

Policy Statement for Assisting Students with Disabilities

This is to inform each faculty member of the College's policy concerning students with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (RHA 504) provides that

no qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any academic, research, housing, counseling, financial aid, physical education, athletics, recreation, transportation, other extracurricular or other post-secondary education program or activity.

A person with a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is one who:

has a physical/mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. "Major life activities" include walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, learning or working. "Substantially limiting" is determined by factors such as the nature/severity of the impairment, its duration and impact. Temporary conditions (such as broken legs or pregnancy) are not covered.

The College is strongly committed to maintaining an environment that guarantees students with disabilities full access to its educational programs, activities, and facilities.

Under the regulations, we are required to make reasonable modifications to our academic requirements and practices as necessary in order to ensure that they do not discriminate against a qualified student. Such modification is commonly referred to as an "academic adjustment" or "reasonable accommodation." Examples of academic adjustments would include modifications to degree requirements (e.g., time to complete a degree, course substitution/waiver, adaptation in the manner in which a course is conducted), modification to course examinations (e.g., additional time, alternative testing methods), and the use of auxiliary aids (e.g., readers, interpreters, tape recorders). The student is not guaranteed any or all of the above accommodations. The decision as to which accommodations are provided for students with disabilities must be made on a case-by-case basis. The College is not required to relax its academic standards.

Some disabilities are obvious--a student in a wheelchair, for example. Some are invisible--as in the case of a learning disability. Some students may wish to identify themselves; others may not. Some may request assistance from you; others may not. Generally, you should not ask any student to state whether he/she has a disability, and you should discourage participation in an activity only when such participation will endanger the safety of the disabled student or other participants.

The Guidelines for Accommodating Students with Disabilities will help you respond to a student's request for an academic adjustment. Students with disabilities, like any other

students, have the responsibility to complete course requirements and to communicate directly with you with any questions they may have about the course. When a student makes a request for service, or if you have questions or concerns regarding a particular student or disability, please contact the Students with Disability Services office (SDS).

Guidelines for Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Once we know someone has a disability, we must follow two rules:

- Rule 1: No discrimination. Ways to avoid discrimination are: not to make assumptions about what persons with disabilities can do; do not prejudge a person with a disability; never request a student to state whether they have a disability even if it's a voluntary answer; do not discourage students with disabilities from participating in any activity or project unless you think it will jeopardize their safety or others.
- Rule 2: We must reasonably accommodate students with disabilities. You must take positive steps, if requested, to place a person with a disability on equal footing as long as it does not impose undue hardship on the College.

For professors, the types of accommodations you must make will generally relate to: 1) the way in which you teach your course or where you teach your course; and 2) the way in which you give your exams and where you give them.

Changes to the environment may have to be made such as allowing guide dogs, changing physical structure of classroom for wheelchair users to move, changing location of classrooms, etc. Additional equipment may be needed (Braille text books and tests, large print books, books on tape, readers, transcribers, note takers, etc.). The College is not required to provide auxiliary items of a personal nature.

We do not have to relax our standards of performance. We are called to provide reasonable accommodations--not perfect accommodations. Do not offer an accommodation unless it is requested. Be creative. As long as it is still a reasonable accommodation to the student, choose the one which is the least expensive, the least disruptive, or the most convenient for the College.

Below are a few examples of types of requests you can expect and how these requests are accommodated:

1. With visually impaired and students with learning disabilities, you may receive a request for the use of a tape recorder in class.
2. With any disabled student you may receive a request for special test arrangements (proctoring). A test may have to be read to or written for a student, for example, or a student may request additional time on a test.
3. Visually impaired students or students with learning disabilities may have difficulty in meeting the reading requirements of a course and you may be asked

- to make reading lists and handouts available in advance. This will allow students to have the materials taped and ready for use at the appropriate time.
4. Students may wish to bring a talking calculator or a lap-top computer to class, use a portable lab station, or run their hands over a 3-D model or map.
 5. Consideration about accessibility in the planning of field trips may have to be made.

In short, you may receive a request for service that appears to be out of the ordinary, or at least beyond any previous experiences with students. Contact Students with Disability Services anytime you have a question (310-846-2554).