

## **WHY DO WE PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS TO OUR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?**

### **IT'S THE LAW!**

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act was the first disability civil rights law to be enacted in the United States. It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs that receive federal financial assistance, and set the stage for enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush. The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS: WHAT'S REQUIRED AND WHAT'S NOT**

Postsecondary institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments or modifications to practices, policies and procedures, and to provide auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities, unless to do so would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the programs or result in an "undue burden" to the college.

**YES:** Sign language interpreters, specialized computer equipment on campus, electronic textbooks, course substitution (rarely), extended time (but not unlimited time), oral testing, note takers, recording devices, frequent breaks, food/drink in classroom, etc.

**NO:** Personal aids and services, readers, private tutors (These are the responsibility of the student...not the college.) And Vocational Rehabilitation will work with student in providing some of these.

## **PRIOR TO WORKING WITH STUDENT, HERE'S SOME TIPS:**

1. Include TECHNICAL STANDARDS IN STUDENT AND PROGRAM HANDBOOKS.

Allied Health: hours/day of work, lifting requirements, standing, stooping, communication, visual and aural acuity, etc.

Commercial Truck Driving: use of extremity, diabetes (controlled or uncontrolled), cardiovascular diagnoses, sleep apnea, hypertension, vision, hearing.

2. Include college Disability Services contact information on all course SYLLABI.

Example for Syllabus:

Disability/Special Needs Services are available to students with documented disabilities needing classroom/testing accommodations, assistive technology, specialized equipment or books, or referral services to outside agencies. Contact the Dean of Student Affairs, North Campus, 478 553-2124, [jedge@oftc.edu](mailto:jedge@oftc.edu) or the Disabilities/Assessment Specialist, South Campus, 478 274-7786, [lbarfoot@oftc.edu](mailto:lbarfoot@oftc.edu) concerning your needs and responsibilities.

## **WHEN YOU ARE INFORMED OF A STUDENT REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:**

--If Student informs you, direct him or her to college's D.S. office immediately. Follow up with D.S. to assure student has contacted them.

--It is the Student's responsibility to provide D.S. with documentation of disability and recommended accommodations. The college never has to pay for testing or records.

--When you receive a "Classroom Accommodation Form" from the student or D.S. Office, begin accommodations immediately. In cases where student requested accommodations and provided documentation earlier

and instructor was not informed for some reason at the time, instructor may have to re-test or re-grade if student was not provided accommodations for exam or assignment.

--Instructors should never question student concerning accommodations on the form. Instructor should contact the D.S. office to discuss any concerns.

--Keep all information on student's disability and accommodations as confidential and discreet as possible. Never discuss in front of another student and don't discuss with parent or another relative/friend unless student has given written permission to do so.

**BEST ADVICE TO FACULTY:**

My advice for you to pass along to instructors is for them to communicate regularly with Disability Services concerning students with accommodations and any concerns. TCSG Disability Services providers have routine training on disabilities, accommodations, the law, students' rights, and can always call our TCSG attorneys when needed.

Thank you!

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