



HUMBER COLLEGE
SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE

RECEIVED
SEP 09 1992

REPORT ON 1991-92
SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOCATION
AND
PROPOSAL FOR 1992-93

HUMBER COLLEGE
LIBRARY

SUBMITTED TO
MINISTRY OF COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS
BRANCH

FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. REPORT ON 1991 - 92 SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOCATION

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY 1
SUPPORT SERVICES/DEVICES 2
SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE 6
CONSULTING/ASSESSING 10
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 13
BUDGET 1991-92 ACTUAL 15

RECEIVED
SEP 09 1992

B. PROPOSAL FOR 1992 - 93

HUMBER COLLEGE
LIBRARY

BUDGET ANTICIPATED 15
SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE 16
SUPPORT SERVICES/DEVICES 17
CONSULTING/ASSESSING 19
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 19
CONCLUSIONS 19

C. APPENDICES

1. Humber College Special Needs Data Report 1991-92
2. Humber College Special Needs Staff, 1991-92
3. Dialogue with Faculty

| |
|----------------|
| 1991-92 REPORT |
|----------------|

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

The activity levels as enumerated in the Special Needs Data Collection Report (appendix #1) continues to significantly increased each year.

| | <u>1989-90</u> | <u>1990-91</u> | <u>% CHANGE</u> | <u>1991-92</u> | <u>%CHANGE</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| TOTAL CLIENTS | 347 | 441 | 27% | 579 | 31% |
| CLIENT CONSULTATIONS | 1903 | 3863 | 103% | 7029 | 82% |
| SUPPORT CONSULTATIONS | 3178 | 4256 | 34% | 7221 | 69% |
| ACCOMMODATIONS | 684 | 1070 | 56% | 1250 | 17% |

The 31% increase in the number of clients is in dramatic contrast to the overall college increase of only 10.9% growth in full-time student enrollment. While the numbers of students in all categories of disabilities have increased, the largest change in absolute numbers is in the population with Learning Disabilities. The client consultations and support consultations relating to this group each have more than doubled. This trend supports the hiring of an additional Learning Disabilities Consultant as detailed in the proposed 1992/93 budget.

SUPPORT SERVICES/DEVICES

TECHNICAL DEVICES

As the budget shows, additional funds were spent this year to improve the accessibility of technical devices to accommodate a variety of needs.

Students who use technical devices were surveyed last May as to how well they felt their needs were met and what changes they would like. A summary of responses is included in Appendix #2. As a result of the survey and other student requests, a number of purchases were made.

Braille

A complete computerised braille system was purchased including a scanner, computer program and braille printer. This is run off a computer that has a voice synthesizer, since a student might use both devices for the same activity. It took considerable time to get the system running properly but we can now braille tests ahead of time so a blind student can have a choice of format. Those students who rely on braille find it much easier to type their projects and exams in braille and then convert to standard print. We also hope to have more documents (e.g. emergency procedures) available in braille, on tape, and in print.

Phone Lines

A TDD line was installed in the office of the SN Technician at each of the North and Lakeshore Special Needs Offices.

CD-ROM

The libraries at both North and Lakeshore have purchased several CD-ROM units. The SN grant purchased voice synthesizers and print enlargers to adapt the CD-ROM unit for use by some SN clients. We also purchased some CD-ROM disks such as Groliers Encyclopoedia and Microsoft Bookshelf that make research easier for people who have difficulty accessing print because of visual and/or learning disabilities.

Work Stations

In order to increase the accessibility of computers for individuals using wheelchairs, two complete work-stations were purchased, one for each of the North and Lakeshore locations.

Tracking Equipment

As the numbers of students using Special Needs equipment grew, it became harder to keep track of it and make sure it was returned at year-end. We have adopted the system used by the Library so that students with outstanding equipment must return it before they can receive their grades from the Registrar's Office. There was not much loss before, but this approach has saved considerable time and effort by avoiding repeated phone calls to retrieve equipment.

Other

A variety of other accommodative devices were purchased as the need is identified. In some cases, computer software was made available to assist students with learning disabilities. An example of this is "Body Language" for students studying Anatomy and Physiology; it was purchased along with a Life Science Lexicon for students in Health programs. Additional voice synthesizers, and 4-track tape recorders were purchased as demand for them increased.

SERVICES

We continue to refine our delivery of support services as we become more adept in predicting what will be most helpful for a specific student. As the data reflects, the most significant change in level of service was for students with confirmed learning disabilities. These students were making greater use of supplementary remediation with the Learning Disability Consultant, using computers, and attending orientations that introduce them to the types of accommodations that they can access.

Morphographs

We continue to offer an advanced Communications course in which students are trained to work as tutors with students with language difficulties. While this course is taught by a Human Studies professor and a Counsellor, the Learning Disabilities Consultant provides part of the training and supervises those tutors who work with students with learning disabilities.

The value of Morphographs is indicated by the increase in students continuing with it, the popularity of the evening courses taught by some

of the day-time tutors, and the interest being shown by other Canadian Colleges.

Special Needs Assistants

The training and supervision of students to work as note-takers, scribes and attendants continues to be an efficient way to offer some services, and to helping students with disabilities meet students in other classes, to help sensitize other students to the needs of those with disabilities. Forms have been developed to facilitate the introduction of SN Assistants to teaching faculty and to seek the help of faculty in recruiting qualified SN assistants.

The SN Technician at the North campus has hired significantly more attendants and notetakers this year to assist the increased numbers of mobility and physically impaired students. This increase is reflected in the growing "Salary - Other" part of the budget.

Last minute requests for scribes and test aides has increased and the SN Technician has to fill this gap.

SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE

There were some changes to the staffing this year (appendix #2), including the return of Craig Barrett (previously Chair of Counselling & Special Needs) from his sabbatical to replace Mike Keogh in the position of Special Needs Consultant, Lakeshore Campus. Craig also reached out to some of the smaller campuses, ensuring classroom and washroom accessibility for a York-Eglinton Centre student who uses a wheelchair, and meeting faculty at the Keelesdale Campus to help them accommodate students with disabilities.

Some of the increased demands for services were met through the hiring of an additional support staff, 3 days a week, to assist with the support services at the North Campus. Training in Lotus 1-2-3 helped our SN technicians devise improved tracking and data collection systems. In addition, the experience of SN staff and the increasing comfort level and skills of faculty working with students with disabilities, resulted in a more efficient service enabling us to meet the increased enrollment.

Pre-Admission Testing

Pre-admission testing is used in many programs to select students from among the increasing number of applicants (Humber had approximately 25,000 applicants this year). Many applicants have disabilities that require accommodation for such testing and in a few cases, if the testing is not relevant, a Special Needs Consultant must intervene (e.g. measuring the reading level of a blind student).

The first concern that arises is the relevance of the testing for individuals with certain disabilities and the fairness of the selection process. In programs with 1000 applicants for 200 positions, it is inevitable that some qualified applicants might not be accepted. It is hard to know if a student's disability has been adequately taken into account. We attempt to work closely with program coordinators to help them assess the impact a specific disability might have on the applicant's ability to handle the program. Our involvement is naturally welcomed more by some program coordinators than others. Since it is hard to prove that an individual has been treated unfairly, we have begun to track students that we assist with pre-admission testing and

hope to be able to show trends on whether or not a program is open to applicants with disabilities.

The second issue that we face is the incredible workload demands of trying to help existing students through their programs, while doing pre-admission interviewing and testing, and assisting unsuccessful candidates to investigate why they didn't get accepted and/or to help formulate other career plans. Understandably, many parents and high school guidance/special education teachers want to understand why a student was not accepted and if there is any way to change the decision. Much time is spent on such service to individuals who might never become students at Humber.

General Learning Disabilities

A separate but related concern is the group of students who do not have a specific learning disability and for whom their psycho-educational assessments indicate "slow learner". These students and their parents expect the type of individualized service that they have received in Special Education classes in high school. We cannot help them through a standard college program if they do not have the cognitive ability to master the theoretical aspect of their programs. Even if they have been incorrectly assessed in school and do have high academic potential, they have probably not learned the academic skills necessary to succeed at college and are at high risk of failing without a remedial program.

We recommend that students without at least half their high school subjects at the general or advanced levels should be screened for functional level in the same way mature students are. However, we are

concerned that there is inadequate funding for upgrading and vocational programs to meet the needs of this group.

An additional concern is that when we ask high schools to clarify the needs of students requesting services because they are "exceptional", we find this label has sometimes been used for problems that we do not consider our mandate such as "lazy", "behaviour problem", "educable retarded", "gifted". This puts us in the position of denying service that the parents and high schools expect. We believe a provincial policy should be developed to clarify and provide consistency between high school and college.

Learning Disabilities in Mathematics

This is an area that has played a secondary role to language disabilities since it is easier for students to avoid programs requiring mathematics. However, most programs have some minimum level of business or technical numeracy. The Special Needs Consultant (North) and Learning Disabilities Consultant have been part of on-going meetings with the School of Business to try to address and resolve the problems of students have with specific learning disabilities in math.

Field Placements

As more students with disabilities enroll in college, faculty in many programs must find field placements that can accommodate the students. Many will seek assistance in this from the Special Needs Consultants, who in some cases must intervene themselves in order to ensure the student has fair access to this major component of their education.

Orientations

In order to assist students with Learning Disabilities to effectively use the accommodations and assistance available, a series of orientations are now offered in the May/June period as well as in August. We work with the college Articulation Coordinator to try to reach high school students who could benefit from these activities.

Employment Issues

Knowing that this is a particularly difficult job market for students, we were pleased to have been approached by a Social Service Worker student wanting to do a field placement with us. He was a mature student with considerable work experience in computers and human resources. In cooperation with the Placement Department, we supervised this student in his work helping students with disabilities with their job search techniques.

The purchase of the Directory of Community and Social Services, "The Blue Book", on computer disk was used by a number of visually impaired students in the Social Services programs since they could access it with voice synthesizer and/or print enlarger.

We believe it is essential to provide more assistance in this area and had actively made connections with Access Connection so that graduates with disabilities could be helped by The Employment Connection. Unfortunately, this service no longer exists leaving a gap in our service to graduating students.

Research

The results of Craig Barrett's research for his doctoral thesis indicate that students with learning disabilities, like other students

with language deficiencies, are less likely to succeed and to persist at college. Students with other disabilities seem to match the general college population in both success and retention rates. There are many aspects of serving students with Special Needs that require further study to determine which interventions are most effective.

Student Activities

The role of Student Activities Council SN Representative was shared this year by two students, one with a disability and one without. These students continued to build bridges with the student council, including initiating an Association for Students with Disabilities.

The college Athletics department initiated two new activities: wheelchair basketball and self-defence for people with disabilities. The new swimming pool (with wheelchair accessible shower) has provided fitness and recreational options for students visual and mobility impairments.

Developmental Disabilities

Most recommendations of the Program Review of the CICE Program (discussed in the last report) were successfully implemented and have resulted in an improved program for students with developmental disabilities. In addition, we are now able to work cooperatively with the employees of CICE to ensure that the expectations of faculty for their students and ours are not confused.

CONSULTING/ASSESSING

CONSULTATIONS

Reasons for the continuing increase in consultations (beyond the increase in number of students) were suggested in last year's report: growing awareness on the part of prospective students, parents, school personnel, agencies and associations of the importance of researching possible programs and accommodations.

Faculty/Staff

The number of consultations increased naturally with the number of students and potential students being interviewed. In addition, the staff of the Special Needs Office continues to try to reach out to other college employees through a variety of means (Professional Development workshops, individual student consultations, etc.) and is being seen and used increasingly as a resource for the college.

Since the growing number of students with learning disabilities has the greatest impact on the work of the Human Studies faculty, we continue to review our working relationship with that group. This Fall, a Communications professor, in consultation with our office, surveyed the Human Studies Faculty as to what type of information they need about students with disabilities and how they wish to receive it. This resulted in some interesting dialogue (see Appendix #3) and the request for a handbook especially for their needs. This handbook is in the process of being produced and will be submitted with the next report.

Schools

Consultation continues to take place with personnel from secondary schools. However, this is difficult for a college like Humber which

draws such a large percentage of students from all over the country. Students are still arriving for admissions testing or the start of class without having notified anyone that they need accommodations.

Another concern relating to secondary school consultations is the frequent lack of clarity as to why a student has been receiving Special Education, the nature of their disability, and the supports that help. To address this, the Special Needs Consultants have spent considerable time at joint professional development activities with high school personnel, facilitated by the College Articulation initiatives or the School Liaison staff.

Other

The number of prospective students (628) consulting with SN staff about college programs and accommodations has tripled this year. More alarmingly, the number of consultations in the "other" category grew to 1231, an increase of 669% over the previous year. This probably is a reflection of the number of individuals and agencies "shopping" for the best program and service. While this is positive from the point of view of prospective students, it might mean that SN Offices in colleges in the Metro Toronto region must devote a greater proportion of their time to serving individuals who might not become students than in colleges in communities where students have little choice. This would be worth investigating for the staffing and funding implications.

ASSESSMENTS

We continue to modify and improve our approach to the assessment of students with unconfirmed learning disabilities. A counsellor with expertise in psychometrics spends approximately 20% of his time working

with Consultants and the Learning Disability Consultant to assess students, using the Woodcock-Johnson as part of the process when appropriate. For the majority of students, this gives a good indication of the nature of the disability and type of accommodations that should be provided. We encourage students to seek formal diagnostic confirmation as quickly as possible.

However, sometimes the Woodcock-Johnson results, the student's educational background, and other supporting data do not provide a clear or consistent picture of the learning problem. For these students and for those who need immediate formal diagnosis, we intend to set aside some funds to purchase outside assessments and consultations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development remains a priority for our office since we believe we must constantly increase our own knowledge and skills and we have an obligation to help other college employees become comfortable and skilled in working with individuals with disabilities.

At least 8 workshops are presented by the Humber SN team each May/June at college and provincial conferences. During the academic year, the focus is on workshops for the staff of a specific program or division, often requested as a result of concerns over a specific student. While the number of faculty members who understand Special Needs issues is increasing, there are still many for whom the challenge of a student who is or seems to be "different" is more than they can effectively handle. In particular, the large number of sessional and part-time teachers in some programs means that our task of educating faculty is on-going.

Of particular value is the one-to-one training that is done by the Learning Disabilities Consultant in attempting to pass her techniques on to other professors in the Language Development Centres. Using the Language Development Centres as "home base" has helped the LD Consultant to informally educate faculty as to what she does and to share the responsibility for helping students with learning disabilities.

The one-day Special Needs workshop prior to the "Access for Success" conference that we proposed in last year's report did not take place since the dates coincided with the CCSN Provincial Conference. It will be considered again for next year.

In order to promote close working relationships with colleagues from other departments, the Special Needs Office from time to time funds attendance at conferences that support work with students with disabilities. For example, "Partnerships for Equity: Access to Education and Employment" was attended by a member of the Placement Department, a faculty member from THAT (Training the Handicapped Adult in Transition) and an employee of the CICE Program (for developmentally handicapped adults).

| |
|--------|
| BUDGET |
|--------|

| | ACTUAL 1991-92 | PROJECTED 1992-93 | DETAILS |
|------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| SALARIES | | | |
| Admin. | 24,621 | 26,620 | |
| Faculty | 174,284 | 218,637 | new LD Consultant |
| Support-FT | 101,529 | 100,431 | |
| -PT | 12,034 | 15,418 | |
| Other | 14,715 | 20,000 | peer assistants |
| OPERATIONS | 17,656 | 15,553 | |
| CAPITAL | *26,422 | 13,000 | |
| TOTALS | 371,261 | 409,659 | |

- * Major purchases included:
- complete braille system (scanner, computer, printer)
 - 2 work stations
 - 2 voice synthesizers for CD-ROM computer unit
 - 2 print enlargers for CD-ROM
 - 2 phonic ear-FM systems and loops
 - 4 4-track tape players
 - 2 hand-held spell-checkers

PROPOSED BUDGET
1992-93

SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE

Two staffing changes planned for this fiscal year are described below.

Learning Disabilities Consultant

Students with Learning Disabilities are of major concern to our office since not only are their numbers rapidly growing each year but also their needs are so varied. Many have been "spoon fed" in their earlier schooling and are unprepared for the demands placed on them in college. Often they have not learned coping strategies, time management, self-advocacy, or other self-management skills essential for college success.

Our research has shown that a large number of the students whose placement tests indicate the need for remedial English avoid taking any communications courses. Thus, they fall behind in their course work, do not improve in their language skills, and have a high drop-out rate.

While we attempt to treat students with disabilities as responsible adults, it is evident that a group of those with Learning Disabilities need more intervention strategies than we have been able to provide. We hope to use the increased grant, to hire an additional Learning Disabilities Consultant to address the needs of this group. Unfortunately, this will be a sessional contract as the grant is not adequate to create a permanent consultant.

Chair and Coordinator

Pamela Mitchell, Chair of Counselling & Special Needs, will be on a 1-year leave of absence and her management duties will be assumed by Judy Humphries. In recognition of the growth of our services and the number and range of people and activities involved, we saw the need for a Special Needs Coordinator. Joy Trenholm will assume this role in September 1992 and pass some of her present work with students with Learning Disabilities on to the new LD Consultant.

SUPPORT SERVICES/DEVICESSpace

By July 1992, the Counselling and Special Needs Services at the North Campus will move into a new location opposite the Registrar's Office. The location offers easy accessibility to the designated disabled parking spaces, WheelTrans drop, Registration, etc. In addition to an extra office for the new Learning Disabilities Consultant, the new location offers two new special needs rooms.

A large room will house the Special Needs Technical and Accommodative Devices. The historical decision to keep this equipment in a room in the Library was intended to make it accessible to students during Library hours and to provide a "normal" setting. In practice, the equipment was under-utilized because it was kept in a locked room in the library and the Special Needs Technician was not readily available for training or to supervise its appropriate use. Most of it will be moved to the Special Needs Office and its use monitored.

The second large room will be used by both Counselling and Special Needs as a supervised Test Centre. A computer will be available and equipped with a voice synthesizer, print enlarger, and commonly used

programs so a student can write tests in a supervised setting as is already done at the Lakeshore Campus. The Computerized Placement Test, used for mature student admissions and language placement, will also be available in this room on voice synthesizer or in large print.

We will also install a bank of special lockers near the entrance to our new location. They will be equipped with special locks for use by students lacking the finger strength or dexterity to use the standard free-hanging lock.

Equipment

As more students with disabilities enter college we have an increasing demand on the existing accommodative equipment and must periodically purchase additional and newer versions.

We are actively investigating programs for enlarging the print on computer monitors that run on the main-frame. If we can find one that is suitable, it will be accessible to computers in a variety of locations.

We are working with the College Academic Computing staff to designate several phone lines for modems so students can work on the computer mainframe from home. This is particularly valuable for students with disabilities that prevent regular attendance at school.

Other new purchases will be identified as students with disabilities indicate their needs and preferred accommodations.

CONSULTING/ASSESSING

As previously mentioned, we hope the addition of a second Learning Disabilities Consultant will allow us assess how we can better assist students with Learning Disabilities as the faculty who work with them. Depending on the skills of the individual we hire, we might also need to refer out for some special diagnostics and we are trying to develop a contract with one of the psychologists who specializes in this field.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will continue to offer workshops to college faculty and other employees to assist them to help students with disabilities. We hope the Special Needs Manual for Human Studies Faculty will be distributed in the early fall and expect it will prompt more workshops and consultations.

Joy Trenholm will continue to represent the college on the provincial committee, CCSN. We expect that all SN staff will continue to participate in and present a wide range of professional development activities, in the college, with school boards, and elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

While we very much value the increase in the Special Needs grant, and believe we are using it wisely and with increasing efficiency, we feel it necessary to point out that there are still gaps in the level of service we can provide in a large and often impersonal college such as Humber. The following concerns remain.

Interventions

It is much easier in a small college to monitor a student's progress, to make sure s/he is making appropriate use of the services available, and to pick up on the emotional difficulties students with disabilities sometimes experience when expected to be responsible for their own needs after many years of being "monitored" and protected. Our level of staffing does not allow us to adequately monitor and intervene with this number of students.

Graduate Placement

While the Humber SN Office works closely with the Placement Department to provide additional service for students with disabilities, some graduates need a much higher level of assistance with their job search and job-keeping skills than the college can provide. This will be increasingly true for those students we are now admitting to college with multiple and severe disabilities. Just as we should not offer access to college without a reasonable chance of success, we should not help students to graduate from college without providing a chance for gainful employment.

Technical Support

A third area of need is for more technical support to assist both staff and student users with the computer hardware and software that is essential to accommodating students with disabilities. It is our experience that funding agencies might provide a student with accommodative equipment but are not willing to support adequate training and on-going technical support. The Humber Chair of Academic Computing has assigned a technician to work closely with us to make sure our

accommodative devices are running well but we are only one of many demands on his time and he is not always available when the system crashes at a crucial time such as when a blind student is writing a test and needs the voice synthesizer or braille printer.

Continuing Education Students

Another population that is growing rapidly and has implications for service and funding is Continuing Education students. We offer limited service for students with disabilities but do not regularly work evenings or weekends to provide access to technology or consultation at those times. Because so many evening teachers are part-time, it is a continuous job to help them understand the needs of students with disabilities. Of the approximately 70,000 students who study through Continuing Education at Humber, the proportion of people with disabilities is growing along with their expectation for accommodative services. We do not have a level of staffing resources to meet the needs of this group without taking away from the service to day students.

Deaf Students

A continuing concern is the provision of services to the deaf students in colleges such as Humber that do not have targeted programs. One issue is still the funding for trained interpreters. The other is the difficulty in providing adequate remedial instruction to help deaf students meet college Communications and General Education requirements.

COLLEGE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL NEEDS
 Special Needs Fee Collection

Overall, we believe we provide a high level of professional assistance to students and potential students with disabilities requiring special accommodations. However, the numbers of students and expectations for accommodation continue to increase and Special Needs staff are stretched to deliver effective service. We hope the designated grant will continue and increase to reflect the unique demands on large Metropolitan Toronto colleges.

| Category | 1987-88 | 1988-89 | 1989-90 | 1990-91 | 1991-92 | 1992-93 | 1993-94 | 1994-95 | 1995-96 |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Administrative | 12 | 15 | 18 | 22 | 25 | 28 | 32 | 35 | 38 |
| Academic | 10 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 28 | 30 |
| Admission | 8 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 28 |
| Financial | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| Health | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Legal | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Physical | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Recruitment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Research | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Student | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Support | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Transportation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Unemployment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Volunteer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Total | 500 | 107 | 649 | 413 | 643 | 579 | 122 | | |

COLLEGE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL NEEDS

Special Needs Data Collection

Sumner College
April 1, 1991 - March 31, 1992

| | Learning Disab. Not Confirmed | Learning Disab. Confirmed | Mobility Impaired | Hearing Impaired | Visually Impaired | Other | Multiple Impairment | TOTAL |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| TOTAL CLIENTS | 136 | 173 | 96 | 35 | 34 | 72 | 33 | 579 |
| CLIENT CONSULTATIONS | | | | | | | | |
| Prospective Students | 99 | 277 | 73 | 22 | 58 | 74 | 25 | 628 |
| Students | 710 | 2115 | 572 | 232 | 571 | 533 | 437 | 5170 |
| Other | 93 | 453 | 143 | 101 | 160 | 107 | 174 | 1231 |
| Total Client Consultations | 902 | 2845 | 788 | 355 | 789 | 714 | 636 | 7029 |
| SUPPORT CONSULTATIONS | | | | | | | | |
| Faculty/Staff | 636 | 2644 | 637 | 233 | 878 | 535 | 323 | 5886 |
| Schools | 92 | 149 | 14 | 04 | 48 | 32 | 34 | 373 |
| Agencies/ Professionals | 13 | 123 | 70 | 75 | 125 | 122 | 76 | 604 |
| Other | 18 | 116 | 63 | 23 | 44 | 61 | 33 | 358 |
| Total Support Consultations | 759 | 3032 | 784 | 335 | 1095 | 750 | 466 | 7221 |
| ACCOMMODATIONS # OF CLIENTS | | | | | | | | |
| Notetaker | 10 | 33 | 13 | 04 | 09 | 05 | 08 | 82 |
| Reader | | 03 | | | 09 | | 01 | 13 |
| Scribe | | 05 | 02 | | 09 | | 03 | 19 |
| Dicta-Typist | | | 03 | | | | | 03 |
| Interpreter | | | | 04 | | | | 04 |
| Intervenor | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Attendant | | | 07 | | | | 01 | 08 |
| Educational Attendant | | 01 | | | | | 01 | 02 |
| Testing Aid | | 07 | 08 | 01 | 09 | 02 | 03 | 30 |
| Proctor | 05 | 29 | 17 | 07 | 09 | 22 | 14 | 103 |
| Supplementary Tutoring | 42 | 34 | 11 | 06 | 03 | 22 | 14 | 132 |
| Supplementary Remediation | 105 | 183 | | 01 | | 30 | 02 | 321 |
| Orientation | | 37 | | | 06 | | | 43 |
| Training | 17 | 59 | 19 | 10 | 09 | 17 | 14 | 145 |
| Special Course | | | 01 | 01 | 01 | | | 03 |
| Adapted Schedule | 02 | 22 | 11 | 04 | 09 | 09 | 05 | 62 |
| Diagnostic Assessment | 59 | 24 | | | | | 03 | 86 |
| Computer | 10 | 21 | 07 | 01 | 07 | | 01 | 47 |
| Special Software | | 04 | | | 07 | | 01 | 12 |
| Taped Material | 03 | 22 | 01 | | 11 | 01 | 04 | 42 |
| FM System | | | | 04 | | | | 04 |
| Enlargement System | | | | | 08 | | | 08 |
| Counselling Support | 23 | 06 | 04 | 02 | 01 | 12 | 01 | 49 |
| Instructional Accommodations | | | | 01 | 06 | 01 | 03 | 11 |
| Other | 05 | 10 | 03 | 01 | | 02 | | 21 |
| Total Accommodations | 281 | 500 | 107 | 047 | 113 | 123 | 079 | 1250 |

SPECIAL NEEDS OFFICE
HUMBER COLLEGE

1991-92 STAFF

CHAIR Pamela Mitchell*

CONSULTANTS Joy Trenholm (North Campus)
Craig Barrett (Lakeshore, YEC, Futures)
Mary Jo Morris (Learning Disabilities - Academic)

TECHNICIANS Ollie Leschuk (North Campus)
Mary Murphy (Lakeshore)

ASSESSMENT Cy Bulanda*

CLERICAL Lead Hand: Nicki Sarracini*
Reception: Joan LaRush* (North Campus)
Edith Karpetz* (Lakeshore Campus)
Additional: Celia Horwood* (North Campus)

NURSE Mary Carr*

* indicates part-time with the Special Needs Office and/or additional duties

Continuum Congratulates Humber's

INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR

LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION AWARD: Andrew Brown and Tom Olien, Technology: Student and Faculty Enhancement Through *Skills Canada*

HUMBER'S AWARD WINNERS:

Moira Delaney, Lakeshore: Creator of a Course in Carribean Literature

Cathy Mitro, Applied and Creative Arts: The Children's Music Education Program

Sandra Nesbitt, Lakeshore: Increased Employability of Graduates Project

Joy Trenholm, Counselling: Development of Special Needs Handbooks

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Learning about Learning Disabilities: A Collegial Dialogue

Over my years at Humber, I've discovered that some of the most valuable professional development occurs in casual, informal circumstances. Below is the response I received from Mary Jo Morris to what I naively thought was a fairly simple question. I was wrong.

I found the answers Mary Jo provided were a stunningly clear distillation of the extremely complex issue of Learning Disabilities. Further, many of the principles discussed provide insights into the learning patterns of all our students. I hope you, too, will learn from and enjoy this fine letter from a dedicated teacher.

Steve Harrington

Dear Steve,

Only two teachers signed the Special Needs survey, and one of them was you. I'm writing because I figure your signing it was a sort of invitation for a reply. If it *wasn't*, don't read on! I warn you! I'm VERBOSE!

One time last year, I remember talking to you and some others about a new theory I'd just heard about the causes of learning disabilities, and you said in a sad voice, "but what can we *do* about it?". Your comment on the survey echoed this; you compare Special Needs to a malfunctioning engine: "I know what an engine is, but I don't how how to fix one if it's malfunctioning. Am I supposed to fix it? Am I supposed to accept that it is malfunctioning?" Now, I know absolutely nothing about engines, and therefore, it is not possible for me to stretch the analogy. But I do

know something about learning disabilities, so I'm going to try to explain them.

First, you can't "fix" a learning disability. They don't come and go, and there are no "cures" for them. Learning disabilities are mysterious because the brain is mysterious. "Intelligence" is not located in any specific part of the brain, nor is it a specific, concrete



thing. Despite I.Q. tests and so on, intelligence is not a truly quantifiable thing. What we call intelligence, however, is observable: it could be defined, I think, as the ability to manoeuvre through life in a society in a competent way. In our society, competence includes the ability to learn in schools, and to learn, specifically, to read, to write, and to reason according to fairly rigid conventions. Students with learning disabilities, unlike those with real "intelligence" problems, can demonstrate their competence in certain areas and not in others. The reasons for the disparities among their competencies are neurological. Some of the pathways in their brains work better than others.

Now, that still leaves us wondering what we can do about it. How can we improve the workings of the brain? Well, to begin with, neural pathways are not made of stone; they are not immutable. The ways we think and the competence of our thinking change all the time. One neurologist from Johns Hopkins calls

teaching "neurological training". Every time a person learns something, his brain changes. (I'll use the masculine pronoun throughout: women are born knowing everything anyway.) (No reply is necessary.) Apparently, a neural pathway works much the same as a footpath: the more it is used, the easier it is to use. When people differentiate between "remediation strategies" and "compensatory strategies", what they mean by "remediation" is smoothing and clearing a pathway in the brain so that it is easier to use. If a student's auditory processing is weak, he is taught ways in which he can strengthen it. "Compensatory strategies", on the other hand, avoid the overgrown, brambly, tangled pathways and try to find other routes to the same destination. If the student's auditory processing is weak, he is taught how to get the same information through, say, visual or tactile channels. Many of the students at Humber who use note takers are doing so because they have difficulty getting information from what they hear; the note taker provides a second route to the information.

The main reason I work out of the LDC is that the majority of LD students have problems with one aspect or another of writing, and the reason for that is simple. Language is extremely complex, and because writing is dependent to a huge extent on speech and adds further complications to an already complex thing, *almost any* kind of learning disability will manifest itself in writing, much to the detriment of the student's achievement in school. If a student has auditory-processing problems and has been taught phonetics, taught to spell what he hears, many of the less meaningful parts of words will disappear — he'll drop endings, for instance. If a student has visual-processing problems, to produce the correct letter-formations from his head will be laborious, and he'll spell words incorrectly and probably produce only truncated pieces of writing.

What I'm saying is that "big" and complex tasks can go wrong in many different ways. More parts of the brain have to be working properly for a person to spell, to read, or to write than a person without a learning disability can imagine. In "normal" people, all of the pathways are functioning adequately, and what's more, the different competencies are orchestrated properly. The power to orchestrate is a function of the brain, too (frontal lobe). There are some LD kids whose "pathways" are clear, but who *cannot (not will not)* pick the right ones at the right time. For them, the remediation people provide training of

frontal-lobe abilities; we "compensation" types provide clear and detailed maps.

In practical terms (do I hear a sigh of relief?), effective teaching of learning disabled students involves three (let's say) main processes. The first is observation: the teacher has to see when students do and do not understand. (If it ain't broke, don't fix it). Sometimes a teacher's natural style just suits the student perfectly; in that case, one could regard the student as "circumstantially non-disabled" (or "lucky"). Sometimes the teacher's style really isn't an issue; if the student is fired up about the material and is good at all

the "frontal-lobe" stuff, he'll contrive to learn the material by any means. (We have a "genius-gardener" in the college who is like that - he's a horticulturalist to the very marrow of his bones; he practically lives in the LDC; he uses the resources available to him, and he is running about a 85% average.) (But you should see his spelling before he cleans it up on the computer. Whew!)

The second teaching process is what I call translation: translation from one channel to another, from, say, auditory to visual, or vice versa. This

does not necessarily involve elaborate overheads or anything like that. I'll give you an example; I do this over and over again, and am repeatedly astonished that it works. When I'm teaching kids to find subjects in the sentences, they get stuck on constructions like "Most of the people were charmed by the politician's departure." They say the subject is "people". I give them the sentence, "One of the men left". They say the subject is "men". I draw 3 stick men. Then I ask, "who left?" They get the idea every time. Amazing. (This translation device also provides an opportunity to show the kids that everyone has some strengths & weaknesses. I can't draw for *beans*.)

The third process is probably the trickiest and the most important, and that is to help the student take charge of himself. The LD kids who register with Spécial Needs (not all of them do) are *all* told to talk to their teachers and explain as best they can how they learn and what they need in order to learn well. In order to do that, they have to *know* how they learn best. A shocking number of them have been in Special Ed. classes throughout their school careers and have no idea why. They conclude that they are stupid, and that only luck can get them passing grades. An alert teacher can help the student to correct a faulty self-image.

Now that I've said all this, I'm going to add that it's

Continued on page 10...

Apparently, a neural pathway works much the same way as a footpath: the more it is used, the easier it is to use. "Compensatory strategies" avoid the overgrown, brambly, tangled pathways, and try to find other routes to the same destination.

