

No Neurodiverse Child Left Behind: Improving Higher Education For Students with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract:

Entering college or university is a daunting and stressful time, even more so for undergraduates with learning disabilities. This demographic of students has difficulty transitioning into young adulthood due to the lack of or awareness of specialized services within their institutions. The following studies and survey reveal students experiences and encourage improvements in higher education.

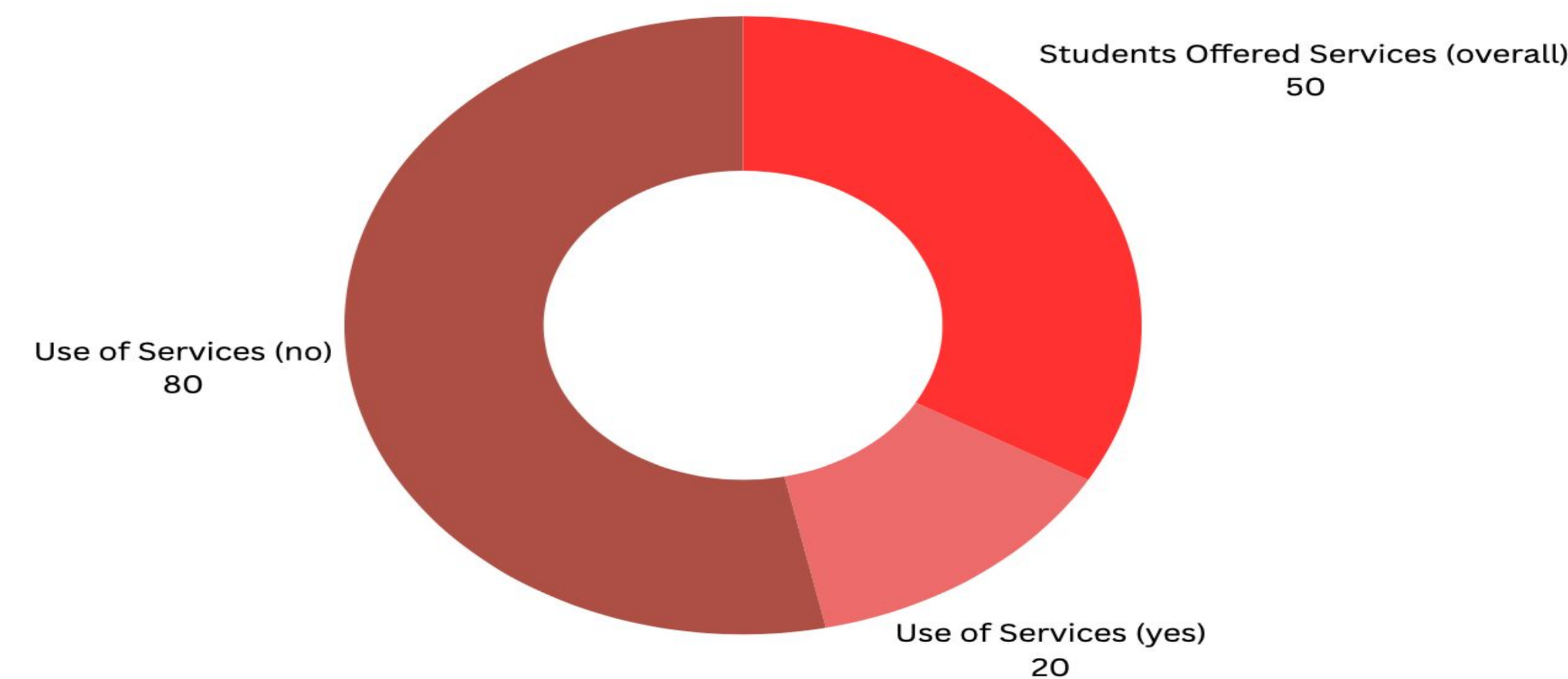
Research:

- ***Journal of Diversity in Higher Education***
 - Participants: 63,802 students from 11 four-year universities.
 - Only 33% of self-reported students used disability accommodations.
- ***Learning Disabilities Research and Practice Journal***
 - Two-thirds of post-secondary students who had previous special education services did not disclose disabilities to their colleges.
 - 43% accessed universally available support services, 11% accessed disability-related services.

Methodology:
Online Survey

14 Total Respondents

Results (in Percentages):



“What could improve students with disabilities’ college experience?”

4/8 Written Responses

1. “More faculty training on in-class support and curriculum building. Offer services to students prior to first college semester”.
2. “When students first enter college, the school should keep track of their previous accommodations and send an email to the student if they’d like to continue with those services.”
3. “I believe that college faculty should be properly trained and educated on disabilities so they can better understand and accommodate students with disabilities.”
4. “For me, in high school it was much easier to get accommodations and I honestly thought [School Name] didn’t even have it for my first year because I was never informed about it.”

Findings:

- 10 out of the 14 respondents answered the question of their use of specialized services in university. This is a reflection of the students’ interaction with the culture surrounding neurodivergence as well as the available services on campus.
- Most college students are aware of specialized services, yet are not communicated about them and do not apply them to their profiles, expecting to be ignored or unfulfilled.
- Research shows that there is a significant scope of improvement in the disability services available at most higher education campuses to help all students to reach their full potential.