Understanding Disability Services at College
It is our policy and practice to create inclusive learning environments. The campus “Disability Support Services” office (each campus’ office has a different name) serves students with a variety of temporary and permanent disabilities that affect their ability to access classes, services, programs and activities on the college campus.

Mission of Disability Support Services
High School vs. College

What are some differences between high school and college for students with disabilities?
LAWS

Applicable Laws in College

- A.D.A (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title 11)
- Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  - Both are Civil Rights Laws
  - Both provide legal protection against discrimination of people with disabilities
  - A.D.A is about Access not Success
  - Who must comply? Programs and businesses that receive federal, state, or local funding

Differences between High School and College
To receive academic accommodations students must meet eligibility requirements defined by state and federal laws.

Students must provide documentation of a disability and meet with the campus Disability Support Services staff to set-up accommodations.

Student must get evaluation and testing at own expense. Colleges do not test or evaluate students.

High School IEP/504 may not always be enough documentation depending on what accommodations you are requesting.

Examples of documentation: letter from healthcare professional treating medical or psychological condition (not a note scribbled on an Rx pad), most recent psychoeducational evaluation, audiogram, etc.
SELF-ADVOCACY

- Student must self-identify to the campus Disability Support Services office. Your high school does not “automatically” transfer this information to college.
- Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect the student to initiate the discussion of accommodations and needing assistance in collaboration with the DSS office.
- Professors are NOT obligated to accommodate students who are not registered with the Disability Support Services office.

Differences between High School and College
PARENTAL ROLE

- You are considered an adult; professors do not communicate with your parents.

- Parents do not have access to student records without student’s written consent.

- FERPA waiver (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974). A federal law that establishes the privacy rights of students over age 18 with regard to educational records.

Differences between High School and College
TEACHING STYLE

- You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class.
- You need to review class notes and other related materials regularly.
- You will be given a **SYLLABUS** your first day of class, which will give you professor contact info, description of the course, course objectives, student responsibilities, grade calculation, calendar of due dates for textbook chapters, assignments and exam dates. You are expected to save, read and consult the syllabus throughout the semester.
- Every professor has a different style of teaching! You probably won’t love them all!
- Classes do not meet every day so attendance is VERY important, and may count towards your grade.

*Differences between High School and College*
STUDY RESPONSIBILITIES

- There is no “resource room”.
- Tutoring is not considered an accommodation. Students must seek out academic labs and tutoring resources on campus.
- You manage your own study time and complete assignments independently.
- You should study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
Differences between High School and College

GRADES & TESTS

- Grading and test format changes are generally not available. Accommodations to how tests are given (extended time, distraction reduced) are available when supported by disability documentation.

- Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material.

- Makeup tests are seldom an option.
The campus Disability Support Services office works with the student **in an interactive process** to identify reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations based upon provided documentation and individual needs.

Some examples of accommodations are:

- **Note-taking assistance (technology)**
- **Audio recording of class lecture**
- **Enlarged print or Braille**
- **Textbooks in alternate format**
- **Preferential seating**
- **Sign language interpreting**
- **The use of a scribe**
- **Adaptive furniture**

**Test-taking Accommodations**
- Distraction reduced space
- Extra time for tests
- Reader for tests (software)

**Assistive Technology**
- LiveScribe Pens (note taking)
- Jaws
- Kurzweil
- Read & Write Gold
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Zoomtext (magnifier)
Examples of academic accommodations that **DO NOT** transfer from high school

- Test questions interpreted or simplified
- One-on-one aide
- Resource room
- Any accommodation that alters the goal or standard of the exam, class, program, etc.
When registering with the campus Disability Support Services office, the staff will discuss with you what academic accommodations you are eligible for based on documentation and interview.

You and the staff will create your “accommodation letter”.

The accommodation letter is the ONLY notification that your professors receive that state your accommodations.

YOU are responsible for discussing your accommodations with your professors.

Professors usually do not approve any accommodations until they receive your official accommodation letter.

There are no IEPs or 504s in college.
Most colleges have a testing center where students with testing accommodations go to take their exams. Every college will have different policies and procedures regarding their testing center.
SUPPORT OFFICES & SERVICES

Some examples (varies by campus):
- Testing Center
- Academic Advisement Center
- Counseling Services
- Health Center
- Transfer & Career Services
- Veteran Benefits
- Disability Support Services
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- Group or One-to-One Tutoring
- Clubs
- Professor’s Office Hours!!!

ACADEMIC LABS

Some examples:
- Accounting Lab
- Computer Lab
- Language Lab
- Learning Center & Writing Lab
- Math Lab
The Disability Support Services office on a college campus can assist with academic accommodations as well as developing self-advocacy skills and referrals to appropriate resources on and off campus. The office also serves as a resource to faculty and staff.

More than accommodations...
Other things to consider...

- What accommodations do I need for equal access?
- Am I ready to handle being a self-advocate?
- Do students with disabilities have a lot of other resources and supports at this college?
- Does the college have academic support services in my areas of weakness?
- Do I require assistive technology? Does the campus have what I need? Do I have what I need at home?
- What off-campus resources and supports can assist with my education (ACCES-VR, Commission for the Blind, Autism Society, Mental Health Services, Independent Living Centers etc.)?
- Should I be a full-time or part-time student? What level of academic support did I need in high school?
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