



Texas Southmost College
TRADITION • INNOVATION • OPPORTUNITY

Faculty and Staff Resource Manual for Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Office of Disability Support Services

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- Dr. Rhonda Rapp, Coordinator of Disability Support Services, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, TX
- Dr. Patricia Candia, former ADA Coordinator, St. Philip's College, San Antonio, TX
- Dr. Rosemary Coffman, former Counselor for Students with Disabilities, Lee College, Baytown, TX

Second Revision (May, 2001):

- Beverly Brown, M.A., former Learning Disabilities Specialist, Palo Alto College, San Antonio, TX
- Renae Quick, M.Ed., Certified Interpreter I, Alamo Colleges Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, San Antonio, TX

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- Rose Medrano, M.B.A., Coordinator Disability Support Services, Palo Alto College, San Antonio, TX

ADA STATEMENT

Texas Southmost Colleges is an equal opportunity organization committed to success and excellence through diversity in every aspect of our Colleges, including enrollment, education and employment. We seek applications from all qualified persons who share this goal. Texas Southmost College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or sexual orientation.

Inquiries or complaints regarding equal opportunity should be directed to EEO/Title IX Coordinator, Linda Boyer Owens, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Organizational Development, (210) 485-0200. Address: Human Resource Department, 201 W. Sheridan, Building A, San Antonio, TX 78204. *For student accommodation or alternate format requests, contact Disability Support Services, (210) 486-3020.*

INTRODUCTION

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act states that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” The Americans with Disabilities Act further strengthens the law and again mandates non-discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities for both public and private programs.

This resource manual has been created to assist faculty and staff of Texas Southmost College to better serve students with physical and/or mental disabilities. The format chosen describes the most common disabilities found at Texas Southmost College, with recommendations for the instructor in assisting the student in class. The resource manual is designed as a reference tool for each semester. For more information, subsequent sections further describe the accommodations as

well as provide tips in working with a sign language interpreter, examples of syllabi statements and disability related resources on the Internet. No two students are alike and thus, this text should only be used as a reference. Nothing can replace the one-on-one interaction between student and instructor or staff member.

With the help of Disability Support Services (DSS), students are given the necessary and mandated assistance to allow them equal access to the educational system. Offered at no charge to the student are such services as interpreting, notetaking, scribes during testing, reading tools during test taking, and use of various technology tools. The responsibility of the law does not rest with any one office or person, but rather with the cooperation of each individual involved with the student.

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DISABILITY LAW

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS & GENERAL ACCOMMODATION ISSUES¹

Where is it stated that instructors must give test accommodations and other academic modifications to students with disabilities?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that colleges “make such modifications to its academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of handicap.” Program modifications, provision of auxiliary aids and services, designation of a responsible person to handle grievances, an established grievance procedure, nondiscrimination statements on college publications, and modifications of course examinations are among those things, which are specifically required. In exam administration, colleges are directed to “provide such methods for evaluating the achievement of students who have a handicap...as will best ensure that the results of the evaluation represents the student’s achievement in the course, rather than reflecting the student’s impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (except where such skills are the factors that the test purports to measure.)”²

What are the instructor’s legal obligations when a student with a disability is enrolled in class?

If a student discloses a disability or requests any accommodation, he or she should be referred to Disability Support Services (DSS). The DSS Coordinator collects and reviews documentation of the disability and works with the student to determine reasonable accommodations. Upon receipt of such documentation and the establishment of the need for academic modifications, a Letter of Accommodation is sent via email to the instructor and it becomes the instructor’s responsibility to ensure that the student has equal access to the information presented in class, an equal opportunity to participate, and an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge without being “penalized” for the limitations caused by the disability.

Can the instructor be held responsible for withholding accommodations if it was not known that the student was disabled?

No. It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation and request the accommodations.

If the institution takes a passive attitude toward helping students with disabilities, could the institution find itself in litigation?

Yes. It is considered a violation of the law to “hide” support services from students with disabilities. It is prudent to remind all students that support services are available.

Is the college required to make every part of every building accessible to students with mobility impairments?

No. However, programs and activities must be accessible to all; this may necessitate moving a class or activity to another location.

¹ Revised from Arapahoe Community College FAQ Reference Book. Arapahoe Community College, Littleton CO.

² Federal Register, Part II Department of Education, Establishment of Title 34, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973; 104.44 Academic Adjustments; p. 30944.

Does the institution have to provide accommodations such as auxiliary aids and services for a non-degree student?

Yes. Students who are auditing classes or who are otherwise not working toward a degree must be offered accommodations to the same extent as students who are enrolled in degree-granting programs.³ This includes students enrolled in any Continuing Education program.

Is it unfair to provide accommodations, like extra time, for one student and not for all students?

Not according to the law. It is considered unfair not to provide the accommodation. Giving extra time for a student with a disability to process information allows him/her to compensate for the disability and “level the playing field” among all students.

CLASSROOM ISSUES⁴

How can instructors make sure all students with disabilities are referred to DSS if the instructor does not know who has a disability?

Make an announcement to your class or print a statement on your syllabus or other handouts, referring students with disabilities to the DSS Office. You may also encourage students to meet with you to discuss their learning needs. Examples of syllabi statements can be found on page 20 of this resource manual.

For a student having obvious difficulties, is it acceptable to ask a student if he or she has a disability or refer the student to DSS?

It is not a good idea to ask this directly for a couple of reasons. First, language in ADA states that a public entity may not make unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability. These inquiries usually relate to hiring or pre-admission screening, but most people familiar with ADA/504 feel that such inquiries are to be avoided. In addition, a direct inquiry such as this would obviously be considered intrusive or insensitive. You can encourage all students to share their unique learning needs with you, and assure them that you will keep the information confidential. Rather than asking, “Do you have a disability?” You might say something like “I noticed that you seem to have difficulty in performing a specific task. Would some kind of accommodation be helpful?”

Can a faculty member forbid a student with a disability to use a audio recorder in class?

Not if it has been deemed to be the most appropriate accommodation for a student’s disability. Audio recorders are specifically mentioned in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as a means of providing full participation in educational programs or activities. Even if a faculty member feels that his or her right to privacy is violated by use of an audio recorder, the faculty member’s right to privacy does not override the student’s right to accommodation. Occasionally, classroom discussion reveals items of a personal nature about students. If open discussions are not appropriate subject matter for any student to be taking notes, it would be appropriate to ask the student with a disability to turn off the recorder during discussion periods.⁵

³ Jane Jarrow, Subpart E: The Impact of Section 504 on Postsecondary Education (AHEAD Publication), p. 39-40.

⁴ Revised from Arapahoe Community College FAQ Reference Book. Arapahoe Community College, Littleton CO.

⁵ Jane Jarrow, Subpart E: The Impact of Section 504 on Postsecondary Education (AHEAD Publication) 39-40.

EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

What are some examples of classroom accommodations for disabilities and who provides them?

ACCOMMODATIONS PROVIDED BY THE INSTRUCTOR:

- Working cooperatively with a sign language interpreter in your classroom
- Facing a student directly when speaking
- Allowing the use of a audio recorder
- Wearing a clip-on microphone as a transmitter to an amplification device
- Providing enlarged copies of printed materials
- Testing under special circumstances
- Lecturing in a manner that is simultaneously visual and auditory
- Providing a written copy of lecture notes or power point presentations
- Seeing that wheelchair accessible furniture is properly placed and available
- Assisting the student in finding a volunteer notetaker
- Allowing the student to participate or demonstrate knowledge in a non-conventional method
- Providing appropriate modifications that facilitate inclusion of the student with a disability

ACCOMMODATIONS PROVIDED BY DSS:

- Training in the use of specialized adaptive equipment
- Providing sign language interpreters through Alamo Colleges' Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Converting textbooks or other classroom materials into an appropriate format for the student (i.e. on CD, electronic format, large print, etc.)
- Proctoring tests for those with extended test time needs
- Providing appropriate modifications that assist the instructor in meeting the student's needs in the classroom or in any program or service offered by the College

SERVICES NOT PROVIDED BY DSS:

DSS does not provide tutoring, personal attendants, private testing services, disabled parking permits, personal counseling, etc.

ONLINE COURSES

Students taking online course(s) and have a letter of accommodation will generally need only extended test time in the DSS alternate testing location, if the test is to be proctored. Students will be allowed time and a half, at a maximum, to complete their test. Instructors will always receive a letter of accommodation in case the student requests additional support.

NATURAL SCIENCE LABS

Students with a visual impairment who enrolls in a natural science course will often require alternate formats to be successful with lab requirements. Instructors may request tactile graphics that are applicable to the coursework (e.g. maps, cells, etc.). DSS may assist in preparing these needs; however, it is advisable that the instructor foresee the need as soon as possible so that alternate formats may be made available at the time the student will need them.

PREVALENT DISABILITIES

HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

The term “hearing impaired” refers to anyone having some level of hearing loss ranging from very slight loss to profound deafness. While there are not two distinct groups of individuals, often accommodations can be grouped functionally between those that are visual and those that are oral-aural. For students with a hearing impairment, it is helpful to list major lecture or discussion topics on the board as they are presented. If students with hearing impairments know the specific topic or emphasis of discussion, they can follow the spoken information more easily. Use visual aids as much as possible. Writing assignments on the board will assist the student and enable him/her to be more prepared for the next test.

Texas Southmost College provide sign language services to Deaf and/or hard of hearing students through a satellite office housed at Texas Southmost College. This service also coordinates interpreters for students during class time. A videophone at Palo Alto College for Deaf may be used to contact the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) provided by Texas Southmost College. For contact information see last page of this resource manual. “Relay Texas,” is another service available for individuals who are hearing and speech impaired. The service allows instructors and students to communicate by phone through a central operator. Email is another option for easy communication between the instructor and a student with a hearing impairment.

Hard of Hearing – The hard of hearing student is one that has enough residual hearing so that he/she probably never learned sign language. Often deafened later in life, the student does not associate with being deaf. He/she relies heavily on lip-reading and will often have a speech impairment due to the inability to hear their own voice.

For the instructor, it is important to remember to face the student as you speak. Do not overemphasize words but rather speak clearly and at a normal rate. The student, in one-on-one situation, is generally able to communicate without any problems. In class, the student may benefit from sitting near the front of the room. It is helpful if the instructor remembers to not talk with his/her back to the class as information is written on the board. As other students ask or answer questions, the hard of hearing student again may miss pertinent information. If possible, the instructor can repeat the questions asked to be sure the student has heard. Lecturing with the instructor’s back to a window throws a shadow over the face, making it difficult to speech read. And finally, the instructor should avoid obscuring his/her face with hands, books, or lecture notes while speaking.

Deafness – The second disability of this category is the student who is profoundly deaf. The academic accommodations typically requested by students who are deaf are interpreters and notetakers.

Since the hearing is more severely impaired, the student who is deaf will communicate through a sign language interpreter. The student will have little or no speech depending on the severity of the hearing loss and the age of onset. For most deaf students, American Sign Language (ASL) is the native language with its own grammar and syntax. Learning English may prove difficult since the student has never heard the language. Common mistakes in written work may include the omission of articles or the use of the wrong tense. Other students may use

manual English (or signed English), which is the sign language in English word order. Regardless of the form of communication the student utilizes, a certified interpreter will be used for communication. For more information on how to use an interpreter, a section is included on page 13 of this resource manual.

It is important to remember that a student who is deaf is unable to look down and hear the lecture at the same time. This becomes increasingly complicated in a computer class as the instructor lectures while the student looks at the keyboard. It is helpful if the instructor can move more slowly through these sections to ensure that the student is gaining all of the information.

ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENTS

There are different kinds of orthopedic impairments that lead to different degrees of mobility. This may include amputation or paralysis, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, severe forms of arthritis, and spinal cord injuries. It is very important not to generalize with regard to the specific limitations of persons with these kinds of disabilities. Not only do functional abilities vary widely among the disabilities, but they also vary widely within the same disability group.

A student with mobility impairment may have difficulties in the ability to travel across campus and some will be advised to allow time between classes. Accessibility – in terms of sufficient curb cuts, handicapped parking, elevators, adequate ramps and restrooms – becomes pertinent to his/her success in college. Students with back injuries may require alternating sitting and standing to reduce the pain.

Open communication between the student and instructor is vital to ascertain any special needs. Determine if problems occurred in accessing the building, classroom, or the restroom. Keep in mind that allowances should be made for tardiness caused by the greater length of time required by the student to get around campus. For students who cannot write, it may be beneficial to sit close to the notetaker, if such services are needed.

In working with a student with wheelchair mobility, do not automatically assume that assistance is required. Offer, if you wish, but do not insist. When speaking with a student with wheelchair mobility for more than a few minutes, sit down or move back to give the student a comfortable angle during the conversation.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

To be considered “legally blind,” a student would have no greater vision than 20/200 with correction. In other words, the student can see at 20 feet what the average-sighted person can see at 200 feet. The individual’s sight may also be limited or diminished and cannot be corrected with standard lenses. The student may also have partial sight, in which the field of vision is impaired because of an illness, a degenerative syndrome, or trauma.

Students who are visually impaired or blind may have restricted visual fields or complete absence of light perception. He/she may require special glasses or the use of a cane or service animal. Accommodations may include provision of print materials in alternative formats including enlarged print copies or audio-taped materials. The student may benefit from a

reader or scribe for exams, extended test time, computer access, and oral in addition to visual presentation of information.

IRLEN'S SYNDROME

Irlen's Syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome is a visual perceptual processing problem which involves how the nervous system encodes and decodes visual information. Academic and work performance, behavior, attention, and concentration may be affected. Irlen's Syndrome is not a learning disability; however, a higher percentage of those diagnosed with a learning disability may have this problem.

A certified Irlen Screener diagnoses this disorder. With the diagnosis, a specific color overlay is determined that assists the student in his or her reading skills. Depending on the severity of the disorder, accommodations may vary.

The following symptoms may suggest that a student needs Irlen Syndrome screening:

- Poor comprehension
- Skipping words or lines while reading
- Avoidance of bright or fluorescent lighting when reading
- Headaches or nausea associated with reading

LEARNING DISABILITIES

In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of students with learning disabilities in post-secondary education. According to the National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities:

A learning disability is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be a central nervous system dysfunction.⁶

A learning disability is not the direct result of other disabling conditions. It is not a form of mental retardation or an emotional disorder. Individual learning styles, learning differences, academic problems, and test anxiety in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.

Students with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence, therefore, should not be considered intellectually inferior. They may have difficulty with taking in, processing, integrating, and/or expressing information. The abilities and skills of adults with learning disabilities will vary with each student having a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses.

The causes of a learning disability are not clearly understood, but presumed to involve a neurophysiological dysfunction. It is important to note that students who receive appropriate

⁶ Hammill, Leigh, McNutt, and Larsen (1981). The National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities 1981, p. 336.

services can minimize many of these deficits and can learn to improve basic skills and compensate for other problems.

An instructor may suspect a learning disability due to inconsistencies between knowledge of material and test scores. The student should then be referred to DSS for a list of local testing facilities. The student may also benefit from the Reading, Writing, or Math Labs on campus as well.

Appropriate documentation is required for those students with learning disabilities before special assistance is given. Approved sources include reports from the student's high school diagnostician or from a licensed psychologist. Appropriate accommodations are determined with this documentation.

A variety of accommodations are available and determined by the needs of the individual student. Common accommodations for a student with a learning disability may include alternative testing format and notetaking services.

Adaptive computer programs may also help the student – special software includes voice to text and text to voice capabilities. Students should be encouraged to contact DSS for assistance.

PSYCHIATRIC OR EMOTIONAL DISORDERS

Psychiatric disorders are broad and range from relatively mild depression resulting from stressors or school or interpersonal relationships to chronic disorders such as schizophrenia or manic-depressive disorders.

A student with a psychiatric or emotional disorder may be treated through a combination of therapies, including medication. Some medication can cause side effects such as drowsiness or hyperactivity. Usually psychiatric disabilities do not affect learning in general, although students may have particular problems during times of stress – receiving information, processing speed, and memory.

If a student is disruptive in class or exhibits inappropriate behavior, the instructor may discuss the problem with the student. The student is expected to meet the same standards as others in the class. If disruptions are a problem, the student needs to be informed of the expectations and consequences.

The instructor can assist the student by providing a safe and encouraging environment within the classroom. Offering extra support will make the student feel more comfortable in the class. Psychiatric disabilities often carry a negative stereotype, which may be broken through education and personal contact.

SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS

Some students have speech disorders which affect their verbal communication. The student may be accommodated through the use of an alternative test taking location, substitution of in-class oral presentation, extra support through summarizing student communications for

accuracy, adaption of foreign language requirements, or alternative public speaking arrangements.

When a speech impaired student volunteers to recite, it is advisable that instructors give them time to express thoughts. On occasion, a speech course substitution is considered with appropriate documentation. Helpful adaptive equipment includes pictures boards, earphone/earplugs during exams, word prediction software, or augmentation communication devices.

OTHER HEALTH-RELATED IMPAIRMENTS

Barriers such as concentration difficulty, consistent health mobility, and lack of stamina are areas affected by some health-related impairment. Students in this category may be accommodated in a number of ways, including alternative test taking location, extended test time, priority classroom seating, attendance flexibility, and peer notetakers. Examples of adaptive equipment include but are not limited to: audio recorder, adaptive keyboard, voice synthesizer, adaptive mice, alternative input device, joystick, on screen keyboard, screen reading software, textbooks on CD, trackball, word prediction software, and voice recognition software.

TEMPORARY DISABLING CONDITIONS

While temporary illnesses and injuries are not considered disabilities under the law, DSS will work with faculty and students to provide access to the College and its programs based on appropriate documentation that clearly indicates the need for assistance.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Texas Southmost College acknowledges that each student is unique and offers a wide range of services, accommodations, and equipment for students with disabilities. The program's flexibility allows services and equipment to be modified to meet the needs of individual students.

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

DSS is available to assist students with academic advisement and accommodations. DSS staff acts as a liaison between the student, instructors, and administrators of the College.

NOTETAKING

Notetaking can often be very difficult for students with sensory impairments, mobility impairments, or learning disabilities. Texas Southmost College utilizes volunteer notetakers, peer class notetakers, and, infrequently, work studies to take notes. Special notebooks and paper are available in the DSS office free of charge. DSS recommends that instructors facilitate the notetaking process by encouraging students in the classroom to volunteer as peer notetakers.

SCRIBES AND READERS

Scribes are available as a testing modification for students with mobility impairments or a learning disability. A reader or reading software is also available for students with a visual impairment or learning disability. Books on CD may be an alternative for students with visual impairments or a severe learning disability.

TESTING MODIFICATIONS

Depending on the specific disability, students may require testing modifications. A student may require extended test time, testing in a quiet place, use of a reader and/or scribe, and/or individualized testing. Some students may have the accommodation of marking the test rather than a Scantron scoring sheet due to a visual impairment or Irlen's syndrome. Oral test or large print tests may also be necessary. Testing modifications are determined by the specific disability and the demands of the course.

EXTENDED TEST TIME

Some students with disabilities are eligible for extended time with in-class or online class exams and quizzes. It is important that this time not impinge on the student's instructional time. Consistent with court rulings, the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education has confirmed that extended time on examinations is a reasonable academic adjustment for some students with learning, physical, and psychological disabilities. Students with appropriate documentation are entitled to time and a half in completing their exams or quizzes.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES (DHHS)

Texas Southmost College provides qualified sign language interpreters in the classroom for students with hearing impairments through the DHHS office at Texas Southmost College. Students must request services at Texas Southmost College, enroll in classes, and Palo Alto College will make the necessary arrangements to accommodate the student with an interpreter. Interpreting services are also available outside the classroom – for instructor/student meetings, tutoring sessions, and other college sponsored activities.

USING AN INTERPRETER⁷

The responsibility of the interpreter is to facilitate communication between the instructor and the student with a hearing impairment and between that student and other classmates.

The following points will assist faculty in working with an interpreting situation.

- Everything that is said is interpreted; everything that is signed is interpreted.
- It is appropriate to speak directly to the deaf student: "I'd like to know how you feel about...", not, "Ask him how he feels about..." The first few times will feel awkward because the student will not be looking at you but at the interpreter.
- Multiple conversations cannot be interpreted, so it is important that only one person speak at a time.

⁷ Report on campus life and the development of postsecondary deaf and hard of hearing students: Principles and practices. (1999) Rochester Institute of Technology, pp 12-16.

- An interpreter can only interpret what can be heard, so the faculty member needs to speak clearly.
- The interpreter will not participate in class. Questions to the interpreter should be made before or after class.
- In classes where sensitive information is being shared, interpreters regard all assignment-related information as confidential.
- For more difficult classes, the interpreter may benefit from receiving a copy of the textbook, course syllabus, and handouts. If material is received beforehand, he or she can do a better job interpreting.
- Because there is a lag time between what is being said and the interpretation, many students who are deaf participate less in class. If the instructor waits until the interpreter catches up and pauses before recognizing a student, the student will have a better opportunity to participate actively in discussion.
- The student will rely on vision; therefore, the interpreter will sit in the front so the student may see both the interpreter and the instructor. He or she may need to reposition as the discussion changes to refer to a diagram on a far wall.
- Be aware of the light in the room. If a video or slide presentation is made, some light source should remain so that the student may see the interpreter during the presentation. The interpreter will not want to sit in front of a light source such as a window, as it would be more difficult for the student to see.
- Interpreters need breaks due to the physical demands of the job. For long periods of time, two interpreters may participate in team interpreting in which they alternate every 20-30 minutes. The following recommendations will assist the interpreter.
 - Build in breaks when classes exceed 50 minutes.
 - Ensure that breaks are at least 10 minutes in length.
 - Remember that using the break to talk to the student who is deaf means that the interpreter is still working.

SERVICE ANIMALS

A service animal is defined by ADA as a dog that does work or performs a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability (including psychiatric, cognitive, or mental). Students may require the need for a service animal. The Alamo Colleges' policy on service animals applies to students and employees. Examples of tasks may include:

- assist during a seizure
- guide for visually impaired
- retrieve medicine or other items
- help individual with dissociative identity disorder to remain grounded
- prevent/interrupt impulsive or destructive behavior
- assist with balance, stability
- provide non-violent protection or rescue work

An animal whose only function is to provide emotional support/comfort is not considered a service animal. By law, a person with a service animal can be asked only two questions: 1) Is this service animal required because of a disability? 2) What work or tasks is the animal trained to perform? A student may not be asked about their disability. In any case, documentation must be provided that specifically identifies that a service animal is needed.

Service Animals may accompany their owner/partner at all times they are on campus but must have the following requirements:

- immunizations against rabies, distemper and parvovirus
- owner ID and other tags such as specialized harness or an identifying cape or backpack
- record of good health
- leash and under control of the owner/partner at all times
- owner/partner is responsible and should be prepared to clean up and properly dispose of animal's feces on the College campus
- humane treatment of the animal

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

FM LOOP SYSTEM

The portable FM loop system is designed for students with limited hearing in a lecture situation. The instructor wears a microphone and the student wears a loop. With this device, background noises are eliminated. It is important to remember that the student may miss other discussions in the room, (such as a student asking a question away from the microphone). In this instance, it is helpful for the instructor to repeat the question so that the student will not miss vital information.

FRANKLIN SPELLER

The Franklin Speller is an electronic resource that helps students with spelling and writing, particularly helpful for students with learning disabilities.

AUDIO OR DIGITAL RECORDER

Audio recorders are available for students' use without charge. They are available through the DSS Office and may be checked out on a first-come-first-serve basis.

BOOKS ON CD

Textbooks can be converted to audio books by scanning them and putting them in electronic format or on CD. Students generally purchase the textbook, deliver it along with a flash drive to DSS and has it scanned. This alternate format may take 1-2 weeks to complete. For timely results, students are encouraged to take their textbooks to the DSS Office before the semester starts.

COLORED OVERLAYS

Colored overlays are used to change the light wave length and often clear up the print for anyone who struggles to read, including people with dyslexia or ADHD. Colored overlays are transparent plastic sheets in different colors. What is important to know is that not all colored overlays are alike.

ADAPTIVE COMPUTER PROGRAMS & EQUIPMENT

DRAGON DICTATE

Dragon Dictate is a software dictation program. With this program, the student can access the keyboard by voice. Traditionally designed for students with mobility impairments, more recent applications have been utilized with students with severe learning disabilities. Instructors or students interested by this program may contact DSS for more information.

ZOOM TEXT

A powerful low-vision software, featuring magnification and screen reading, Zoom Text includes two adaptive technologies – screen magnification and screen reading. It provides complete access to all MS Windows applications.

KURZWEIL

The Kurzweil is a reading system developed as a compensatory aid for students with reading difficulties. It allows the user to view a scanned page on the computer screen while listening to the text being read aloud. It provides study skills, editing, and file management tools which assists the student with reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and organization of information, writing, spelling, self-editing, and study skills.

INTEL READER

The Intel® Reader is a mobile handheld device designed to increase independence for people who have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, or have low vision or blindness, or anyone who struggles with reading standard print. Its unique design combines a high-resolution camera with the power of an Intel Atom™ processor that converts printed text to digital text, and then reads it aloud while highlighting the text onscreen. The reader is currently stationed in the DSS office and is used to read tests to students.

ELECTRONIC MAGNIFIER

This optical magnifier is ergonomically designed to allow students to pivot and adjust the screen for a comfortable viewing position. The split-screen mode lets students view magnified images and the computer simultaneously. Pivoting is available for both vertically and/or horizontally to accommodate peripheral or eccentric viewing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RESOURCES FOR FACULTY

- [LEARNING DISABILITIES](#)
 - LD online
<http://www.ldonline.org>

DEAFNESS

- PEC – Postsecondary Education Consortiums – one of four federally funded regional centers designed to provide outreach and technical assistance to enhance postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, State Outreach and Technical assistance Centers are located throughout the south to provide additional support.

<http://www.pepnet.org>

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

- The DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) assists blind or visually impaired individuals and their families. Depending upon their goals and needs, DBS offers services to help regain independence or find a job.
- DBS staff work in partnership with Texans who are blind or visually impaired to get high quality jobs, live independently, or help a child receive the training needed to be successful in school and beyond. DBS envisions a Texas where people who are blind or visually impaired enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment, and our mission is to work in partnership with Texans who are blind or visually impaired to reach their goals.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/>

FACULTY NOTIFICATION OF NEED FOR ACCOMMODATION

When the student has completed the process of self-identification and provided documentation to the DSS Coordinator, student will be notified via email with a Letter of Accommodation and an Extended Test Time form, if applicable. The student is responsible for providing both forms to their instructor via email, hard-copy, or both.

If a student approaches an instructor about accommodation, and a letter of accommodation is not available, the faculty member should refer the student to the DSS Office in PC 116 to begin the process so that all matters regarding disability accommodation are handled consistently. A copy of the Initial Request for Services form follows and may be duplicated and given to the student to submit to DSS if necessary.

ADA STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a situation occurs in which a student believes that he or she was treated unfairly by a staff or faculty member or a college administrator, the student should schedule a conference with that individual in an attempt to resolve the problem.

A student grievance should be initiated as soon as possible after the incident upon which the grievance is based. Therefore, the student should not wait longer than thirty (30) days after the occasion for which the grievance arose before seeking a conference with the individual involved. The student may seek assistance from the DSS Coordinator in resolving the complaint. Students can contact these individuals through the Office of the Vice President of Student Success.

If, after the conference with the individual staff, faculty, or administrator involved, the student believes that a problem still exists, the student must consult with the individual's supervisor

within five (5) working days subsequent to the initial conference.

The student must file a written grievance containing a full description of the problem and the remedy requested with the supervisor. Copies of this grievance will be retained by the student, the individual accused, and the supervisor.

The supervisor may individually and separately hear the grievance from the student and staff, faculty or administrator involved, or may have a joint meeting to hear the grievance. After hearing both sides of the problem, the supervisor may request that the student and individual meet with the supervisor again in order to reach an acceptable resolution. The supervisor may involve a higher level administrator or at any point in the process for assisting in resolution of the complaint.

If an agreement is not reached in the above described conferences, the supervisor and/or higher-level administrator will affirm or deny the grievance within five (5) working days subsequent to the conference.

- a. If the decision is to affirm the individual staff, faculty, or administrator's position, the student may appeal to the next higher administrative level.
- b. If the decision is to affirm the student grievance and to recommend that the individual accused reverse his/her decision, the supervisor must meet with the individual and provide him/her a written explanation. To affirm a student grievance, the supervisor must have adequate cause.


If either the student or individual involved is dissatisfied with the higher administrator's decision, he/she may appeal to the President within five (5) working days of the date of the decision. A complete record of the grievance will be forwarded to the President.

The President and the appropriate administrator will meet with the student and the individual accused. After hearing both sides and reviewing the record, the President will render a decision affirming or denying the grievance. If the decision is to affirm the student grievance and recommend that the individual reverse his/her previous decisions, the President must meet with the appropriate administrator and individual and provide a written explanation of his/her decision. To affirm a student grievance, the President must have adequate cause. The decision of the President is final.

The ADA Grievance Procedure does not apply to matters more appropriately considered under the Academic or Non-Academic Grievance Procedures or as an appeal of the Student Code of conduct disciplinary procedures.⁸

EXAMPLE SYLLABI STATEMENTS

To better serve students with disabilities, it is recommended that each syllabus include a statement regarding requesting accommodations if they have a disability. While you may choose the wording of the statement, below are some examples which may be used. Students speaking directly to the instructor should be referred to DSS in PC 116.

 Special Note: Please inform me if you have a disability and need accommodations for this

class.

- ✚ Please inform the instructor if you are a student with a disability and need accommodations for this class.
- ✚ In accordance with the law, we ask if you have a disability or think you have a disability please contact DSS located at the Palomino Center, Room 116.
- ✚ Students with disabilities may register with DSS located at the Palomino Center in Room 116 before classroom accommodations can be provided.
- ✚ If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs.

ETIQUETTE AND DISABILITIES

How do people learn to be comfortable around individuals who are different from us? How do we know the right thing to do to be helpful, but not patronizing or condescending? For many of us, our first exposure to disabilities came through a family experience, either permanent or temporary, associated with an illness. It is said that aging, in and of itself, is synonymous with disability. As we age, we begin to confront the fragility of life. In this sense, most of us will come to terms with our own fragility, eventually. It is not uncommon to feel uneasy around a person with a disability, especially when one has not had prior experience or awareness.

Whatever the exposure to persons with disabilities, one's comfort zone can be increased by an awareness of what is and is not expected or appreciated.

The following points are designed to increase one's awareness and comfort level with persons with disabilities.

- Remember, students with disabilities are people. They are more similar to than different from other students. The reason a student entered the program is the same as any nondisabled student in the class. This can and should create a common area of interest. Build upon this fact.
- Don't develop preconceived notions about what the student can or cannot do. Be courteous and respectful, as with any student. Let the student take the initiative to explain the disability, the limitations, and the modification/accommodations prescribed by DSS.
- Be consistent in what behavior is expected of all students. Don't accept inappropriate behavior from a student with a disability just because he/she has a disability. This will only make the student less "marketable" as a worker, because socially inappropriate behaviors won't be accepted on the job.
- Don't assume and attempt to help in a given situation. Always ask if he or she needs assistance.
- Be patient. Let the student learn and progress at his/her own rate. However frustrated the instructor becomes, the frustration of the student is likely to be greater.
- Let the student take risks. That's the best way to learn about personal potential.
- Be a role model for nondisabled students by showing appropriate behavior toward the student with a disability.
- In public, if a child asks a question about a person with disabilities, answer the question directly and promptly. Often the person with the disability may be willing to answer the question for the child.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT (EXCERPT FROM F.1.1.1 PROCEDURE)

Texas Southmost College are committed to providing all students equal access to its programs, facilities, and services. In keeping with this commitment, the Alamo Colleges recognize that a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may be necessary to address the personal needs of a student with a disability in order for that student to fully participate in the college's offerings.

Students who require personal care attendant services are encouraged to provide a PCA to assist the student with personal needs as well as to facilitate as full integration into the college experience as reasonably possible. It is not the responsibility of the Texas Southmost College to provide personal care attendant services to meet the personal needs of the students. It is the sole responsibility of the student to provide a PCA to assist the student should an attendant need to be hired.

Student and Personal Care Attendant Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Secure any needed PCA prior to attending any college-related activity, i.e., orientation, placement testing, registration, and class attendance. (The Alamo Colleges will not be responsible for providing a PCA on an interim basis.)
- Sign the Personal Care Attendant Agreement & ID Request form each semester/session.

- Ensure that each PCA registers with the disability services office and signs the Personal Care Attendant Agreement each semester/session.
- Ensure that if PCA personnel changes occur during the semester, the student and the new PCA register with the disability services office and sign a new Personal Care Attendant Agreement form.
- Direct the activities of his/her PCA while at the college.
- Have a back-up plan or alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with the student on a particular day or in a particular class.
- Follow the Alamo Community College District's (District) policies and abide by the Alamo Colleges Student Code of Conduct.

The PCA is expected to:

- Adhere to the Texas Southmost College Student Code of conduct, as well as any and all other District and college policies, rules, regulations, and procedures.
- Conduct him/herself in a courteous and professional manner while on campus.
- Not discuss any confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or other students.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress and/or behavior.
- Refrain from contact with or asking questions of faculty, staff, or others on behalf of the student.
- Refrain from intervening in conversations between the student and faculty, staff or other students, unless the student is incapable of communicating directly with the faculty member or other individual, the student requests the PCA's assistance, and a classroom assistant or appropriate communication aid is not immediately available to the student.
- Refrain from working on or completing any of the student's academic assignments.
- Complete and sign the Personal Care Attendant Agreement each semester/session and adhere to the requirements therein.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR WORKING WITH DISABLED STUDENTS

All Disabilities

- If the person speaks unclearly, don't be afraid to ask him/her to repeat, even several times if necessary.
- Don't be afraid to laugh with the person.
- Help only when requested to assist. Sometimes asking (if the student falls, for example) may be appropriate, but never assume assistance is wanted. Let the person explain the specific help he/she needs.
- Don't stare at people with disabilities. At the same time don't ignore his/her existence.
- Don't be afraid to use phrases like, "See you later" to a person who is blind, or "I haven't heard from you" to a person who is hearing impaired.

Four Key Elements to Remember About a Learning Disability

1. A person with a learning disability is of average or above average intelligence.
2. A person with a learning disability has discrepancies in learning. Examples include: doing well in math, but not in reading, or understanding the content one day and not remembering in the next.
3. A person with a learning disability often has processing problems. There are three areas of processing: input, integration, and output.
 - a. Difficulty with input means not taking in information correctly (visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically). With input difficulty information is received improperly by the brain.
 - b. Integration difficulty means the information is taken into the brain, but while there it is scrambled, or not decoded accurately.
 - c. Difficulty with output means the person understands and integrates the information properly, but is unable to express it in any understandable way.
4. A person with a learning disability is not mentally retarded. The person may have additional difficulties such as a psychological disability, a physical disability, a hearing or speech impairment, disadvantaged economic or educational background. But none of these additional issues is the primary cause and does not necessarily exist in a person with a learning disability.

Visually Impaired

- Identify yourself when entering the presence of a person who is blind.
- When walking with a person who is blind, let the person take your arm and then walk a little ahead. Never grab the person's arm.
- Ignore the "service dog" of a person who is visually impaired. The dog is trained to serve and is working. Don't distract the animal.
- Offer information about the immediate surroundings to a student who is visually impaired. For example, tell the person there is a "construction ahead" sign while walking together, but wait to be asked to offer any further assistance.
- Control noise for a person who is visually impaired because the person compensates for the vision loss by using acute auditory skills.

Characteristics of Learning Disabled Students

People with learning disabilities perform in a variety of ways, and seldom, if ever, display the same characteristics. Following are characteristic difficulties experience by college students with learning disabilities. Hopefully, not student will have all of the difficulties.

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Writing</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty reading new words, particularly when sound/symbol relationships are inconsistent• Slow reading rate – takes longer to read a test and other in-class assignments• Poor comprehension and retention of reading material• Difficulty interpreting charts, graphs, scientific symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty with basic math operations• Difficulty with aligning problems, number reversal, confusion of symbols• Poor strategies for monitoring errors• Difficulty with reasoning• Difficulty reading and comprehending word problems• Difficulty with concepts of time and money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems with organization and sequencing of ideas• Poor sentence structure• Incorrect grammar• Frequent and inconsistent spelling errors• Difficulty taking notes• Poor letter formation, capitalization• Inadequate strategies for monitoring written work

Physically Impaired

- Address the student in a wheelchair at eye level.
- Don't take control of the student's wheelchair without first asking or being asked.

Hearing Impaired

- Speak directly to the student who is hearing impaired, regardless of whether or not an interpreter is present.
- Ask the student if he/she understood information presented, if uncertain or if the student appears confused.
- Control the environment to keep it as quiet as possible.
- Ask the student's permission before introducing him/her as hearing impaired

