

Emergence of Disability Studies in the University

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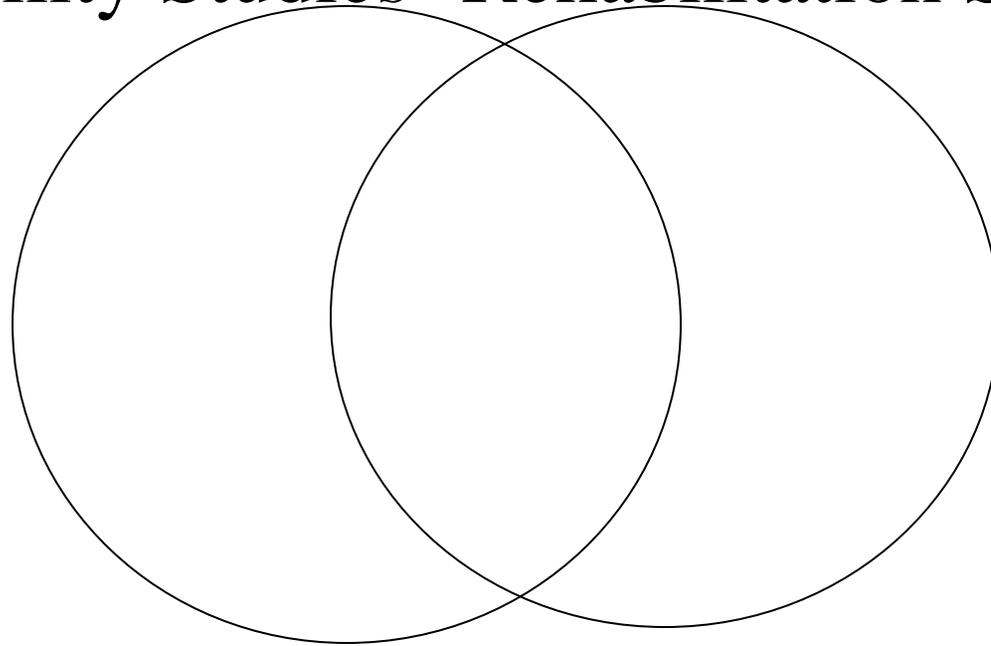
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Where to House it?

- Which Disciplines?
 - Social Sciences (policy)
 - Health and Medicine (clinical approaches)
 - Humanities (cultural studies)
- Within College or Across University?

Study of Disability: How to Define it?

Disability Studies Rehabilitation Science



What is Rehabilitation Science?

- Interdisciplinary field
- Focuses on how disability develops and factors influencing these processes, including treatment, technology, and environment
- Goal of improved physical and psychological functioning

What is Disability Studies?

(UK Definition)

Disability studies is concerned with the interdisciplinary development of an increasing body of knowledge and practice, which has arisen from the activities of the disabled people's movement, and which has come to be known as the "social model of disability."

The social model of disability locates the changing character of disability, which is viewed as an important dimension of inequality, in the social and economic structure and culture of the society in which it is found, rather than in the individual limitations.

What is Disability Studies?

(US: Syracuse University Definition)

Disability studies applies social, cultural, historical and philosophical perspectives to the study of disability in society.

...disability studies is designed to help students understand and work to overcome the barriers to full participation of people with disabilities in society.

What is Disability Studies?

(US: University of Illinois at Chicago Definition)

Instead of treating disability as simply inherent in individuals, then, Disability Studies transforms the understanding of disability from an individual deficit to a complex byproduct of social, environmental and biological forces.

What is Disability Studies?

(US: University of Illinois at
Chicago Definition continued)

In order to achieve these goals, UIC's disability studies program recognizes disability as a complex phenomenon existing at the intersection of human differences and social values. The Ph.D. program in disability studies promotes an awareness of disability that supports individuals in shaping identities and lives. Moreover, the program examines how services that support persons with disabilities along with social and political change can reduce sources of disempowerment.

Rise of Disability Studies

- Disability viewed as a social problem
- Social construction of disability
- Universality of disability
- Recognition as an academic field
- UK: Social Oppression
- US: American Social Activism
- EU: Human Rights Approaches

Disability Studies Programs

- 23 programs identified
- Cluster programs
- Concentrations (Education, Rehabilitation Science, English)
- Degree Programs (UIC)
- Certificate programs

Key Publications on Disability Studies

Examples:

The Handbook of Disability Studies

and the

Encyclopedia of Disability

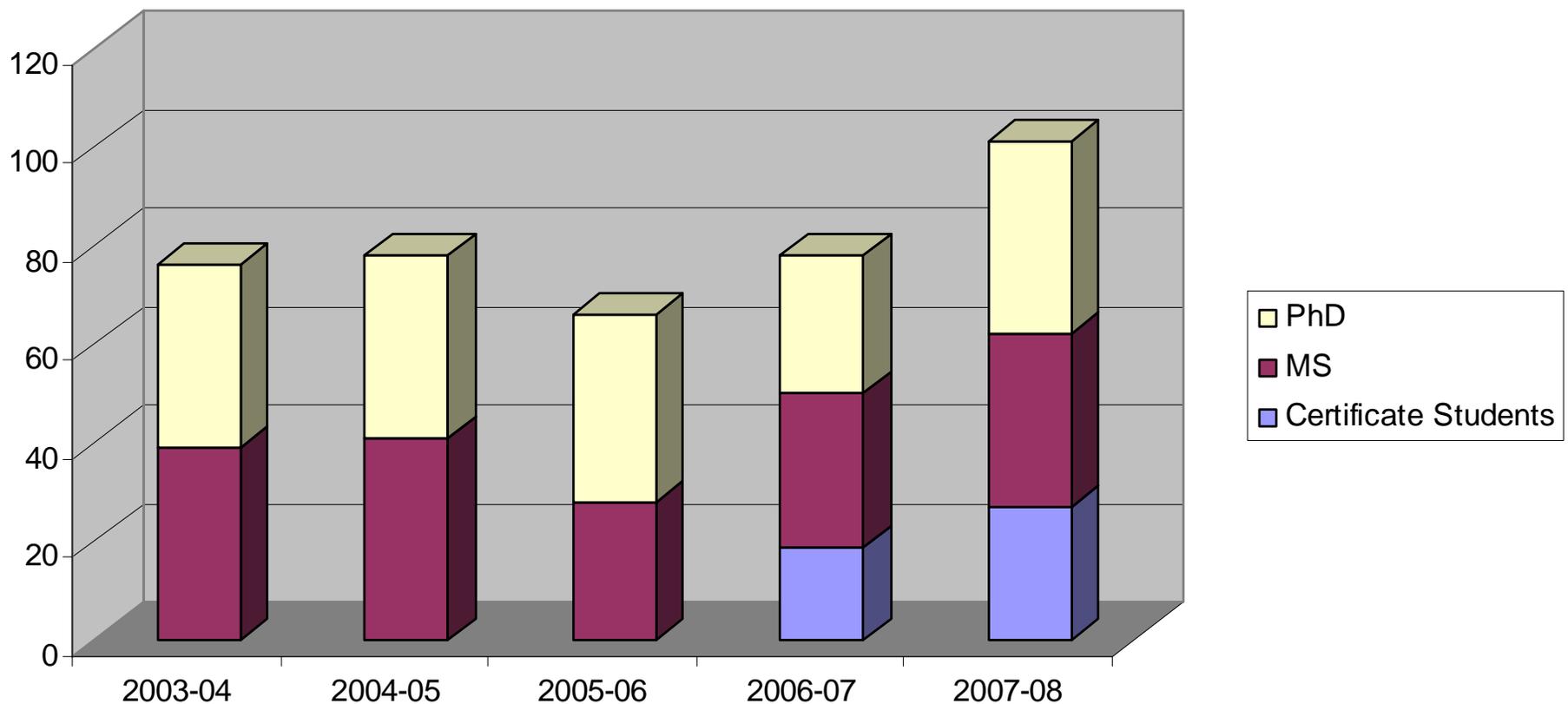
Programs Approved in 1997

- Masters of Science
 - Disability Studies and Policy
 - Rehabilitation Technology
- Interdisciplinary PhD Program
 - Within College of Applied Health Sciences
 - With Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy

Certificate Programs

- Disability Ethics
- Management and Organizations
- Rehabilitation Technology

Academic Programs: Enrollments at start of Each Academic Year



The Department of Disability and Human Development (UIC)

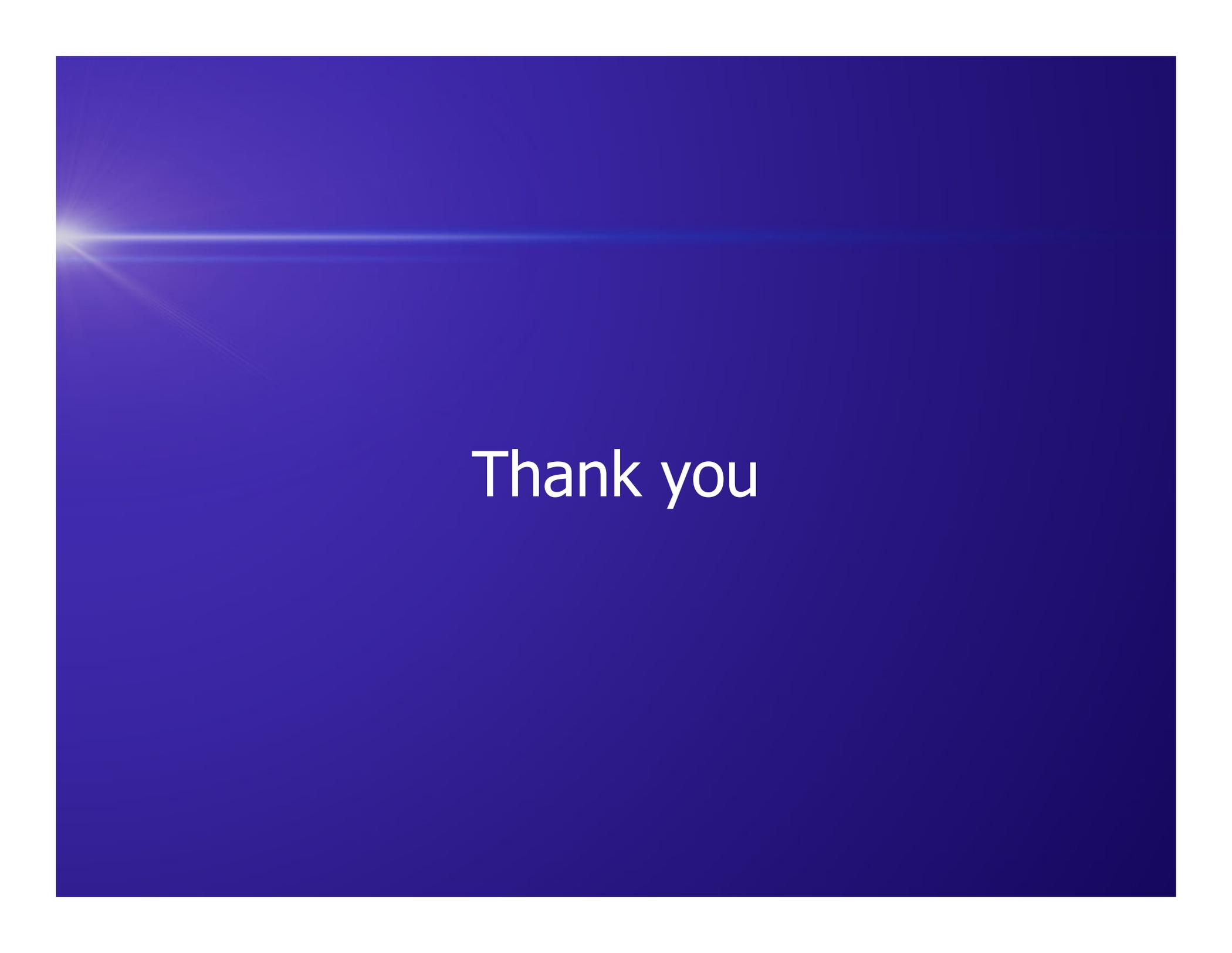
Characteristics	1997	2007
Tenure Track Faculty (FTE's)	6.5	9.25
Staff and Researchers	130	146
Number of Courses Taught	4	19
Number of MS Students	2	35
Number of PhD Students	0	39
Post Docs	0	2
Total External Funding	\$4.7 Million	\$9.9 Million

Struggle to Make it Interdisciplinary

- Recent College approval to house it in DHD
- Allows flexibility across university
- Development of Rehabilitation Sciences as separate degree

Contentious Issues in Disability Studies

- Who controls DS: Disabled people and their interests
- What is the role of Activism in the Academy?
- Is it a field?
- Is there room for rehabilitation science or the medical model?
- What is reasonable accommodation?
- Where should it be housed?
- How do you keep it interdisciplinary?



Thank you