Disability Support Services

What Students Need to Know...

Nancy Callahan
ADA Coordinator/Disability Support Services
Jamestown Community College
Disability Support Services—Meet the Staff

• Coordinator: Nancy Callahan

• Regular office hours at each campus
  • ~ 1 day /wk in Olean
  • ~ every 3 weeks in Dunkirk
Assistive Tech/Text Conversion Assistant

Andrea Hatfield

Andrea is based in Jamestown, in Main Street, and doubles as receptionist there.
Tech Support at Olean Campus

- Chriss Bouch, Technical Assistant
  - Accommodated test administration
  - Assistive tech training
  - Alternate media assistance

Find Chriss in the LACC (Learning Assistance and Computer Center- TECH)
New: Student Support Services at NCEC!

- Coordinator: Jennifer Coe
  - Accommodated test administration
  - Assistive tech training
  - Basic skills tutoring and study skills support

Find Jen in the Library and Room 209. Hours as posted.
The Legal Background: Equal Access...

- Section 504 of Rehab Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (and Amendment)
- Both proclaim that qualified students with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications in all campus programs and services.
Special Ed laws, like the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) are designed to ensure student *success*, along with broadly defined ways and means for doing so.
The ADA and 504 are about civil rights, as opposed to the special education laws in high school.
Different Legal Aims

High School: Special Ed

- Seeks to guarantee **success**
- Ends with graduation

College: Civil Rights Law

- ADA/504 emphasis is on **access**
- Students are entitled to reasonable accommodations to “level the playing field”
- *Students must meet the same academic standards* as their classmates
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

These acts proclaim that qualified students with disabilities are allowed full participation in the same programs and activities available to non-disabled students. It is the college’s responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations for this to happen.
A Qualified Person With A Disability Is One Who...

- meets the academic and technical criteria for admission to a program with, or without, reasonable accommodation
- identifies him or herself to the institution as a student with a disability in need of accommodation
- provides documentation verifying the disability and that supports the need for specific accommodation.
A “Reasonable Accommodation” Is...

- A way of working around a functional limitation that allows you to meet the same academic standards as your classmates
- Reasonable accommodations “level the playing field”
- E.g. a dyslexic student may request and receive his textbook in an audio format
What is “reasonable” is determined between the DSSO and you, based on:

- What you request.
- Documentation you provide that verifies need.
- Whether the accommodation is appropriate for course/classroom.
- Note: the college is not obligated to provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the curriculum.
Students With Disabilities Have the RIGHT To:

- Full and equal access to and the opportunity to participate in all programs, services, and activities at the college;
- Be evaluated based on ability, not disability;
- Reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments
Further Rights....

- Appropriate auxiliary aids and services determined on a case-by-case basis;
- Privacy and to have confidential information released only with consent;
- Information and course materials readily available in accessible formats
Students with Disabilities Have the RESPONSIBILITY To:

- Meet college, course, and program qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for academic standing, courses, programs, services, employment, and activities;
- Identify their disability, in a timely manner, to the coordinator of disability support services, when an accommodation is desired and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as needed;
Further Responsibilities...

- Provide, in a timely manner, current, relevant, appropriate documentation from a qualified professional;
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Abide by the Student Code of Conduct in the same manner as all students.
Typical Services

- Alternate testing formats, time limits and locations
- Note-takers and scribes
- Sign-language interpreters
- Textbooks and classroom media in alternate format
- Assistive technology, software and equipment
- Academic advisement, assistance and advocacy
6 Steps To Accessing Services

1. Introduce yourself to the DSSO and arrange to meet with the coordinator.
2. Be prepared to discuss your needs and request accommodations for specific classes for which you are registered.
3. Provide documentation that verifies functional limitations and supports your accommodation requests (see the DSSO website for documentation guidelines)
4. Once reasonable accommodations have been agreed upon, a letter will be sent to you and to your instructors authorizing your accommodations.

5. You will need to meet with each of your instructors to arrange the logistics of your accommodations (e.g. time and location for your tests, identifying classroom assistants, etc.).

6. Keep the coordinator apprised of any needed modifications to your requests.
Your Accommodations Are:

- Arranged on an individualized case-by-case, course-by-course basis.

You need to meet with the coordinator after you have registered each semester in order to arrange the upcoming semester’s accommodations.
## Usual Testing Logistics

### Where
- Main Street (Jamestown), the LACC (Olean) and the SSC (Dunkirk) have testing facilities and staff available during posted hours
- At branch sites and/or off-hours, your instructor will work with the office staff to find an open room for you to take your test

### When
- Normally students should take their tests at the same time as the rest of the class (to allay concerns about test security...)
- Sometimes a student may need to take his/her test at a different time to accommodate the need for extended time or use of assistive technology
Assistive Tech

- Sometimes a student’s accommodations will include use of specialized hardware, software or services.
- Staff at each site (Andrea, Jennifer and Chriss) can train students in the use of assistive tech.
- Andrea can assist with converting tests into accessible format.
- Andrea and Chriss can help you procure textbooks in alternate media.
Where and What Is This Assistive Tech....?

At each campus’ learning center is market-leading software:

- Kurzweil reading and writing software (for visually-impaired and LD)
- Dragon Naturally Speaking dictation software (for physically-impaired and/or LD)
- Zoomtext with Voice enlargement software (for visually-impaired)
Other assistive tech available for loan

- Digital recorders and tape players
- E-players for audio texts
- MP3 players
- Personal FM systems (for hearing impaired students in lecture courses)
- Talking and large-display calculators
More Rights and Responsibilities Information Available at: www.sunyjcc.edu/disabilitysupport

- JCC’s Policy Statement for Students with Disabilities
- And, the Special Modifications Request Procedure
- The Office of Civil Rights downloadable brochure: “Students with Disabilities...Know Your Rights” http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html
Important Qualifiers

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehab Act:

• **Direct Threat**: an institution can refuse to make accommodations for, or allow the participation of, a person with a disability if doing so would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

• Auxiliary aids and services must be provided unless doing so would result in a *fundamental alteration* of the program or would result in an *undue financial or administrative burden*.
Colleges are not required to make accommodations that would represent critical changes to programs or curriculum.

For example—
- a learning disabled writer requesting a waiver of a core writing course required of all graduates would represent a fundamental alteration.
Undue burden...

Issues considered in determining undue burden:

- nature and cost of action,
- overall financial resources of the institution,
- legitimate safety requirements.

If granting an accommodation would result in an undue burden, institutions may deny the request but must explore the use of alternate accommodations.
There are formal grievance procedures at the college should you feel you have experienced discrimination on the basis of your disability. These procedures are described in detail in the *Constitution of the Student Body*, specifically, Appendix V, Complaint Procedure- Human Rights.
Some Practical Matters

- Evacuation
- Elevators
- Voter Registration
Evacuation Procedures for Mobility-Impaired Individuals

- For all emergencies except fire or earthquake use the elevator
- If you are unsure what kind of emergency exists, use the Stairs or Area of Rescue Assistance
- Areas of Rescue Assistance are
  - Labeled
  - Located in the stairwells of upper floors
  - Equipped with emergency phones
“The Elevator is Out of Service...”

If you are mobility-impaired and the elevator is out of service....

- Your upper-story classes may have to be temporarily moved to an accessible location.
- We will work with division assistants and/or Buildings & Grounds, or DSSO to find an accessible place.
Voter Registration

The Disability Support Services Office is a National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) voter registration site and can assist.

- Please stop by or call for a registration form and/or assistance with filing.
- More info at: www.elections.state.ny.us/NVRA.html
That’s it---Thanks!

To Contact Us...

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