Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on college students with chronic medical disabilities

We surveyed 72 undergraduate and graduate students living with chronic medical disabilities (which includes chronic and rare diseases) from states across the U.S. on their academic experience during the global pandemic.

63% of students reported a change in their accommodation needs due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

30% of the students surveyed lost accommodations.

49% did not feel their accommodations adequately supported their needs during the pandemic.

The average student rating of their university’s response to their academic needs during the pandemic was 5/10

The average student rating of their professor’s ability to understand and provide needed accommodations during the pandemic was 6/10

How students feel their universities could improve accommodations for students with chronic medical disabilities:

- More opportunities for social interaction with other students with chronic medical disabilities
- More personal health resources & support groups
- Mandate disability training for professors & faculty
- More support & counseling for students
- No more medical evaluations for accommodations
- More individualized support for students with disabilities
- Increased communication, outreach, & support that continues beyond the pandemic
- Educate other students on the importance of wearing a mask and adhering to other safety measures
- Realize the value and importance of online classes and flexible education for those with chronic medical disabilities
- More opportunities to give administration feedback
- Mandatory training for administration and professors on giving accommodations
- Do not pressure to attend classes in-person if they do not feel comfortable doing so
- Educate other students on the importance of wearing a mask and adhering to other safety measures

Below are some of the individual responses we received from students when asked how their universities could improve their response to the Covid-19 pandemic now and moving forward:

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