

State University System
Access and Success for Students with Disabilities (Auxiliary Learning Aids)
2008-2009 Budget

Total Budget Need: \$583,392

The Board of Governors and the State University System (SUS) of Florida are committed to providing students from diverse backgrounds with a high-quality college education for success in the global marketplace and community. In its Strategic Plan, the Board has recognized that "there are many forms of diversity to which individual institutions and the System need to be attentive," including diversity in terms of students' race and ethnicity, area of residence, socioeconomic status, gender, age, family background, and disability status.

The number of students with disabilities enrolled in the SUS has risen significantly in recent years. Whereas overall student enrollment in the System rose from 251,984 in fall 2001 to 294,016 in fall 2006 (a 17% increase), the number of students served in the System's student disability resource centers rose from 4,920 in 2001-02 to 8,401 in 2006-07 (a 71% increase).

For many students with disabilities to succeed and persist to graduation in the SUS, they need access to certain Auxiliary Learning Aids (ALA) and services, such as interpreters, Computer Aided Real-Time Translation (CART), readers, voice synthesizers, specialized calculators, text enlargers, taped texts, notetakers, assistive listening devices, and more. Although the numbers of students requesting academic accommodations have increased in recent years, and although the cost of ALA has increased, the funding for ALA has not.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits state and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability." Title II regulation states, "A public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity."

A total of \$795,412 in ALA funds allocated previously in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) was divided up and moved to each university's base in July 1, 2002. No additional funding has been provided through the GAA since that time. University disability service providers indicate that there is a projected 2008-2009 need of \$2,298,007 for auxiliary learning aids and services. Although not currently required, institutions were expected in 1992 proviso language to match the state funds with forty percent (40%). Forty percent of the projected 2008-2009 budget need is \$919,203. Subtracting the \$795,412 already placed in the universities' bases for ALA, this leaves \$583,392 unmet need for auxiliary aids and related services for university students with disabilities.