to being a full-time student at the University, this option is not feasible for all students as some cannot afford to graduate later than their intended graduation date. The lack of an intermediate option forces some students to take a full course load, instead of a reduced course load, while seeking medical help, and consequently suffer the academic consequences mentioned in the Findings section.

Furthermore, the University should amend its policy mandating that undergraduates graduate within 12 quarters, with the possibility of an extra quarter. Without the implementation

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[11] Although this recommendation arises from the need for part-time student status as expressed by participants, this option should be made available to all students since it could be beneficial to some students depending on their financial or personal situation.

of part-time student status, students who cannot take a leave of absence but are facing issues in passing classes due to balancing receiving medical care, the impacts of their condition, and completing their coursework, may not be able to graduate within the 12 quarter or 13 quarter limits. Even with the implementation of part-time student status, students may still find themselves in situations where they face an emergency medical issue that they could not have anticipated during the beginning of the quarter due to the chronic nature of some disabilities, leading to them needing more quarters at the University in order to complete their degree requirements. Both increasing flexibility in the number of quarters in which a student has to graduate and allowing part-time student status will make obtaining a degree from the University more accessible.

The University of Chicago's administration also needs to provide Student Disability Services with more authority over faculty members in order to enforce the honoring and implementation of accommodations. Additional authority over faculty members would work towards addressing two issues discussed in the Findings section: delays in accommodations being honored and accommodations not being honored at all. Under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, faculty members and the University are not required to make adjustments that would fundamentally alter the nature of a course, service, program, or activity, or that would result in an undue financial or administrative burden (United States Department of Education 2011; University of Chicago n.d.). Without additional policies set by postsecondary education institutions on an individual level, this legal standard limits SDS in their ability to force professors to honor the accommodations that a student is granted. Currently, if a faculty member is not willing to accommodate a student, the student can reach out to SDS, who will contact the faculty member to discuss the situation. However, SDS cannot change a faculty member's

decision not to accommodate since the legal standard is broad and does offer faculty members some protection in this regard. Consequently, SDS needs to be provided with an enforcement mechanism, whereby the administration either grants SDS the power to override a faculty member's lack of compliance with accommodations or gives SDS the ability to escalate the situation to a higher level figure within the administration who would then require the faculty member to honor the student's accommodations. If the latter approach is implemented, then this designated figure should have to follow-up with both SDS and the faculty member in question within 24 to 48 hours to ensure that the issue does not persist for long enough for it to negatively impact the student's coursework. It is important to note, however, that this expansion of SDS' authority would not extend to all aspects of a faculty member's discretion. SDS would not have the ability to require professors to change their course structure (i.e., format of exams, number of assignments or exams, implementing pop quizzes, etc.) or course content; their power would be limited to ensuring that the material is accessible to every student and that every student's accommodations are adequately honored. Additionally, regardless of whether SDS is given the direct power to implement the accommodations or if they must go through the administration, SDS should be required to speak with the faculty member in question in order to explain the latter's obligations to the student and how to accommodate the student before SDS escalates the situation further. Ideally, in conjunction with training, this policy would mitigate the need to take further action, thus aiding in fostering a positive relationship between faculty members and Student Disability Services.

Due to students' hesitation to reach out to Student Disability Services regarding issues with faculty members implementing accommodations, as seen in the Findings section, the need for this increase in authority may be questioned; however, this concern is ameliorated by an

examination of why such hesitancy occurs. Although many students currently advocate for themselves to faculty members without getting SDS involved, this does not always occur because the student prefers to take on the responsibility themself. Due to SDS' lack of authority over faculty members, some participants, such as Alex, noted that they did not "trust SDS to do a good job getting [them] what [they] needed" and expressed more faith in their own ability to address the situation. Providing SDS with some authority over faculty members may increase students' likelihood of reaching out to SDS because students might feel that taking this step would aid in them being accommodated as a result of this policy change. If a student prefers to advocate on their own behalf, they are able to do so; however, giving students the option of having SDS take on this role from the onset can relieve students of the time commitment that these conversations with faculty can take, as well as any emotional burden or feelings of discomfort associated with confronting faculty regarding issues with accommodations.

Student Disability Services should also be given greater authority over accommodations provided by Housing & Residence Life. Although SDS staff members do have periodic meetings with staff from Housing & Residence Life, SDS cannot force Housing to implement policy changes. For example, SDS does not have power to change the housing lottery process, which prevents students like Mia, who may need a dorm room with a kitchen and roommates who will adhere to her dietary restrictions, from being assured that they will be accommodated. Although standard participation in the housing lottery does not necessarily mean that the student will not be accommodated, a lack of definitive confirmation of receiving accommodations creates an unnecessary burden on the student. As a result, SDS should have the ability to place a student higher on a housing lottery list as necessary, allow students to skip the housing lottery altogether

if they need a specific style of housing, and provide students with the ability to select their roommates if their condition requires it.

Additionally, many participants perceived the University as having a culture that was not inclusive of disabled students. This perception of exclusivity could be addressed by changing some of the current policies in place that make campus inaccessible to some students. The University's transportation service for injured students that Alex used only operates Mondays to Fridays, from 8:00am to 6:00pm, and has a policy of requiring that students request service at least 24 hours in advance of when they would need the ride (University of Chicago Department of Safety & Security, n.d). As mentioned by Alex, student life occurs outside of those service hours and other academic activities may be scheduled on a short notice. The University should extend the hours of the service's operation to be 24 hours a day, every day, and allow students to request a ride either immediately or within a shorter time frame. Such a program could be implemented with technology similar to that of popular ride-share apps, with which students could request transportation on an as-needed basis. The University could work with Lyft to expand on their previous partnership, which provided University students with discounts for Lyft rides taken from campus to their homes during the hours when University shuttles were not operating (University of Chicago Department of Safety and Security 2019). The expansion of this partnership could work towards providing free and more immediate rides to students with transportation accommodations. This expansion would be further feasible since Lyft offers wheelchair accessible vehicles that can be requested through the Lyft app in Chicago. Finally, the University needs to ensure that all offices and program spaces are located in buildings that are physically accessible. This would not only allow disabled students and students with a temporary condition to be included in all facets of academic life, but would also increase campus

accessibility for disabled faculty members and faculty members with temporary health issues. Without these changes, the University's campus will not be fully accessible, and thus not accommodating all members of the University community.

Another way that the University of Chicago's administration can make the University's culture more inclusive is by implementing policies that increase visibility for disabled students on campus. Some participants, such as Ava specifically, mentioned the "need to move SDS out of a parking garage" due to the negative message that the office's location sends to students. Jennifer also remarked that this type of change was needed since the current location "is just not the best for people with mobility issues [or people] with chronic pain." The University should relocate Student Disability Services' office from underneath a parking garage to either its own building or to a location that is more central to campus. Mia suggested that the office "should be located in one of those houses on 57th and Woodlawn, where like this Center for Student Identity and [Inclusion]... is located." Additionally, in the welcome materials that students receive upon admission, the administration should include a document created by SDS with information regarding accommodations, including the types of accommodations that are available, how to apply for accommodations, and information regarding campus accessibility. This will resolve some of the issues students faced regarding the lack of information on how to apply for accommodations while also providing more time for disabled students to obtain the documentation necessary to apply for accommodations if they have the means to do so. Finally, the University administration needs to provide more visible support for disabled students. This can occur through the creation of a disability cultural center, additional affinity events, and/or organizations aimed specifically at supporting disabled students as they transition into college. Not only will this help disabled students meet other disabled students and form a large,

supportive community, but they will also work towards normalizing disability and uplifting disabled voices on campus (Chiang 2020, 1183).

Student Disability Services at the University of Chicago

Although participants felt that the staff at the University of Chicago's Student Disability Services meant well, changes need to be made in the way that they operate in order to better support students. First, changes in how students learn about how to apply for accommodations and how to get in contact with Student Disability Services should be implemented. Many participants suggested that Student Disability Services should have a mandatory information session during O-week so that all students are informed about how the accommodations process works. Although some students may know that they will need accommodations when they matriculate to the University and therefore would either seek out information about how to begin the accommodations process or have some information about how the accommodations process works from previous experiences, that may not be the case for students who are diagnosed with a disability or a temporary condition during their time at the University. Presenting this information during O-week would ensure that every incoming student is exposed to the resources available at SDS in the case that they currently need it or will need it in the future.

Additionally, SDS needs to ensure that their welcome package materials, programming during O-week, website, and accommodations request form feature a list of all of the accommodations that the University offers, as well as specify that other accommodations could be potentially available if a student has a need for them. As a result of SDS' change in their accommodations application process and website, SDS now lists more accommodations than before; however, the list provided is still incomplete. This needs to be rectified in order to inform both students who have never received accommodations prior to attending the University and

students who were diagnosed during their time at the University of their options since these students may need additional information and guidance due to unfamiliarity with accommodations. Additionally, expanding the list to include all of the accommodations that the University offers would allow students who received accommodations in high school to see if they can receive the same or similar accommodations that they previously had and still need. Although publishing a selection of the University's offered accommodations is an improvement from the lack of information that students used to face, publishing only a selection could make students believe that the accommodations listed are the only ones that are offered, leading to them not requesting other accommodations that the University could potentially offer.

The process of receiving accommodations also needs to be changed in order to better serve students. Although legislative change is the most comprehensive way to make receiving accommodations easier, SDS should implement AHEAD's documentation guidelines to provide some immediate relief to students. This change will enable students who cannot afford to receive new diagnostic testing or documentation to receive accommodations, thus allowing more students to become eligible for accommodations. This increase in accommodations being granted will necessitate additional funding towards accommodations at the University; however, many accommodations are relatively inexpensive (for example, the University of Wisconsin system reported that the annual cost of note-taking services was $183 per student) (Evans et al. 2017, 372). Thus, this change will not impose an undue financial burden upon the University. These guidelines can also improve the relationship between students and SDS. By approaching the accommodations request process through the centering of student experiences with their disability, as opposed to how a student can fit within the constraints of the institution, a better relationship between students and SDS could be built since students might be more likely to see

SDS as an advocate who is focused on helping them, instead of as a body that upholds the status quo of the institution. This change in the relationship between students and SDS could make students more likely to communicate with SDS about any issues they are facing with their accommodations, with SDS subsequently working towards having those issues resolved in a timely manner.

Furthermore, many participants mentioned that the process of requesting accommodations, from when they initially submitted their documentation to when they receive their letter of accommodations, can take weeks. The length of time that it takes to receive accommodations, combined with, at times, a lack of explanation as to why the process took so long, imposes undue stress on students, especially given the time constraints of the quarter system. I propose that SDS implement a more formal timeline outlining how they process accommodations requests. This timeline could be published in the welcome packet and/or presented to students during O-week. In order to aid in adhering to this timeline, SDS could ask students to provide their documentation prior to matriculating at the University, if they are able to do so. The implementation of a formal timeline would also remove some of the burdens that students face while they wait for their accommodations. Additionally, if a deviation from one's accommodation timeline needs to occur, SDS should immediately reach out to the student in order to ensure that neither their academics nor their well-being are impacted by this delay and take the appropriate steps to fix any problem that might arise as a result of the delay.

Additionally, Student Disability Services should allow students to be more involved in the accommodations determination process. Some participants felt that they should be included in the committee review process that occurs after a student's intake meeting since this process is what ultimately decides which accommodations will be granted to the student. Ava mentioned

that the current system allows for information regarding students' conditions to fall through the cracks:

> [The documentation that is reviewed in the committee meeting] is a bunch of papers, and me trying to explain a thing in a six sentence summary [on the accommodations request form] doesn't explain my experience. That's just not representative of what I go through. So, it's kind of weird that you're discussing my condition. I don't know what you're discussing in that back room.

This lack of information regarding the committee review process creates additional stress for students that could be mitigated by allowing them to participate in the committee meeting. Furthermore, a student's participation in the committee meeting could help dispel any misconceptions that committee members who did not participate in the intake meeting with the student might have about the student's disability. Multiple participants also mentioned that despite receiving temporary accommodations for permanent conditions, they were forced to either reapply or receive new documentation to receive the same accommodations. This policy made some participants feel that SDS has a fundamental misunderstanding of some students' conditions. These misconceptions could ultimately be avoided if students are included in the committee review meeting and are able to answer any questions that members of the committee had regarding either their condition or the accommodations that they requested.

Student Disability Services should also take a more active role in ensuring that students are accommodated. Although much of SDS' ability to create substantive changes to how they approach helping students have their accommodations honored depends on the University's administration providing them with more authority, SDS can take further action under the powers currently allotted to them. SDS' policy for having accommodations honored requires that students both send their letter of accommodations to the faculty member in whose class they want to implement the accommodations and speak with the faculty member about how the accommodations could be applied in their class. As seen in the Findings section, speaking with

faculty members can be an uncomfortable experience for students and often leads to unwanted disability disclosure. SDS should thus change their current policy to provide students with the option to have only SDS inform faculty members of the accommodations that a student is requesting be implemented. I propose a system that operates similarly to the process for sending accommodation requests to faculty members. If a student prefers that a staff member from SDS speaks with a faculty member about accommodations, then that student would be able to indicate which accommodations they need for that particular class in the AIM portal. This action would then prompt SDS to send the letter of accommodations to the faculty member, as well as follow up with that faculty member to discuss implementing the accommodations. Alex suggested that this process occur on a quarterly basis, stating that "it should be like an opt-in thing where you either opt-in for all of your information to be shared for [a specific] class for the extent of that class, or you can just like opt in for the quarter, [telling SDS that you're] fine with [SDS] contacting [faculty members] for the quarter." Additionally, the student could be consulted by SDS if needed to address any issues or to clarify any concerns that the faculty member may have. Since some participants did mention that they did not mind speaking with faculty members or, in some cases, preferred to do so themselves instead of having SDS speak with them, students should still have the option of using the process that is currently in place.

Additionally, SDS needs to implement measures to ensure that the accommodations that are being provided are of high quality. One of the most common issues that participants mentioned facing with testing accommodations was not being able to contact a faculty member to ask clarifying questions during the exam and not being informed of corrections that the faculty member makes during the administration of the exam. In order to address this issue, Luna suggested a system in which, when students take exams in a separate room, they have access to a

phone that allows them to call into the classroom where their peers are taking the exam and speak with the faculty member administering the exam. If the student does not receive a response, a designated staff member will take the student's question and then either email or call the faculty member, ensuring that the student does not lose too much time in trying to have the question answered. SDS should create a similar system at the University by instructing faculty members to either call or email the designated staff member administering the exam of any corrections that the student needs to be made aware of. Similarly, the instructor should also be aware of the staff member contacting them should a student have any questions. SDS should also ensure that the designated testing spaces for students who require extra time have appropriate conditions for taking exams. Students should not be assigned to take exams in classrooms that are either near active construction sites or contain other potential distractions that could put them at a disadvantage. Students should also be provided with the option to take exams alone if that is an accommodation that is relevant to their disability.

Furthermore, Student Disability Services needs to implement additional policies to be more accessible to students. Due to the University of Chicago's rigorous academics, a student's academic life extends past Student Disability Services' current working hours (Mondays - Fridays, 8:30am - 5:00 pm). Since a student can face issues with having accommodations honored in classes that administer exams at late hours or might require SDS to ensure that their accommodations will be honored should a student need emergency medical attention outside of SDS' operating hours, students cannot be guaranteed that they can receive immediate aid should they need it. To address this problem, Ava suggested the implementation of a crisis line that students could call if an issue occurs outside of SDS' normal operating hours. This crisis line could function in the same manner as the University's Dean-on-Call Program and would allow a

student to both get immediate aid at all hours of the day and prevent an urgent situation from escalating and leading to academic consequences for the student. Additionally, SDS should implement a policy of informing students of any changes in the accommodations request or implementation process. As seen through Cleo's experience of not being informed of changes in documentation requirements and subsequently not being accommodated, consistent communication regarding changes needs to be provided to students so that they can make informed decisions about accommodations.

Ultimately, the University of Chicago's administration needs to increase Student Disability Services' authority to address accommodations issues on campus. This increase in authority, as well as the implementation of services and policies proposed earlier in this subsection and in the University of Chicago Administration subsection, will require additional funding for SDS from the University. This funding, in turn, will go towards increasing SDS' staff size, increasing the availability and quality of accommodations, and funding for services, such as the crisis line. By having policies that ensure students' accommodations are fully implemented and that provide students with additional resources, many of the inequities that students experience resulting from gaps in legislation and policies that the University currently promotes can be ameliorated.

Conclusion

Due to the development of new technologies and the passage of legislation that aimed at protecting disabled individuals' civil rights, the number of disabled students attending postsecondary education has increased since the 1970s. These efforts, however, have not completely removed the disparities in graduation rates between disabled and nondisabled students. The literature has identified various factors leading to this disparity, namely

documentation disconnect, a lack of both knowledge of rights and self-advocacy skills on behalf of students, differences in the accommodations process between secondary and postsecondary education, and different legal standards for the accommodations that need to be provided to students between primary/secondary education and postsecondary education. By examining the experiences of students at an elite university and comparing the experiences of students applying for permanent accommodations with the experiences of students applying for temporary conditions, this study expands on the existing literature by researching experiences that are rarely explored.

Through the analysis of 19 interviews with current and former University of Chicago undergraduate students who have received or attempted to receive accommodations at the University, I identified several issues that disabled students encountered in receiving accommodations and in having those accommodations implemented: a lack of information regarding eligibility for accommodations and the specific accommodations available at the University, as well as how to apply for them; documentation disconnect and the subsequent financial burden of receiving new documentation and testing; a lack of understanding and authority to implement policy changes on behalf of Student Disability Services; issues with the quality of academic accommodations; faculty members not honoring accommodations at times; and various campus accessibility issues that impact students' academics and residential life experience. Additionally, the interviews revealed that, although students who applied for and received temporary accommodations did face difficulties with campus access and documentation, these students generally had a more positive experience with faculty members and encountered fewer issues with having academic accommodations honored. These findings, while consistent with the literature, reveal additional challenges with having accommodations

honored that stem from elite institutions' culture of academic rigor. To address these issues, I propose policy changes on the federal level, for the University of Chicago, and for the University's Student Disability Services specifically. Although I propose substantive changes to the legislation and the standards for accommodations that these pieces of legislation set, these changes may take a long time to implement, therefore, universities can and should make policy changes on the institutional level so that they can work towards better accommodating their students. The implementation of these policies would signify a change from policies that adhere to the medical model of disability, in which disabled people are seen as individuals that need to be "cured" or "fixed," to ones that adhere to the social model of disability, where disability is instead created by barriers that society puts in place for disabled people.

The limitations of this study shed light on necessary areas of research that should be pursued. This study could be expanded within the University of Chicago itself to gain more perspectives on the issues in receiving and having accommodations honored. Additional research could focus on including both a more diverse group of participants within the College and more participants from other divisions within the University to identify if there are any differences between these groups. Since students from some divisions may have better experiences with the accommodation process due to division-specific policies, additional research can be instrumental in identifying those policies and advocating for their implementation throughout the University as a whole. Moreover, this study focuses solely on students at the University of Chicago, limiting the generalizability of the data. Although many elite universities are similar in their competitive nature and level of academic rigor — both features that led to issues with accommodations — additional research on the difficulty of receiving and having accommodations honored at elite universities in general is needed. While I do expect the results to be similar at other comparable

universities due to these shared characteristics, it is important that this additional research is conducted in order to best understand how to ensure disabled students are being accommodated at all levels of education.

Ultimately, this study sheds light on concerning patterns of inaccessibility at the University of Chicago due to issues with accommodations. Addressing these issues will not only require changing policies and funding allocations, but will also necessitate a change in attitudes towards accommodations and a large shift towards accepting disabled students on campus. Cleo emphasized that University of Chicago has "the opportunity to lead in disability accommodations and we're not doing it. We could... really be leaders in how students with disabilities with high academic skills get treated, and [we're] not doing it." Cleo is right — it is time we do better. It is time we lead because the future is, and undoubtedly should be, accessible.

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Appendix A

Interviewee Pseudonym	Year in Program	Non-chronic, Chronic or Temporary Condition
Ava	3rd	Chronic
Isabella	3rd	Non-chronic
Charlotte	4th	Non-chronic
Mia	3rd	Non-chronic
Harper	2nd	Non-chronic
Avery	3rd	Temporary
Luna	Alum	Non-chronic
Alex	3rd	Chronic
Ella	2nd	Non-chronic
Paige	3rd	Chronic
Martha	Alum	Chronic
Cleo	Alum	Chronic
Kit	3rd	Chronic
Zooey	Alum	Temporary
Madelyn	4th	Temporary
Jennifer	3rd	Non-chronic
Sandy	4th	Non-chronic
Tyler	4th	Non-chronic
Beverly	4th	Temporary

Appendix B

Accommodations Thesis Interview Interest Form

Thank you for your interest in my study! After you fill out this form, I will contact you to schedule a time for the interview that works best for you.

* Required

Name *

Your answer

Email *

Your answer

Pronouns

Your answer

Gender

Your answer

Race

Your answer

Division *

○ Biological Science Division

○ Booth School of Business

○ The College

○ Divinity School

○ Graham School

○ Harris School of Public Policy

○ Humanities Division

○ The Law School

○ Physical Science Division

○ Pritzker School of Medicine

○ Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering

○ School of Social Administration

○ Social Sciences Division

Which year are you in your program? If you graduated, please put your year of graduation. *

Your answer

If you are in the College, what is your major?

Your answer

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Have you received or attempted to receive accommodations at the University of Chicago (this includes accommodations for temporary conditions)? *

○ Yes

○ No

Do you identify as a disabled or chronically ill person? *

○ Yes

○ No

Are you willing to participate in this study? *

○ Yes

○ No

Do you need any accommodations to participate in this study? *

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, which accommodations would you need?

Your answer

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Appendix C

Introduction Script:
Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This interview is expected to take about 45 to 60 minutes. I will have some questions to guide the conversation, but this is an opportunity for you to share your story and mention anything that you feel is relevant to your experience. I would like to remind you that all of the questions are completely voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time. All of your answers will be confidential, and your name will be anonymized when the results are published. Do you have any questions before we begin?

(If the participant has a chronic permanent condition) Do you prefer to be referred to as a disabled/chronically ill student or a student with a disability/chronic illness?

Introductory Information
1. What year did you start school at the University of Chicago?
2. What is your division at the University?
   a. **(If in the College)** What is your major?
3. Which year are you in your program?

Accommodations Request Process
4. Have you applied to receive accommodations at the University of Chicago?
   a. **(If yes to 4)** In which year did you first apply for accommodations?
   b. **(If yes to 4)** In which quarter did you apply for accommodations?
   c. **(If yes to 4)** Were you diagnosed prior to starting school at the University of Chicago or during your time at the University?
5. Were you applying for accommodations for a non-chronic, temporary or chronic condition?
   a. **(If the accommodations were for a temporary condition)** For which period of time were you requesting accommodations for?
   b. Would you consider the condition an invisible illness?
6. Did you have accommodations prior to attending the University of Chicago?
   a. **(If yes to 6)** were you trying to receive the same accommodations that you have had in the past?
7. How did you learn about how to apply for accommodations?
8. Did you know if you were eligible for accommodations at the University of Chicago?
9. Did you know which accommodations were offered by the University of Chicago?
10. What kind of documentation did you provide prior to meeting with Student Disability Services to discuss your accommodations?

a. **(If the participant has applied for accommodations in the past at other institutions)** Did the University of Chicago ask for different or additional documentation?

11. How long did it take you to obtain the documentation from your healthcare provider?
12. Did obtaining this documentation pose a financial burden on you or your family?
13. How long did it take Student Disability Services to contact you regarding setting up a meeting after you sent in documentation for accommodations?
14. How soon was the next available meeting time?
15. Were the times offered to you for this meeting convenient for you? Did fit into your school/work/extracurricular activities schedule?
16. Did Student Disability Services ask for further documentation before your meeting?
17. **(If the participant has applied for accommodations in the past at other institutions)** How would you say the University of Chicago's process differed?

Meeting with Student Disability Services

18. How many people did you meet with during your intake meeting?
19. Do you think that the staff at Student Disability Services listened to you and gave you an adequate amount of time to explain your situation?
20. Do you think that the staff at Student Disability Services understood your condition and its effect on your life and academics?
21. Did you feel comfortable speaking with the staff member from Student Disability Services?
    a. Did they ask any questions that you felt were too intrusive or irrelevant to the process?
22. Did Student Disability Services ask you during this meeting which accommodations you would need?
23. During this meeting, did Student Disability Services tell you which accommodations the university offers?
24. Was the staff member able to answer any questions that you had?
    a. **(If yes to 24)** Was the information that the staff member provided correct?
25. Did you require a follow up meeting?
26. Is there anything else about the intake meeting with Student Disability Services that you would like to tell me?

Accommodations Approval Process

27. Did Student Disability Services give you a timeline for when you would receive your accommodations?
    a. **(If yes to 27)** Did they follow that timeline?
28. Did you receive all of the accommodations that you requested?
    a. **(If no to 28)** What percentage of your requested accommodations were granted?

        a.i.   If you feel comfortable sharing, you may share which accommodations were granted.

29. **(If the participant was requesting accommodations for a permanent condition)** Would you have to reapply for accommodations at any point in the future?
    a. **(If yes to 29)** Would reapplying for accommodations pose a financial burden on your or your family?

30. **(If the participant was requesting accommodations for a temporary condition)** Were your accommodations granted for the period of time that you requested?

Honoring Accommodations

31. (**If the participant waited to file for accommodations with Student Disability Services**) Prior to getting accommodations from Student Disability Services, did you speak to your professors/other faculty members about them providing accommodations?

32. **(If the participant waited to file for accommodations with Student Disability Services**) Why did you wait to file for accommodations?
    a. Did you have difficulties with professors/other faculty members accommodating you without accommodations granted specifically through Student Disability Services?
    b. Did you notice a difference in how your accommodations were treated after they were granted by Student Disability Services?
        b.i.   **(If yes to 32a)** Please explain the difference.

33. Did Student Disability Services explain how to inform professors of your accommodations?

34. Have you spoken to professors/other faculty members regarding your accommodations after sending them the accommodations letter through the AIM Student Portal?
    a. **(If yes to 34)** Please tell me more about this experience
    b. **(If yes to 34)** Did you feel comfortable having those conversations with your professors?
    c. **(If yes to 34)** Were your professors/other faculty members understanding?
    d. **(If yes to 34)** Have you felt that there have been any differences in how professors/other faculty members respond to accommodations depending on their academic department?
    e. **(If yes to 34)** Have you felt that there have been any differences in how professors/other faculty members respond to accommodations depending on their rank (ie. grad student, assistant professor, tenured professor)?
    f. **(If yes to 34)** Is there anything about your experience speaking with professors/other faculty members regarding honoring your accommodations that you would like to tell me about?

35. Have any of your professors/other faculty members worked with you to create a plan of how to implement your accommodations within their specific classroom setting or their specific assignments?

    a. (If yes to 35) Have you felt that those plans were effective?

36. Have professors/other faculty members ever refused to honor your accommodations after you sent them your accommodations letter and/or spoke to them about your accommodations?

    a. (If yes to 36) How many times has this occurred?

    b. (If yes to 36) What steps did you take to resolve this issue?

37. Have professors/other faculty members ever agreed to honor your accommodations after your initial conversation and then failed to honor them when they had to?

    a. (If yes to 37) How many times has this occurred?

    b. (If yes to 37) What steps did you take to resolve this issue?

38. Have you ever missed an assignment or exam or were penalized for late assignments due to a professor/other faculty member failing to provide your accommodations?

39. Have you been penalized for missing class, even though your accommodations should have prevented this from occurring?

40. Do you feel that you did not perform to the best of your abilities on an assignment, in an exam, or in a class in general because a professor/other faculty member failed to accommodate you?

    a. (If yes to 40) Are there any specific instances that you would like to highlight?

41. Is there anything about your experience with professors/other faculty members and receiving accommodations that you would like to mention?

Student Disability Services

42. Have you ever had to have Student Disability Services reach out to a professor/other faculty member on your behalf to have your accommodations honored?

    a. (If yes to 42) Could you tell me more about this situation(s)?

    b. (If yes to 42) How was the situation resolved?

    c. (If yes to 42) How long did it take for the situation to be resolved?

    d. (If yes to 42) Were you satisfied with the resolution?

    e. (If yes to 42) Did any adverse effects occur while the situation was trying to be resolved?

43. Do you think that your professors/other faculty members would respond well to having Student Disability Services reach out to them?

    a. (If no to 43) Why?

44. Would you hesitate to get Student Disability Services involved in having your professors/other faculty members honor your accommodations?

    a. (If yes to 44) Why?

45. Have you received the Attendance Flexibility and Deadline Extension Accommodation Agreement Form from Student Disability Services?
   a. **(If yes to 45)** Did you ask a professor/other faculty member and submit it to Student Disability Services?
      a.i. **(If yes to 45a)** Did you find it to be helpful?
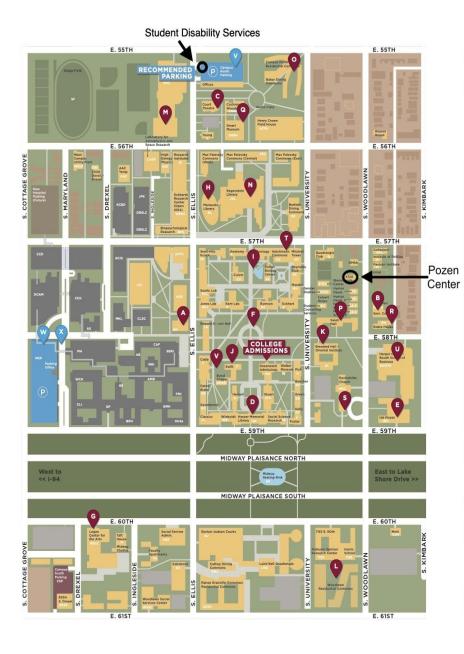   a.ii. **(If yes to 45a)** Were the accommodations listed on the form honored?

Policy Recommendations
46. What changes to the process of receiving accommodations do you think need to be implemented?
47. What changes to the way Student Disability Services operates to do you think are needed?
48. **(If yes to 5b)** Do you think that having an invisible illness impacted your ability to get accommodations? Please elaborate.
49. What changes do you think need to be made to the way in which professors/other faculty members are informed about accommodations?
50. Do you think that professors/other faculty members need to receive more training about accommodations?
51. **(If yes to 5b)** Do you think that professors/other faculty members need more training that specifically covers invisible illnesses?
   a. **(If yes to 51)** What do you think that training should cover?
52. What changes do you think the University of Chicago's administration needs to make to better support disabled or chronically ill students?
53. Are there any other changes that you think any area of the University of Chicago needs to make to better support disabled or chronically ill students?
54. In regard to accommodations, what do you think Student Disability Services does well?
55. In regard to accommodations, what do you think professors/other faculty members do well?
56. In regard to the accommodations, what do you think the University in general does well?
57. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experience that you think will be relevant to this study?
58. **(If the participant has a permanent condition)** If you feel comfortable sharing, what about the experience of being a disabled or chronically ill student do you think that other people, both within and outside of the university, do not understand?
   a. Are there any specific instances that you would like to highlight?

COVID-19 Questions
59. Did you need to reapply for accommodations during or after Spring Quarter 2020?
   a. **(If yes to 59)** Did you notice any differences between having accommodations granted during the COVID-19 pandemic?

    b. **(If yes to 59)** Did you notice any differences between having accommodations honored during the COVID-19 pandemic?

60. Are there any other ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted you regarding accommodations?

Appendix D

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Visitor Map

Campus Buildings and Dining

A. Campus Bookstore / Starbucks
B. Co-Op Bookstore / Plein Air Cafe
C. Court Theatre
D. Harper Memorial Library
E. Ida Noyes Hall
F. Main Quad
G. Logan Center for the Arts
H. Mansueto Library
I. Botany Pond
J. Swift Hall / Grounds of Being Cafe
K. Oriental Institute Breasted Hall
L. Woodlawn Residential Commons
M. Ratner Athletic Center
N. Regenstein Library
O. Campus North Residence Hall / Dollop Coffee
P. Saieh Hall / Starbucks
Q. Smart Museum
R. Robie House
S. Rockefeller Memorial Chapel
T. Reynolds Club / Hutchinson Commons Food Court
U. Booth School of Business / Kovlar Cafe
V. C-Bench

Parking and Taxis

W. Campus North Parking (Recommended pay-to-park visitor garage. Free and paid parking is available around campus.)
X. Medical Center Parking
Y. Taxi Stand (To call a taxi cab dial 312.829.4222)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

College Admissions
Rosenwald Hall 105
1101 E. 58th Street
collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu

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