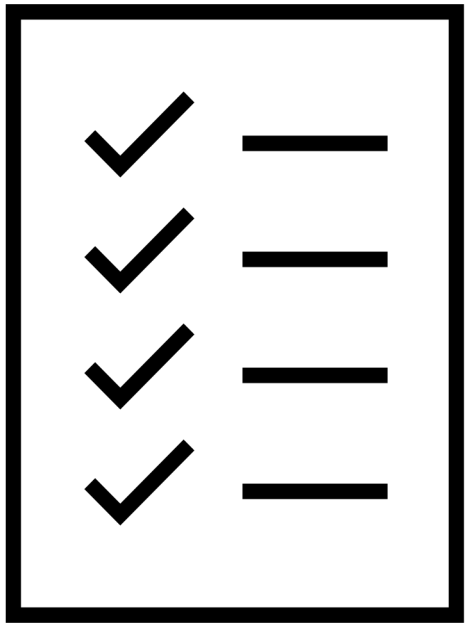
STUDENT DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS REGISTRATION PROCESS

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

AGENDA

1. **Background**
2. **Review of Current Process**
3. **Stakeholder Feedback**
4. **Action Plan**
5. **Projected Savings**
6. **Next Steps**



BACKGROUND

WHY IT MATTERS

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and Office of Civil Rights & Title IX have partnered to create a more **user-friendly** and **efficient experience** for **students with disabilities** seeking **academic accommodations**.

As the demand for reasonable accommodations in classrooms has increased, there is an opportunity and a need to **streamline the process**, **provide greater clarity to students, faculty and staff**, and **improve coordination** with other offices **for students** who are **also seeking workplace accommodations**.

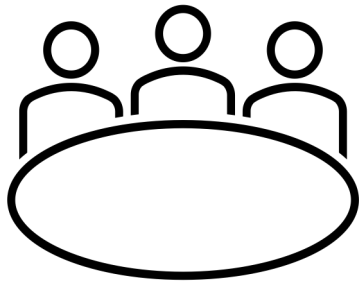
PROJECT TEAM

Sponsors: Rex Tolliver, VP for Student Affairs & Academic Support
Donna Arnett, Executive VP for Academic Affairs & Provost
Julian Williams, VP for Access, Civil Rights, and Community Engagement

Project Leads: Sonia Badesha, Director of Student Disabilities Resource Center (SDRC)
Molly Peirano, Asst. VP for Civil Rights & Title IX

Project Team: Kate Dominguez, Disability Coordinator for SDRC
Ernestine Surls, Administrative Coordinator for SDRC

SDRC STAFFING



Overall:

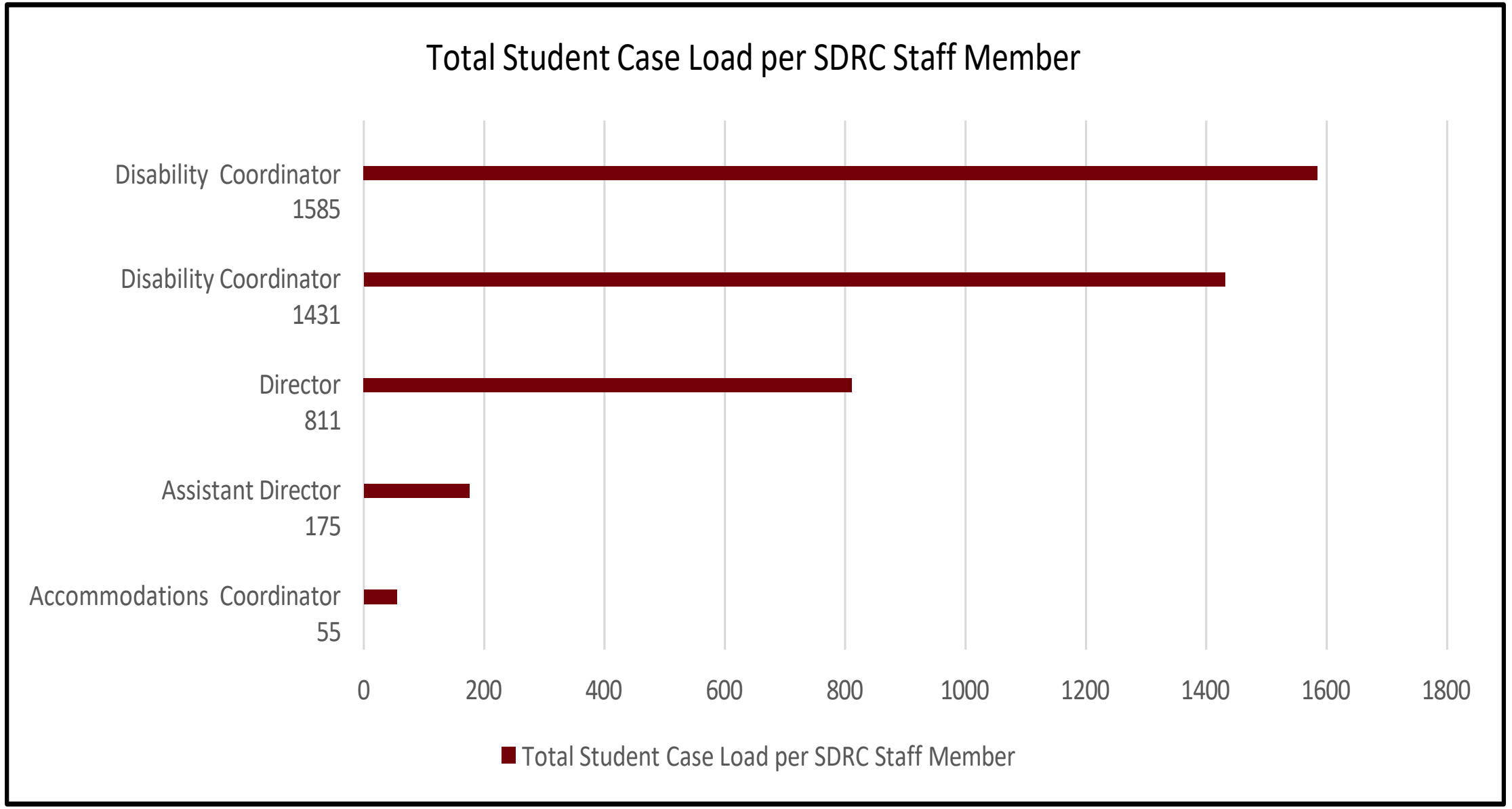
12 positions, 3 of which were vacant for the majority of 2023-2024

Managing the academic accommodations registration process:

5 staff members are primarily involved student classroom accommodations registration, 4 Disability Coordinators and 1 Administrative Coordinator

2 Disability Coordinators were vacant for most of 2023-2024

SDRC Staff Total Workload – *Staff to Student Distribution as of 1/11/2024*



REVIEW OF CURRENT PROCESS

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST PROCESS

HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW

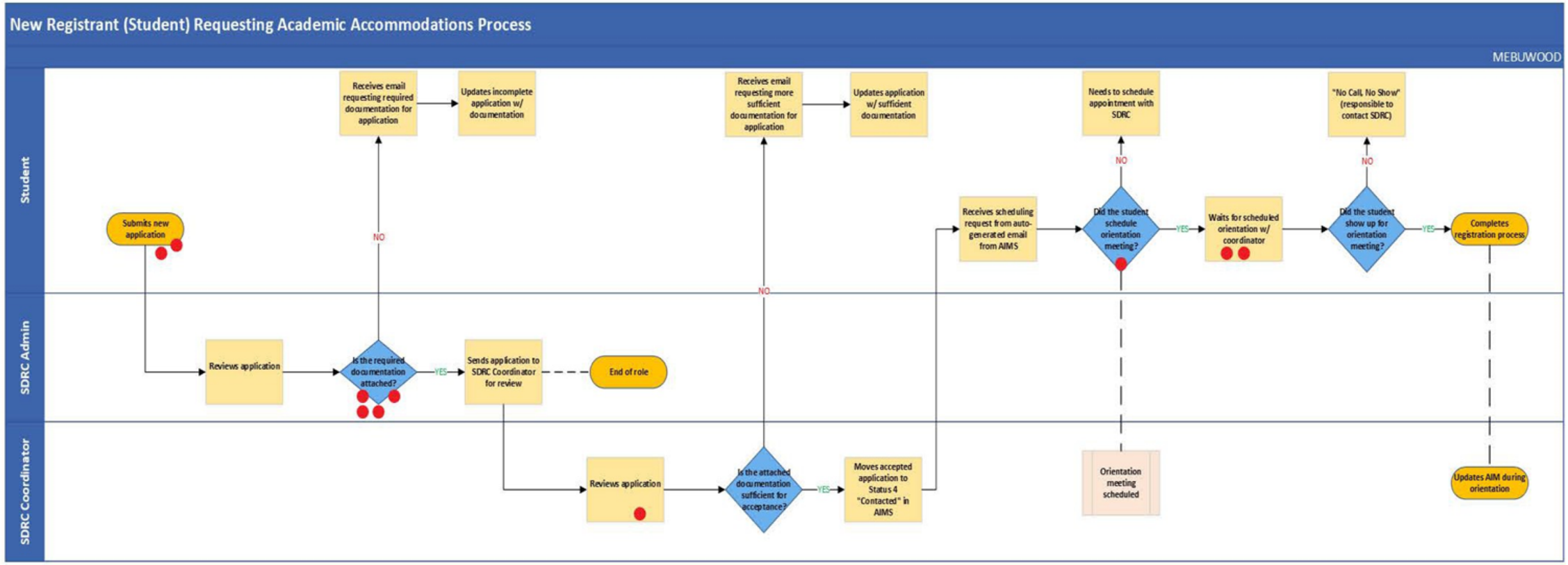
Start-to-finish process time averages 2-3 weeks

Follow-ups, representing interactions between these roles and the student applying for accommodations, consume significant staff hours daily and weekly, reflecting critical points in the process * *(indicated in red)*

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST PROCESS

DETAILED PROCESS MAPPING

Project mapping identified where considerable time is spent processing, waiting, or looping back with students to gather missing or incomplete information.



HAND-OFF FOR GRADUATE STUDENT WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS

HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW

The process for graduate student workers to request workplace accommodations lacks clarity and formal structure.

Absent a clearly defined process, the director of the SDRC has offered informal consultation, contingent upon the completion of the academic accommodation application process.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

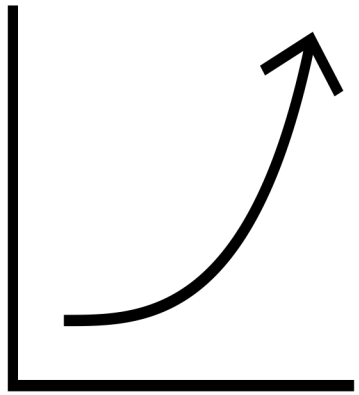
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

A survey was distributed to registered SDRC students and faculty and staff partners. This survey focused on process effectiveness, communication channels, challenges, and overall satisfaction with the accommodations process.

Stakeholder Feedback	Number	Percentage
Undergraduate Student	103	**48%**
Graduate Student	27	**13%**
Faculty	79	**37%**
Staff	4	**2%**
Total	**213**	**Respondents**

ACTION PLAN

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS



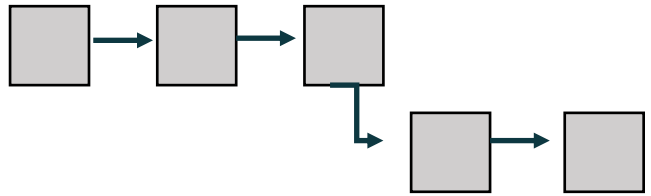
ACTIONS

To increase accurate first-time AIM application completions by new student registrants

- **Update AIM application** so students can complete the application accurately on the first attempt
- **Create instructional video tutorials** for SDRC services and programs
- **Explore integration between AIM and Banner** for application auto-fill enhancement
- **Pilot SMS messaging feature within AIM** for student notification

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

ACTIONS



To improve the efficiency of internal SDRC processes for timely accommodations

- **Fill open Disability Coordinator positions** for workload and application processing time reduction
- **Create designated time for focused review** of new accommodation applications
- **Develop SDRC phone directory** for direct call routing
- **Research appointment scheduling platforms** for integration with AIM
- **Conduct post-engagement survey** on accommodation process improvements

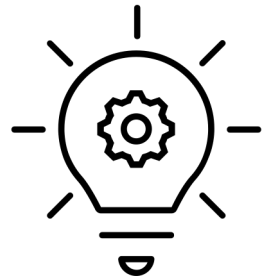
ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

ACTIONS

To foster stronger partnerships with faculty and staff to enhance support for students with disabilities

- **Share information about accessibility services** with student government and other student organizations
- **Develop New Student Orientation material** explaining the registration process
- **Present information about SDRC services and programs** at new faculty orientation and select faculty meetings

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

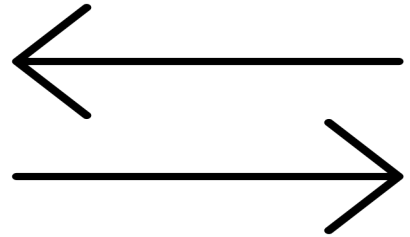


ACTIONS

To increase awareness of SDRC academic services and accessibility

- **Create central landing page** to serve as a navigational guide for accessibility services
- **Create policy** to provide the framework needed for more inclusive policies and procedures to support students with disabilities

HAND-OFF FOR GRADUATE STUDENT WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS



ACTIONS

To provide a seamless hand-off to HR for graduate student workers with disabilities who request workplace accommodations

- **Eliminate** the need for current SDRC registered students to **submit medical documentation twice**
- Update the **"Release of Information" process and form** with Employee Relations
- Transfer existing SDRC student information via **electronic consent and document transfer**

PROJECTED SAVINGS

PROJECTED TIME SAVINGS

SDRC Application Processing Times				
	It currently takes….		In the future with action plan improvements…	
Administrative Coordinator				
Daily (M-F) monitoring of AIM queue for new applications	Avg 1 hour to flag new applications for missing documentation	5 hours	Avg 30 minutes to flag new applications for missing documentation	2.5 hours
Disability Coordinator				
7 new applications to review per week	Avg 2 hours to review 1 application	14 hours	Avg 1.5 hours per 1 application	10.5 hours
15 new orientations per week	Avg 1 hour to host 1 orientation	15 hours	Avg 1 hour per 1 orientation	15 hours
3 follow-up appointments per week	Avg 30 minutes per 1 appointment	1.5 hours	Avg 30 minutes per 1 appointment	1.5 hours

PROJECTED TIME SAVINGS

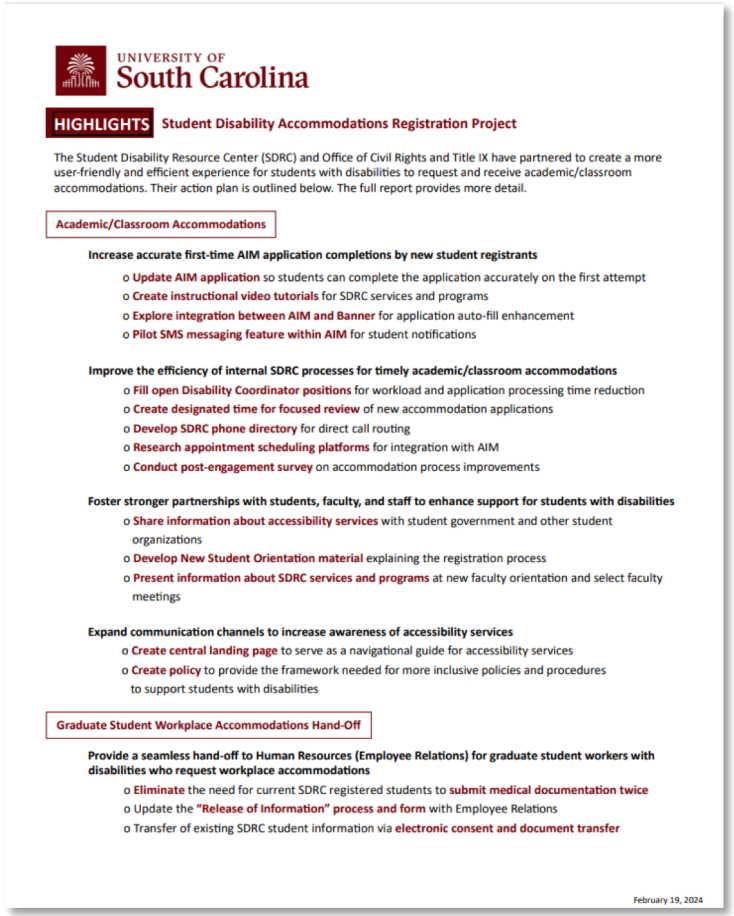
The **Administrative Coordinator** will **save 2.5 hours per week** or approximately **120 hours per year** (based on 48 weeks of work per year). **Each** of the **four Disability Coordinators** will save **3.5 hours per week** or approximately **168 hours per person annually**.

As a result of this plan, the **SDRC** can **repurpose 792 hours per year** currently spent tracking down missing information, following up with students who missed appointments, and other non-value-added activity. This time can be repurposed **to advising and guiding students, a truly value-added activity**.

Avg Total Hours in Application Review and Follow-Up	Current	Future	Savings Per Week
Administrative Coordinator	5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours (50%)
Disability Coordinator	30.5 hours	27 hours	3.5 hours (11.5%)

NEXT STEPS

SDRC ACTION PLAN SUMMARY



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HIGHLIGHTS **Student Disability Accommodations Registration Project**

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and Office of Civil Rights and Title IX have partnered to create a more user-friendly and efficient experience for students with disabilities to request and receive academic/classroom accommodations. Their action plan is outlined below. The full report provides more detail.

Academic/Classroom Accommodations

Increase accurate first-time AIM application completions by new student registrants

- o **Update AIM application** so students can complete the application accurately on the first attempt
- o **Create instructional video tutorials** for SDRC services and programs
- o **Explore integration between AIM and Banner** for application auto-fill enhancement
- o **Pilot SMS messaging feature within AIM** for student notifications

Improve the efficiency of internal SDRC processes for timely academic/classroom accommodations

- o **Fill open Disability Coordinator positions** for workload and application processing time reduction
- o **Create designated time for focused review** of new accommodation applications
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Foster stronger partnerships with students, faculty, and staff to enhance support for students with disabilities

- o **Share information about accessibility services** with student government and other student organizations
- o **Develop New Student Orientation material** explaining the registration process
- o **Present information about SDRC services and programs** at new faculty orientation and select faculty meetings

Expand communication channels to increase awareness of accessibility services

- o **Create central landing page** to serve as a navigational guide for accessibility services
- o **Create policy** to provide the framework needed for more inclusive policies and procedures to support students with disabilities

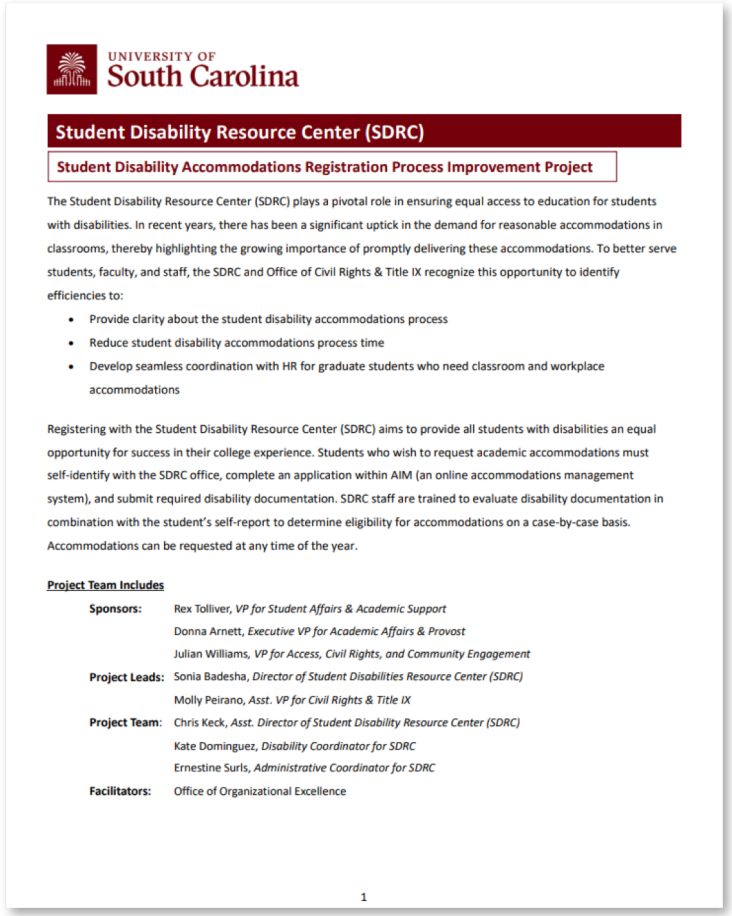
Graduate Student Workplace Accommodations Hand-Off

Provide a seamless hand-off to Human Resources (Employee Relations) for graduate student workers with disabilities who request workplace accommodations

- o **Eliminate** the need for current SDRC registered students to **submit medical documentation twice**
- o Update the **"Release of Information" process and form** with Employee Relations
- o Transfer of existing SDRC student information via **electronic consent and document transfer**

February 19, 2024

SDRC FULL REPORT



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Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)

Student Disability Accommodations Registration Process Improvement Project

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) plays a pivotal role in ensuring equal access to education for students with disabilities. In recent years, there has been a significant uptick in the demand for reasonable accommodations in classrooms, thereby highlighting the growing importance of promptly delivering these accommodations. To better serve students, faculty, and staff, the SDRC and Office of Civil Rights & Title IX recognize this opportunity to identify efficiencies to:

- Provide clarity about the student disability accommodations process
- Reduce student disability accommodations process time
- Develop seamless coordination with HR for graduate students who need classroom and workplace accommodations

Registering with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) aims to provide all students with disabilities an equal opportunity for success in their college experience. Students who wish to request academic accommodations must self-identify with the SDRC office, complete an application within AIM (an online accommodations management system), and submit required disability documentation. SDRC staff are trained to evaluate disability documentation in combination with the student's self-report to determine eligibility for accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Accommodations can be requested at any time of the year.

Project Team Includes

Sponsors: Rex Tolliver, *VP for Student Affairs & Academic Support*
Donna Arnett, *Executive VP for Academic Affairs & Provost*
Julian Williams, *VP for Access, Civil Rights, and Community Engagement*

Project Leads: Sonia Badesha, *Director of Student Disabilities Resource Center (SDRC)*
Molly Peirano, *Asst. VP for Civil Rights & Title IX*

Project Team: Chris Keck, *Asst. Director of Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)*
Kate Dominguez, *Disability Coordinator for SDRC*
Ernestine Surls, *Administrative Coordinator for SDRC*

Facilitators: Office of Organizational Excellence

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP

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