



# Accessibility at the Panama City Project Center

Shiivek Agarwal, Mia Bourguignon, Sarah McCarthy, Cassandra Zimmerman  
Sponsored by Dr. Aaron Sakulich  
Advised by Dr. Grant Burrier & Dr. Curt Davis

# Goal Statement

To promote confidence in students' decisions to attend the Panama City Project Center by improving the information available to prospective traveling students.

# Background

## Disability and Limitations

“... a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”(ADA National Network, 2023, para. 2)

## Accessibility Definition

- Everyone can enter a public space and access all aspects
- All users can access information in a format suitable for their needs

## The United States

- American Disability Legislation
- Studying Abroad with Disabilities
- WPI International Programs
- WPI Campus Offices

## Panama City Project Center

- Panamanian Disability Legislation
- Ciudad del Saber

# 4

## Methodology: Objectives

- 1. Identify the most prevalent disability and accessibility issues that affect WPI students attempting to travel abroad**
- 2. Assess accommodations in Ciudad del Saber (CdS) and surrounding areas regarding these disabilities**
- 3. Investigate the personal experiences of people with disabilities in Panama City, particularly at CdS**
- 4. Advise the Project Center Director, Dr. Sakulich, regarding available accommodations and alternatives**

# Methodology: Strategies

|                                 |                         |                                     |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1: Identify Concerns</b>     | Archival Research       | Interviews with WPI Staff           | Surveys of WPI Students |
| <b>2: Assess Project Center</b> | Archival Research       | Interviews with Panamanian Subjects | Observations            |
| <b>3: Personal Experiences</b>  | Survey of CdS Residents | Personal Ethnographies              |                         |
| <b>4: Advise</b>                | Analysis of Data        | Final Deliverables                  |                         |

# Discussion of Accommodations



**Major Accessibility Concerns  
For WPI Students Traveling  
Abroad**

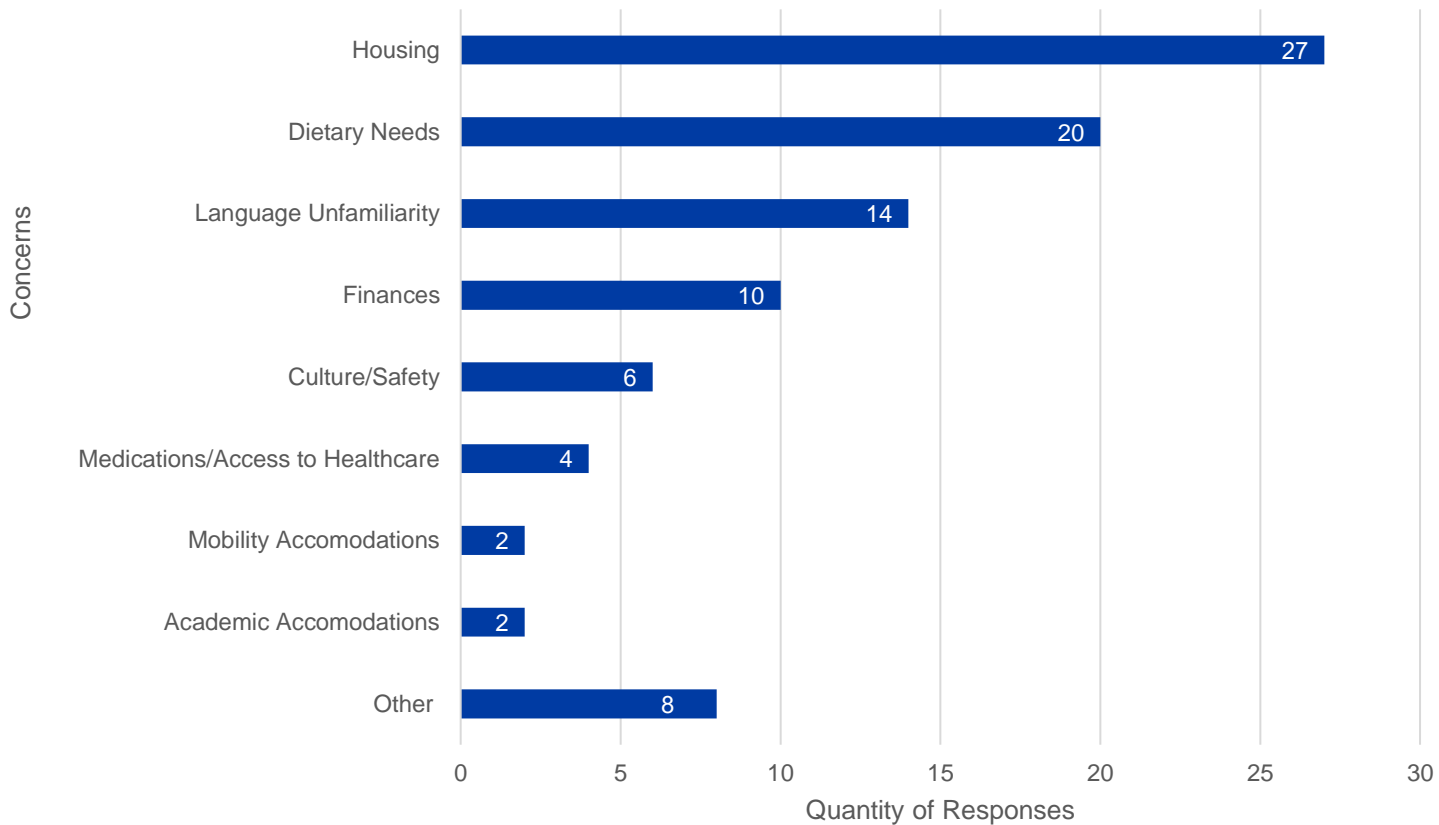


**Available Accommodations  
at the Panama City, Panama  
Project Center**



**Limitations of the  
Findings**

## Common Concerns from Survey Results



# Housing Accommodations

Of respondents with concerns, **50.9%** felt unclear about housing accommodations.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Single Room      | Available, same location as double rooms                                     |
| Private Bathroom | Available, bathroom shared only with roommate, fully private for single room |
| Air Conditioning | Available, no temperature adjustment   |

- No photos on WPI eProjects
- Some photos on CdS lodging complex website



# Dietary Needs



Most common diets/food allergies  
can be accommodated



Wheat



Tree Nuts



Peanuts



Eggs



Shellfish



Milk



Fish



Soy

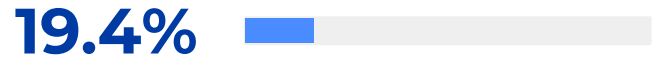


Sesame



*Note. from Food Allergen Awareness. Wake County Government. (n.d.).*

# Language Barriers

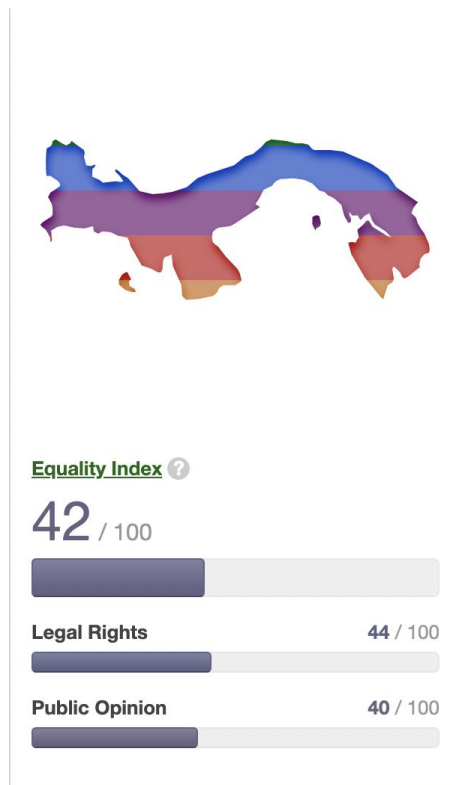


- Language barriers can compound with dietary restrictions
- Three-day preparatory course in Spanish
- Panama City has English signage at tourist destinations

# Culture & Safety

## Panama Compared to the United States:

- Panama Equaldex: 42
- United States Equaldex: 76



*Note.* From Equaldex . (2023). *LGBT rights in Panama: Equaldex*. LGBT Rights by Country & Travel Guide. <https://www.equaldex.com/region/panama>

# Medications and Health Care



- Medications - in original packaging with a prescription
- Can purchase common medications
- Emergency clinic located on CdS campus



# Mobility Accommodations

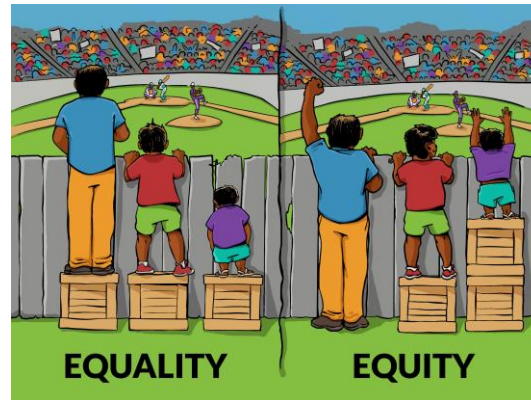


- Wheelchair Accessibility at Dormitories
- Campus Accessibility Efforts
- Accessibility Beyond CdS



# Academic Accommodations

- Not reported as a major concern
- OAS/GEO provide guidance for advisors
- Academic accommodations handled internally



*Note: From Maguire, A. (2016). Illustrating Equality VS Equity. Interaction Institute for Social Change. Retrieved October 11, 2023, from <https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>.*

# Limitations of Findings

## Time

- Limited scope due to time constraints
- Would have liked to include other voices and locations.

## Survey Results

- Maintaining anonymity
- Received over 700 responses

## Bureaucracy

- Lack of response from Government agencies
- Took time to find the correct personnel at CdS

# Recommendations

- Panama City Project Center Accessibility Handbook
- Infographic for WPI Global Fair
- Allergen card
- Additions for eProjects website

**Allergens**

| English   | Spanish     | English   | Spanish    |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Peanuts   | Maní        | Shellfish | Marisco(s) |
| Tree Nuts | Nuez/Nueces | Wheat     | Trigo      |
| Milk      | Leche       | Gluten    | Gluten     |
| Eggs      | Huevo(s)    | Soy       | Soja       |
| Fish      | Pescado     | Sesame    | Sésamo     |

**Phrases**

“Without \_\_\_\_” → “Sin \_\_\_\_”

“I am allergic to \_\_\_\_” → “Soy alérgico/a a \_\_\_\_”

“Does this food have \_\_\_\_?” → “¿Esta comida tiene \_\_\_\_?”



## Housing

- Dormitory style housing
- Double occupancy and single occupancy rooms are available in some cases
- Kitchenette on every floor
- Full kitchen available in a separate building
- Breakfast included
- Convenience store near dormitories



## Food

- Food court with many cuisines ~10-minute walk from dormitories
- Vegan, Vegetarian, Pescatarian, Kosher, Halal, and Allergy Friendly options available



## Transportation

- Dormitories are ~20 minutes outside Panama City by car
- Uber is widely used for short commutes
- Public buses are easy to use for short- and long-distance trips

## More Information

- The Medical Clinic and Pharmacy located ~10 minute walk from the dorms
- 3-day Spanish class completed upon arrival





# Acknowledgments

Thank you to our sponsor, Dr. Aaron Sakulich, for providing this opportunity and your continued guidance.

Thank you to our advisors, Dr. Grant Burrier and Dr. Curt Davis, for your support and direction throughout this process.

Thank you all for attending this presentation!

# Questions?

The slide features a white background with the word "Questions?" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. On the right side, there are two overlapping rectangular shapes: a light blue rectangle on top and a darker blue rectangle below it, both extending from the right edge towards the center.

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