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Preface

The purpose of this handbook is to assist faculty and staff with the understanding and implementation of accommodations for students with disabilities. The material outlined in this handbook is provided to facilitate the processes and procedures to aid those individuals involved in working with students to help make their college endeavors productive and rewarding.

In establishing guidelines and procedures in the construction of the Services for Students with Disabilities Faculty Handbook, information was used from various sources within the Texas A&M University System. Other sources include the CAS standards.

Several professional standards and protocols for outlining the material contained within this manual were used.

Vision Statement

Life Services and Wellness is designed to accommodate a diverse student population within a holistic perspective, in order to achieve their educational potential, promote healthy lifestyles, and maintain optimal physical and mental health. Life Services and Wellness is a multi-faceted department composed of counseling, healthcare, wellness, outreach, academic testing and services for disabled students. These components strive to be responsive to student needs by providing programs that encompass prevention, education, intervention, treatment and referrals, and support for students, faculty and staff.

SSD Mission Statement

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at Texas A&M University-Kingsville exists to ensure that students with disabilities participate in the full range of college experiences. Our goal is to promote optimal development and achievement in all students while fostering independence and self-advocacy. We work to promote an environment that is free of physical and attitudinal barriers.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that became effective for public entities such as The Texas A&M University System on January 26, 1990. The ADA provides comprehensive civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local governmental services, and telecommunications. (Each major component of the act is contained in a separate section referred to as a title.) The act contains five titles.

Title I. Title I covers non-discrimination in employment activities. It requires that employers not discriminate on the basis of disability in recruitment, hiring, retention, or promotion of employees. Employment opportunities must be made available when it can be shown that, with or without reasonable accommodation, the individual can successfully perform the essential functions of the job.

Title II. Title II of the ADA is divided into two subparts. Subpart A requires that state and local government entities and programs be made accessible to individuals with disabilities. Subpart B covers transportation and requires that public transportation systems be made fully accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Title III. Title III covers the accessibility and availability of programs, goods, and services provided to the public by private entities. Although the act uses the term "public accommodations," it is used in the context of use by the public rather than operation by a public entity. By definition, a public accommodation is privately owned, operated, and/or offered.

Title IV. Title IV requires that telecommunication services be made accessible to individuals with hearing and speech impairments and has specific reference to the development of telecommunications relay systems and closed captioned technology. It has no direct relationship to institutions of higher education, as all appropriate mandates for communication access referring to postsecondary settings are contained in Titles II and III.

Title V. Title V of the ADA contains miscellaneous provisions that apply to all of the other titles as well - in other words, employers, state and local government entities, and public accommodations covered by Titles I, II, and III are also covered by the provisions of Title V.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first "civil rights" legislation for persons with disabilities on the national level. Included within the various sections of that title is a call for nondiscrimination in federal agencies (Section 501) and the establishment of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Section 502). Of direct importance to the postsecondary community are Sections 503 and 504.

Section 503.

Section 503 mandates nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in employment in institutions and entities that receive federal financial assistance. Although Section 503 is not an affirmative action statute (i.e., there is no requirement to give preference in employment to qualified persons with disabilities), there is a mandate to actively encourage application and consideration for employment of disabled candidates.

Section 504. Section 504 is a program access statute. It provides that:

"No *otherwise qualified* individual with disabilities in the United States.... shall, *solely* by reason of his/her disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by any program or activity provided by any institution or entity receiving federal financial assistance."

It is this Section 504 mandate that has promoted the development of disability support service programs in colleges and universities across the country over the last 20 years. Subpart E of Section 504 deals specifically with this mandate for institutions of higher education. While it does not require special educational programming for students with disabilities, it does require that an institution be prepared to make appropriate academic accommodations and reasonable modifications to policies and practices to allow the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs and activities available to non-disabled students. This means that the institution is under no obligation to assure the success of students with disabilities in higher education, only to assure that such students have the same opportunities as other students to be successful on the basis of their intellectual abilities and academic achievements.

Eligibility for Services

To be eligible for services a student must:

- Apply and be accepted for admission to Texas A&M University-Kingsville through the regular admissions process;
- Provide current and comprehensive documentation of a temporary or permanent disability which requires accommodation;
- Register with **SSD** at the beginning of **each** semester.

A disability is defined as (1) any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individuals; (2) a record of such an impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. A major life activity is defined as: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and writing. These disabilities include physical disabilities, learning disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, neurological impairments, chronic or temporary health problems, communication disorders, or psychiatric disabilities.

Services We Provide

The **SSD** staff conducts an initial intake with new students at the beginning of each semester to assess their needs and discuss appropriate services. The following services are available to all currently enrolled students who meet the eligibility guidelines.

Academic and Other Accommodations

Academic accommodations are those services provided to allow students with disabilities to have an equal educational opportunity. Such accommodations are provided on an individual and flexible basis as needs

arise. **SSD** will work with the student to identify the nature of accommodations needed. Examples of accommodations include extended testing time, interpreters, note taker services, reader services and registration assistance.

Advocacy

Services for Students with Disabilities is available to students with disabilities to assist or advise with any disability related issue. **SSD** works to increase awareness through education and outreach. We are available to university students, faculty, staff, and administration for consultation on disability issues.

Accessibility Assistance

Students with physical disabilities who are unable to access a classroom due to physical barriers should contact **SSD** for assistance.

Technological Resources

The following is a list of assistive devices available for student use in **SSD**:

- Kurzweil 1000 Scanner
- Manual Wheelchair
- FM Assistive Listening Device
- Tape Recorders

Other Services

Services for Students with Disabilities works closely with the university to ensure that the student's needs are met. If students need services not mentioned in this handbook, and if the service is within the bounds of reasonable accommodation, **SSD** will provide that service or make appropriate referrals. It is the student's responsibility to make his or her needs known.

Federal law prohibits A&M-Kingsville from making any preadmission inquiry about disabilities, so many times **SSD** may not know of a student who could greatly benefit from our services. Faculty and staff referrals are greatly appreciated by both students and **Services for Students with Disabilities**.

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS

Institutions must make modifications to academic requirements as necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate against students with disabilities or have the effect of excluding students solely on the basis of disability.

An institution may not impose rules or restrictions that have the effect of limiting participation of students with disabilities in educational programs or activities.

Evaluation of student performance, including course examinations and other measures of student achievement, must be provided with appropriate accommodations. These accommodations ensure that the evaluation represents the student's achievement in the course, rather than reflecting the impact of the student's disability.

The institution is responsible for seeing that students with disabilities are not denied access, benefits, or subjected to discriminations under any program or activity because of the absence of auxiliary aids or services.

Colleges and Universities MUST consider the following accommodations and adjustments on a case-by-case basis:

- Extending the time permitted for a student with a disability to earn a degree.
- Modifying examination formats to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Developing course substitutions or waivers for students with disabilities.
- Permitting the use of such learning aids as tape recorders, word processors, calculators, lap-top computers and spell checkers for students with disabilities.

Colleges and Universities MAY NOT:

- Limit the number of students with disabilities admitted.
- Make pre-admission inquiries regarding an applicant's disability.
- Use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic level of applicants with a disability because special provisions were not made for them.
- Exclude a student from a course of study.
- Counsel a student with a disability toward a more restrictive career.
- Measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against the student with a disability.
- Institute prohibitive rules that may adversely affect students with disabilities.

HOW TO PROVIDE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The classroom environment should give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in discussions and activities. A disability does not automatically preclude a student's participation in certain activities or classes. A student with visual impairments may benefit from art class, and a student who is quadriplegic from a physical education class.

When a student's disability prevents him or her from fulfilling a course requirement through conventional procedures, thoughtful consideration should be given to alternatives, keeping in mind that academic standards must be maintained. Each student is unique. Faculty members should not assume that all persons with a similar disability have the same needs or that solutions to their problems will always be similar. Innovative and flexible solutions such as extended deadlines, use of word processing equipment, or alternate test formats are the key to accommodation.

Faculty and staff members need to invite students with disabilities to make known the accommodations they need to meet course requirements. An ideal way to encourage students with disabilities to discuss needed accommodations is to include the following statement on the course syllabus and to repeat it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her**

disability to the Assistant Coordinator for SSD.

For more information, call or visit:

**Life Services and Wellness
1210 Retama Dr., Rm. 125
Phone: 593-3024**

Students with disabilities are expected to take an assertive role in talking with faculty and staff about the disability and accommodations. When faculty make the initial invitation encouraging students to make an appointment to discuss disability needs, the groundwork is laid for establishing a good partnership. **Open and comfortable lines of communication are essential and the key to solving accommodation issues.**

The instructor should indicate a willingness to be partners in this process. Statements and questions that may be helpful to faculty and staff might include the following:

- I have not had a student with a disability in my class before. I feel uncomfortable because I know so little about disability. Tell me about your disability and let's plan accommodations that will enable you to have full and fair access to this course;
- Let's talk about your abilities and disabilities as they relate to this course;
- What class adaptations have been most successful for you in the past?
- Are there medical and safety concerns we need to consider?
- What has worked best for you when you take tests?

A newly disabled student may still be learning how to adjust to his or her disability whether permanent or temporary. The student may have been well into his or her academic career and developed strategies with which he or she was comfortable but which may no longer serve the student after illness

or accident. A newly disabled student may return to the campus before his or her condition has stabilized. There may be changes during a semester in the student's ability to function. During such a period in a student's life, an extra degree of understanding and adaptation may be necessary. A newly disabled student may also be having difficulty adjusting and may fluctuate from time to time in decisions about what sort of adaptations work best. The student and the faculty member may want to consult with other students with disabilities and **Services for Students with Disabilities** for assistance.

An important point to remember is that unless the disability is rather new, students with disabilities coming to Texas A&M University-Kingsville have generally adjusted to and compensated for the disability. From the beginning, those with congenital disabilities have accommodated their lifestyles and managed daily independent living. More time and effort as well as varying degrees of dependency upon other people (attendants, readers, note takers...) and social systems are required to accomplish routine daily activities.

WHEN YOU INTERACT WITH A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY

- Foster a positive climate by modeling attitude of inclusiveness and support for students with disabilities in all aspects of campus life.
- Learn about disabilities. This will help overcome misconceptions.
- Meeting a student with a disability for the first time may be uncomfortable. Relax and do not hesitate to engage in an honest and open conversation about the student's disability as it relates to classroom expectations.
- Interact out of interest and caring. This is preferable to interacting out of obligation, fear, or pity.
- Try to be helpful; ask questions about a student's specific needs for assistance rather than presuming the answers.
- Students with disabilities must have the opportunity to define their own interests and activities.
- Treat a student with a disability as a healthy person. Because a person has functional limitations does not mean he or she is ill. Some disabilities have no accompanying health problems.
- Keep in mind that students with disabilities have the same daily activities that you do; i.e., shopping, running errands, family and extracurricular activities, academic pressures, social interests, church, and so forth. Remember that students with disabilities deserve the same attention and consideration as non-disabled students.
- Before providing assistance, offer assistance. This gives the student the option of accepting.
- Students with disabilities should be viewed as individuals rather than "they," "the disabled," or "the blind."
- Talk directly to a person with a disability, not to those accompanying him or her. For example, if a deaf person is with an interpreter, talk to the deaf person, not the interpreter.

- Avoid placing your perceptual limitations on the student. The combination of personal motivation and technical assistance can make for career and life options believed unobtainable until recently.
- The teaching environment directly affects the capability of a student to participate and keep up with the course work. Most necessary modifications are simple techniques which can foster full participation not only by students with disabilities, but by other students as well.
- Advance planning is the key to working with students with disabilities. Additional time may be required for tests, papers, or project; therefore plan accordingly.
- For some students with disabilities, writing may be difficult or otherwise impossible. These students find it helpful to tape lectures and class discussions. If an instructor intends to publish lectures, the student may be asked to sign a statement that tapes will not be released.
- In general accommodating a student with a disability in the classroom may be more a matter of common sense than a change in teaching style or curriculum. Faculty members should look upon each student with a disability as an individual when considering changes. Helping to determine successful accommodations for the classroom is a partnership-the responsibility of both the faculty or staff member and the student.
- By law, students with disabilities are entitled to classroom and test accommodations. **Services for Students with Disabilities** professionals are available to help faculty and staff members determine appropriate methods for adaptation and accommodation.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Measuring student progress in the classroom is an essential component of the educational process for all students. Not all students can be tested fairly under standard administration of regular testing procedures. Testing procedures must be adapted to ensure the measurement of a student's academic achievement, not the functional limitations caused by a student's disability.

A disability such as a hearing, learning, visual, motor, or speech impairment may interfere with the student's ability to deal with the testing, instructions, materials, or the mode of response. An alternative testing method for students with disabilities will be a more accurate way to measure ability or achievement. To create a fair testing situation, student's may need some or all of the following accommodations:

- extended testing time
- an accessible test site
- special equipment (word processor, tape recorder)
- readers
- note takers/scribes
- large print or braille copies of tests
- alternative format (oral, essay, multiple choice)
- quiet test environment

In order to ensure fairness and equality, consistency is one of the most important factors when making academic accommodations. This ensures that the modifications do not give students with disabilities a competitive edge, but eliminates competitive disadvantage.

Deciding What Accommodations are Appropriate

To ensure consistency, **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is the officially designated office to verify disabling conditions and recommend academic accommodations.** SSD professionals make recommendations based on medical or psychological documentation. This office will determine the appropriateness of test adaptation requests, verify exam procedures, and help facilitate accommodations. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to contact **SSD** for consultation and assistance (593-3024).

SSD makes recommendations based on each student's individual situation. While recommendations are made, it is the shared responsibility between student and instructor to come to a mutual agreement on how reasonable accommodations will be made. Equity is enhanced by ensuring that such procedures are agreed upon early in the semester.

It is the student's responsibility to discuss his or her needs with the instructor. The professor can facilitate this exchange by extending an invitation to students to meet with him or her to discuss accommodation. This invitation can come in the form of a general announcement (on the syllabus or in class) indicating the instructor's willingness to provide accommodation.

Maintenance of Academic Standards

Keep in mind that your academic standards should not be compromised. All students must meet the required level of understanding and performance competencies for the course. You may need to modify the evaluation or testing method but content should not be changed.

A student with a disability is being given no favor by "watering down" the course objectives for him or her. In fact, that would be a

definite disservice! For example, an instructor who waives an exam or allows a student to "take home" a regular exam may be providing an inappropriate accommodation because he or she feels sorry for the student. Not only does this give a student with a disability an unfair advantage, it also prevents the student from making necessary educational choices based on true assessment of performance.

If, despite reasonably developed accommodations, the student does not pass the exam, remember that he or she, just like any other student, may not have mastered the course material. Students with disabilities have the same right as other students to fail as part of their educational experience.

Extended Testing Time

There are situations in which a reasonable test accommodation dictates extended testing time so that the student can complete a test. For many students with disabilities, taking tests within the normal time will not result in a fair evaluation. Students are allowed up to double the regular testing time. For instance, students with dexterity problems are not able to write quickly; some, but not all, blind and visually impaired students will need tests read to them or can read their own test if they are prepared in braille. Braille tests take time to prepare and read. Students with psychological disabilities may experience severe test anxiety. Students with learning disabilities need extra time so that they can process information accurately and their knowledge can be measured fairly.

"This isn't fair to other students in the class. Everyone would do better if they had more time." While some faculty may believe this, extended testing time does not provide the student with a disability an advantage but it does minimize the impact of a disability on the student's performance. The University of California conducted a research study that

indicated extended time makes a significant difference in the performance of students with disabilities but does not significantly improve the performance of non-disabled students. (M. Kay Runyon, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol. 24 (2) (Feb. 1991) pp. 104-108.)

Services for Students with Disabilities will work with faculty members and students to establish what is a fair amount of time. Having the extended time will allay the fear of not being able to complete the test and the results will be a more equitable testing environment for the student.

If the accommodation requires the exam to be administered in a place other than the classroom, effort should be made to provide a setting which is equally conducive to concentration. Such a setting should be free from interruptions and distractions. Sensible and sensitive proctoring should be provided. A student should not be expected to cope with taking the exam in a busy office. Also, for some students, having an instructor administer the exam individually can be an intimidating experience and could put him or her at a disadvantage. It is important to discuss the student's preferences for testing accommodations.

SSD Testing Service

Students whose disabilities require extended time to complete examinations are eligible to use **Services for Students with Disabilities'** testing service. Students whose disabilities require a "distraction-free" testing environment or whose instructors choose to do so, may use the **SSD** testing service. We proctor the examination according to the professor's instructions at the regularly scheduled time unless the student arranges otherwise. At the request of the professor, **SSD** will pick up the examination and return the completed examination to the main office or department secretary. It is the student's responsibility to be certain that a test is scheduled to be taken in the **SSD** office.

**THE AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) AND
SECTION 504 AS APPLIED TO
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:
AN OVERVIEW
By Jeanne M. Kincaid, Esq.**

What is the major difference between Section 504 and the ADA?

Section 504 only applies to entities that receive *federal* financial assistance, whereas the ADA covers most establishments whether privately owned or assisted with state and/or federal funds.

If a college or university is in compliance with Section 504, will it automatically be in compliance with the ADA?

In most instances, yes. However, to the extent that the ADA provides greater protection to individuals with disabilities, the college/university must comply with the ADA.

Who is considered to be "otherwise qualified" under the ADA and Section 504?

- Students who can meet the technical and academic qualifications for entry into the school or program;
- Parents or members of the public who have a disability;
- An employee with a disability who can, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the essential requirements of the job;
- Persons who are discriminated against because of their association with individuals with disabilities.

**Who is an "individual with a disability?"
A person who:**

- Has a *physical* or *mental* impairment which *substantially limits* a major life activity;

- Has a record or history of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

What is considered a "major life activity?"

Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself and performing manual tasks.

What are the obligations of students with disabilities?

The student has an obligation to *self-identify* that he or she has a disability and that he or she *needs accommodation*.

What are the college's obligations under Section 504 and the ADA?

For students the college must provide *reasonable accommodations* for the student's known disability in order to afford an *equal opportunity* to participate in the college's programs, courses and activities.

For employees, the college must provide *reasonable accommodations* to the employee's known disability if it would enable him or her to perform the *essential* functions of the position.

A college may not discriminate against any individual solely on the basis of disability.

What are some examples of reasonable accommodations that a college might be expected to provide its students who have disabilities?

A college must provide a student *academic adjustments* to ensure that the student receives an equal opportunity to participate. A college must also provide auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities such as:

- Qualified interpreters and note takers;
- Readers, taped texts and material in braille;
- Adaptive equipment for students with manual impairments.

A college is not required to provide attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study or other devices of a personal nature. A college is only obligated to provide tutorial services to students with disabilities in the same manner as it does to non-disabled students. The college may choose the methods by which the auxiliary aids will be supplied so long as the methods used provide an equal opportunity. The college may not charge the students for necessary accommodations.

Must the college provide the student all the academic adjustments and auxiliary aids he or she needs?

No. A college is not required to provide academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services if such provision would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or the academic requirements are considered essential to a program of study or to meet licensing prerequisites.

What does reasonable accommodation mean in the context of employment?

Colleges must make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified applicant/employee who has a disability unless the accommodation would impose an *undue hardship* on the operation of the college's program.

How is "undue hardship" defined?

The following factors are used to determine if an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the college:

- The overall size of the college's program with respect to the number of employees, number and type of facilities, and size of budget;
- The type of college operation, including the composition and structure of its work force;
- The nature and cost of the accommodation needed.

What are some examples of reasonable accommodations expected to be provided by an employer?

- Making facilities readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities;
- Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and the provision of readers or interpreters

What are the procedural safeguards of Section 504?

Colleges must provide students and employees with *notice* of the non-discrimination requirements of Section 504. Students and employees have a right to file a grievance with the college. The college's grievance procedures must provide the student or employee with *due process*. Every college must have a Section 504 and ADA compliance officer. The college may not discriminate against any individual because of his/her exercise of these rights or against individuals who participate in an investigation pursuant to these regulations.

What are the accessibility requirements of Section 504?

Facilities constructed prior to *June 3, 1977* need not necessarily be made accessible so long as the program or activity viewed in its entirety is readily accessible to persons with disabilities. However, the student must be afforded an equal opportunity to enjoy the full range of services offered by the college. If a college modifies one of these buildings, it must make the modification accessible to the maximum extent feasible. Buildings constructed after June 3, 1977 must be readily accessible and useable to individuals with disabilities. All programs and services must be provided in a manner that affords the student maximum integration with his/her non-disabled peers.

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HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

The term hearing impaired refers to anyone having some level of physical impairments which result in receiving less sound, ranging from very slight loss to profound deafness. An individual who is hard of hearing perceives sound less well than the average person but has sufficient hearing to use auditorially-based methods of communication, sometimes with visual supplements. Most deaf individuals employ one or more visual methods and symbol systems for communication.

The major challenge for the student with hearing loss is communication. Communication skills vary widely and are effected by personality, degree and type of residual hearing, family environment, and age of onset. Just as the individual cannot control his or her ability to perceive volume, pitch, and tone, he or she cannot control these in his or her own speech. If the student's speech is quite intelligible, it is a testimony to hours of training and deliberate effort.

A hearing impairment is considered by some experts in the field or disabilities to be the disability that is the most educationally devastating. Much learning is aural which results in experiential and language deficiencies. Students with hearing impairments miss a great deal of information learned incidentally by non hearing impaired. They often do not understand language elements such as sarcasm, innuendo, some jokes or humor, or some abstractions.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The student is responsible for making his or her needs known. The professor and student should come to an agreement regarding accommodations as early as possible. The professor should discuss in-class assignments, field trips, and any aurally-oriented requirements with the student to plan for any adaptations

they will need. The student with the disability is the best source of information regarding his or her needs. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with the federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit the Life Services and Wellness Department at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- Discuss necessary classroom accommodations and testing adaptations early in the semester.
- Contact **SSD** to verify a student's hearing impairment or for consultation regarding appropriate accommodations.
- Try to provide the student with a list of new vocabulary at the beginning of class because it is difficult to understand new words or technical terms.
- Sign language may not always provide complete explanations. If possible, provide copies of lecture notes to assist the students in following the lecture.
- The use of visual aids such as chalkboards, overhead projectors, films, diagrams, and charts greatly assist students with hearing

impairments. Try to incorporate these into lectures whenever possible. When showing a film, it is helpful to provide written transcripts or closed captioned when available.

- Standing with a light source behind you or covering your mouth when speaking makes it almost impossible for a student who has a hearing loss to read lips.
- An overhead projector allows the instructor to face the class. This would usually be better than a blackboard.
- Because a time lag occurs between the speaker and interpreter, slow the pace when lecturing if the student has an interpreter.
- Colloquial expressions and idioms are often difficult to interpret; therefore, try to limit their usage.
- In order to see both the interpreter and instructor's visual cues and expressions, allow students with hearing impairments to sit in the front of the room.
- In a group discussion, it is preferable if students speak one at a time. Point to the speaker and rephrase the question in your response so the student with a hearing impairment can better follow the discussion.
- Interpreter's fees average about \$25.00 an hour and skilled interpreters are hard to find. This makes it important to inform the student of class cancellations or changes as early as possible so they can make arrangements with their interpreters.
- Support the use of adaptive listening devices, tape recorders, and interpreters in the classroom.
- Assist the student in recruiting volunteer note takers if requested.
- Work with students to arrange for adequate time for completion of exams or class assignments. (See section on testing.)

Positive Communication Tips

- Speak clearly and naturally. Don't block your mouth with your hands. A mustache reduces clarity in lipreading.
- Avoid standing in front of light sources. The glare makes it difficult to read lips and facial expressions.
- Accentuate body language, including facial expressions and gestures, to help you get your message across effectively. These are helpful but be careful not to exaggerate them.
- Speak directly to the individual with a hearing loss, not to the interpreter.
- If you have difficulty understanding their speech, do not hesitate to ask them to repeat. Your understanding will improve as you become familiar with their speech.
- Some combinations of words are more difficult to recognize. Therefore, it may be necessary to rephrase complex ideas.
- Speak in a normal volume and tone. Shouting distorts the information and does not help.
- If you speak to someone who is not looking directly at you and they do not respond, keep in mind that they could have a hearing loss.
- Attract the attention of the hearing-impaired person with a cue such as a tap on the shoulder or a wave before speaking.
- Have pencil and paper ready to write messages back and forth if other methods of communication are not successful.
- If you work with someone who is hearing impaired or deaf, be aware of safety issues.

If there are fire alarms they will not be able to hear them. The employer should install flashing alarms and permanent signs about what to do in case of an emergency because communications in such situations is much more difficult.

- If you need to phone an individual and do not have a **TTD** (telecommunication device for the deaf), you can use Texas Relay Service by calling (800) 735-2988. Operators are available to relay information between the two parties. When using this service, speak as if you are addressing the person with the hearing impairment directly.
- Post on centrally located bulletin boards any information delivered over public address systems or establish a message relay system.
- Familiarize yourself with resources available on campus to students and staff with disabilities so that you can make referrals when appropriate.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES

The largest group of students with disabilities on college campuses are students whose disabilities are not visible. Most students with hidden disabilities are individuals with medically-based disabilities such as arthritis, diabetes, lupus, asthma, allergies, multiple sclerosis, or head injury. Students with invisible disabilities (such as seizure disorders or AIDS) may decide not to request accommodation, choosing to face barriers rather than possible social stigma.

Students whose hidden disabilities appear intermittently or cyclically may need different accommodations at different times. Students with fluctuating abilities sometimes find lack of acceptance by faculty, as well as their peers, because they are confused by shifting symptoms of their disability.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The instructor should make an announcement at the beginning of the semester informing students that he or she is available to assist with accommodation. Otherwise, the student is responsible for approaching the instructor about his or her needs. An agreement between professor and student regarding accommodation should be reached early in the semester. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities office**

early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with the federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit Life Services and Wellness 1210 Retama Drive.

- Be aware that variations in a student's performance caused by medication may present problems that require appropriate modifications.
- If a faculty or staff member has valid questions about the effect of the medication a student is taking, it is appropriate to discuss these issues with the student.
- When you need further information and/or verification of a student's disability or suggested accommodations contact **Services for Students with Disabilities**.
- Work with students to arrange for adequate time for completion of exams or class assignments. (See section on testing)
- Should the disability cause interruption in course work, assign incompletes rather than failing grades.

Positive Communication Tips

- Treat every person with a disability as an individual. Needs and abilities vary among and within disability groups.

Services for Students with Disabilities serves students with temporary disabilities such as broken limbs, temporary visual or medical problems, or during recovery from surgery. Please make referrals as needed.

Hints for Speaking or Writing about People with Disabilities

As members of an academic community, you are very much aware of the impact language has on the reader or listener. Therefore, it is important to be aware of and to apply the appropriate terminology when describing people with disabilities.

The most important thing to remember is to put people first, not their disability. Say "woman with arthritis," "children who are deaf," "people with disabilities." This puts the focus on the individual not the particular functional limitation. If you must be succinct, give an accurate and positive portrayal, such as disabled citizen, wheelchair user, paralyzed person. Words such as crippled, deformed, suffers from, victim of, the retarded, etc., are *never* acceptable.

Disability groups also strongly object to using euphemisms to describe disabilities. Terms such as handi-capable, mentally different, physically inconvenienced, and physically challenged are considered condescending. They reinforce the idea that disabilities cannot be dealt with up-front.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

A learning disability (**LD**) is a permanent neurological disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with normal or above-average intelligence process information. The most common learning disabilities include *dyslexia*, a severe difficulty with reading, *dyscalculia*, a severe difficulty with math, *dysgraphia*, a severe difficulty with written expression. Learning disabilities and **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)** have a tendency to overlap. Between 50 and 90% of **ADD** students also have learning disabilities. **ADD** is a separate disability believed to be the result of differences in chemistry in the parts of the brain which control inhibition. It may interfere with academic achievement, self-esteem, and relationships.

Because learning disabilities are hidden, these students often have to deal with functional limitations, but also with the frustration of having to "prove" that their disability exists. Many **LD** students choose not to disclose their disability for fear of being considered mentally retarded or illiterate.

Many learning disabilities are not diagnosed until adulthood. Until college, many **LD** students were able to "get by" in high school and blame average to poor performance on boredom or lack of challenge. If you suspect that a student who is struggling in your class may have a learning disability, refer them to **SSD**. When diagnosed, such students are usually relieved to find that their frustrations have a name and that there are ways to deal with them.

Learning disabilities can be the most challenging of all the disability groups in the university setting. The kinds of cognitive deficits found in students with learning disabilities involve skills that represent the essence of what higher education is all about, absorbing information through reading, listening and observing, remembering, processing, organizing, analyzing, synthesizing and applying information, communicating information through the written and spoken word, and being evaluated primarily through written language on all of these skills. Yet, in spite of the deficits and difficulties encountered by **LD** students, many of these students are able to succeed. We all have strengths and weakness in our learning styles. Students with learning disabilities simply need alternative ways to learn.

The types of accommodations provided to students with learning disabilities and **ADD** may vary depending on the nature of the disability and the course content. For example, a student may benefit from an oral exam in one subject area, but not in another. A student's past scholastic record of success with one accommodation over another is often the best predictor of success. It is not unusual for there to be an initial trial-and-error period of finding the best way to evaluate a student's ability to demonstrate mastery of course material.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The student is responsible for making his or her needs known. The professor and student should come to an agreement regarding accommodations, especially how academic performance will be evaluated, as early as possible. The professor should discuss any oral requirements with the student to plan for any adaptations they will need. The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding his or her needs. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following statement on the course syllabus and/or announce it the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Services for Students with Disabilities office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit Life Services and Wellness at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- When you need further information and/or verification of a student's disability or suggested accommodations contact **Services for Students with Disabilities**.
- Discuss necessary classroom accommodations and testing early in the semester.
- Be highly explicit with expectations, such as those about class attendance, homework, and participation.
- Encourage the student to sit toward the front of the classroom to minimize distractions.
- Support the use of note takers or tape recording lectures.
- Try to provide a list of new vocabulary at the beginning of each class. When possible provide copies of lecture notes to assist the student in following the lecture.
- Students with learning disabilities often need explicit structure. They may need help distinguishing main and supporting ideas; seeing the relationship of parts to the whole.
- Students who have difficulty writing may need to take extra time for exams or make alternate arrangements in which the student can respond orally, type, or tape record test answers.
- Students with reading disabilities may need a reader or to have the test tape recorded.
- The use of visual aids like chalkboards, overhead projectors, films, diagrams, and charts greatly assist these students. Learning is more like multiple sensory experiences.
- Students with reading disabilities need advance notice of reading materials and assignments because they may use volunteer readers or assistive devices to read their text.
- Work with students to arrange for adequate time for completion of exams or class assignments. (See section on testing.)
- Encourage the use of word processing equipment that will help **LD** students compose, edit, and spell more accurately.
- Provide an outline of the day's lecture. Break down difficult concepts into steps or parts. Give a brief review of the material presented and emphasize key points.
- Give study questions for exams that demonstrate the format as well as content of the test. Giving an explanation of what constitutes a good answer and why is very helpful.
- It may be necessary to rephrase particularly complex ideas or ideas that introduce new terms.

Albert Einstein did not speak until the age of three. Even as an adult Einstein found that searching for words was laborious. He found school work, especially math, difficult and was unable to express himself in written language. He was thought to be simple minded (retarded), until it was realized that he was able to achieve by visualizing rather than by the use of language. His work on relativity, which revolutionized modern physics, was created in his spare time.

Positive Communication Tips

- The most important thing to remember when working with someone with a learning disability is to be patient and not treat them in a condescending manner.
- Be supportive. Give praise when merited; it builds confidence.
- Be aware that inconsistent perceptual abilities have social implications such as causing problems meeting people, working cooperatively, and making friends.
- Familiarize yourself with resources available on campus to students and staff with disabilities so that you can make referrals when appropriate.

Physical disabilities encompass a wide range of diagnosis and functional abilities. Types of physical disabilities include spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and numerous others which result in quadriplegia or paraplegia. Quadriplegia involves very limited or no use of hands, arms and or legs while paraplegia results in lower level paralysis or dysfunction.

It is difficult to generalize with regard to abilities and limitations with these kinds of disabilities. Functional abilities vary among disabilities as well as among students with the same disability. Functional abilities may also fluctuate within an individual due to periods of remission and exacerbation with disabilities such as multiple sclerosis or arthritis.

The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding his or her needs and abilities. The most common limitations affecting students with physical disabilities involve mobility and dexterity.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The instructor should make the announcement at the beginning of the semester informing students that he or she is available to assist with accommodation. Otherwise, the student is responsible for approaching the instructor about his or her needs. An agreement between professor and student regarding accommodation should be reached early in the semester. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Include the following on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit Life Services and Wellness at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- When you need further information and/or verification of a student's disability or suggested accommodations contact **Services for Students with Disabilities**.
- Support the use of note takers and taped lectures. It is also helpful to provide copies of your overheads or lecture notes.
- Be aware of physical access concerns in laboratories and on field trips as well as in the classroom. A student in a wheelchair will require a table in the classroom. Tables for wheelchair users are available upon request from Physical Plant or by calling the **SSD** office. Be realistic when a student is late to class. Although physical barriers are contributing causes, chronic lateness is not acceptable and needs to be discussed with the student.
- In a laboratory setting, students with dexterity impairments can participate if they are teamed with a partner. The student with the disability can direct the partner with step by step instructions, thus being actively involved in the learning process.
- Work with students to arrange for adequate

time for completion of exams or class assignments (See section on testing).

Positive Communication Tips

Notes

- Do not assume that people with mobility limitations need assistance, but feel comfortable in asking if you can help. The student will accept your offer if he or she needs help. Do not be offended if your offer to help is rejected. Most people with mobility impairments prefer to maintain as much independence as possible.
- Refer to a person in a wheelchair as a "wheel chair user," not as "confined to a wheelchair." Mobility aids are liberating to the user, not confining.
- An individual who uses a wheelchair may feel awkward or uncomfortable speaking to a person who is standing for a lengthy conversation. Try to sit down so that you are at that person's eye level whenever possible.
- Speak directly to the person with the disability. Often people are uncomfortable or feel awkward when interacting with a wheelchair user and they have a tendency to speak to the appliance or someone who accompanies that person.
- If a person's speech is affected by the disability and difficult to understand, do not hesitate to ask him or her to repeat the message.
- Be knowledgeable of the facilities where you work so you can accurately direct people with mobility impairments to accessible pathways and restrooms.
- Familiarize yourself with resources available on campus to students and staff with disabilities so you can make referrals when appropriate.

PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

Mental illness is a widespread and debilitating illness. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that one in five Americans has some form of diagnosable and treatable mental illness in any given six months.

The onset of mental illness is often between the ages of 18-25. With the use of many psychotropic medications and psychotherapy, the symptoms associated with mental illness can be reduced and controlled. Community integration is the most effective way for people to combat the disabling effects of this disability. Postsecondary education is an opportunity for qualified students with psychiatric disabilities to enhance the recovery and reintegration process.

Attitudinal barriers are a common problem for students with psychiatric disabilities. The stigma surrounding mental illness is great. Although more students are identifying themselves and requesting accommodations, many do not seek assistance for fear of discrimination.

Students with psychiatric disabilities can benefit from and can participate fully and successfully on the college campus with appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Examples of services provided by **Services for Students with Disabilities** may include, but are not limited to, advocacy, study skills, time management assistance, extended testing time, and referral.

In working with instructors, disclosure of the student's diagnosis and history is a matter of student's choice. Functional limitations may be explained to justify accommodations, but all other information is confidential. The functional limitations that are most common in the educational setting are poor concentration and anxiety.

Faculty and staff may be reluctant to set limits on students with psychiatric disabilities because of the student's perceived vulnerability. Instead of setting limits or asking stu-

dents to change behavior, they may stretch the limits of their own tolerance because the problem is perceived as a "mental health" problem. With all students, setting limits based on a student code of conduct is a valuable tool to foster maturity and more clearly define roles and expectations.

In the unlikely event that a student with a psychiatric disability exhibits inappropriate behavior, the professor should consult the **"Texas A&M University-Kingsville Student Handbook."** All students, regardless of disability, are expected to adhere to the code of conduct published in this manual in order to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The instructor should make an announcement at the beginning of the semester informing students that he or she is available to assist with accommodation. Otherwise, the student is responsible for approaching the instructor about his or her needs. An agreement between professor and student regarding accommodation should be reached early in the semester. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit Life Services at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- Discuss necessary classroom accommodations and testing adaptations early in the semester.
- Contact **SSD** to verify a student's psychiatric disability or for consultation regarding appropriate accommodations. Also, assistance with managing students who act out or exhibit inappropriate behavior is available.
- Be highly explicit with expectations, such as those about class attendance, homework, and participation.
- Encourage the student to sit toward the front of the classroom to minimize distractions.
- Support the use of note takers or tape recording lectures.
- Students may need flexibility in scheduling examinations.
- Work with students to arrange for adequate time for completion of exams or class assignments. (See section on testing)

Positive Communication Tips

- The most important thing to remember when working with someone with a psychiatric disability is to be patient and not treat them in a condescending manner.
- Be supportive. Be aware that students with psychiatric disabilities find many of the procedures in the academic environment very stressful. For example, participating in class, developing relationships with peers, and test taking can be intimidating or threatening.
- Give praise when merited; it builds confidence.
- Give directions orally and write them down.
- Familiarize yourself with resources available

on campus to students and staff with disabilities so that you can make referrals when appropriate.

Notes

SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS

Speech impairments have many causes such as hearing loss, illness, injury, and congenital or psychological conditions. Speech impairments are found alone or in combination with other disabilities such as cerebral palsy, hearing impairments, head injury, or multiple sclerosis.

Speech impairments range from problems with articulation to an inability to speak at all. Common speech impairments include stuttering, chronic hoarseness, difficulty in evoking an appropriate word or term, and esophageal speech.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The student is responsible for making his or her needs known. The professor and student should come to an agreement regarding accommodations, especially how academic performance will be evaluated, as early as possible. The professor should discuss any oral requirements with the student to plan for any adaptations they will need. The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding his or her needs. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following statement on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information, call 593-3024 or visit Life Services and Wellness at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- When you need further information and/or verification of a student's disability or suggested accommodations contact **SSD**.
- Give students with communication disabilities the opportunity to participate in class discussions as much as possible, even if extra time is necessary.
- If the course requires oral communication and the student is unable to participate, arrange for alternative methods, such as written communication that might be shared with the class.
- Encourage participation, but do not require a student with a communication difficulty to speak in front of the class.
- Allow students who are unable to communicate orally to use a typewriter, word processor, sign board, or sign interpreter in class.

Positive Communication Tips

- The ability to understand impaired speech improves with continued exposure and listening.
- Be patient and listen.
- Do not provide words or finish sentences for a person who stutters or speaks with difficulty; let the person complete his or her thoughts.
- If you do not understand what is being said, do not pretend to know; tell the student you do not understand and allow him or her to repeat the communication.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Not all individuals with visual impairments are totally blind. Many have some usable vision while some may have only light perception. Given that perfect vision is measured as 20/20, a person is considered visually impaired if corrected vision is no better than 20/70. If a person's corrected vision is no better than 20/200 in the best eye, that person is considered legally blind. It is important to keep in mind the broad range of abilities of students with visual impairments and take their individual needs into consideration when working with them.

Students who are blind or who have low vision have difficulty getting accurate access to information, locating large print or braille materials, getting around in a large and unfamiliar setting, finding transportation, finding readers for library work, research reports and short articles, getting recorded textbooks on time, and participating in recreational or athletic activities.

Professor/Student Responsibility: The student is responsible for making his or her needs known. The professor and student should come to an agreement regarding accommodations, especially how academic performance will be evaluated, as early as possible. The professor should discuss in-class assignments, field trips, and any visually-oriented requirements with the student well in advance to plan for any adaptations he or she will need. The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding his or her needs. **Services for Students with Disabilities** is available for consultation if any questions or problems arise.

Classroom Accommodations

Include the following statement on the course syllabus and/or announce it during the first class meeting: **Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his or her disability to the SSD coordinator. For more information call 593-3024 or visit Life Services and Wellness at 1210 Retama Drive.**

- Discuss necessary classroom accommodations and testing adaptations early in the semester.
- When you need further information and/or verification of a student's disability or suggested accommodations contact **Services for Students with Disabilities**.
- Give students advance notice of books and resources required to allow time to arrange for alternate formats.
- Support the use of adaptive equipment in class and on exams and be open to students taping your lectures.
- Students with visual impairments need preferential seating. Since the student cannot see visual cues, he or she needs to be seated in a position to receive verbal cues.
- As you are writing on the chalk board or discussing a diagram, verbalize what you are writing.
- Try to speak directly to the class, remembering that turning your head away can muffle sound; body language and gestures cannot be seen.
- Provide large print exams or copies of overheads to students with low vision, if requested. Mimeograph copies are difficult to read.

- Discuss with each student his or her individual needs when giving in-class assignments, showing videos, and planning field trips.
 - Assist with recruitment of note takers or readers as requested. They may be volunteer or paid, depending on the student's needs and resources.
 - Work with students to arrange for adequate time for completion of exams or class assignments. (See section on testing.)
 - Whenever possible, use drawings. Raised line drawings can be made by tracing over the lines of a drawing, map, chart, etc., with white glue or nail polish.
 - In group discussions, have each speaker identify himself or herself.
 - When a class is relocated, ask someone to wait at the door of the original classroom to guide the student to the new location.
- objects and other objects in the room.
 - Ensure that your building has adequate signage in braille.
 - Allow the person who is visually impaired to advise you about how he or she wishes to be guided.
 - When walking with a blind person, allow him or her to take your arm just above the elbow. Walk in a natural manner and pace. You don't have to give information about turns and steps because he or she can feel what you are doing.
 - When offering a seat to a vision-impaired person, place his or her hand on the back or arm of the seat. This gives a frame of reference when seating oneself.
 - A guide dog is trained as a working animal and should not be petted or spoken to without permission of the owner. A general rule is that the dog is working while in harness.

Positive Communication Tips

- Do not assume that people with visual impairments need assistance, but feel comfortable in asking if you can help.
 - Familiarize yourself with resources available on campus to students and staff with disabilities, so that you can make referrals when appropriate.
- Identify yourself when greeting a person who is blind. When you are leaving, let him or her know.
 - It is all right to use words and phrases such as "look," "watch," and "Do you see what I mean?" People with visual impairments also use these.
 - It is not necessary to raise your voice; just address the person directly to let him or her know that you are speaking.
 - Provide a thorough orientation to the physical layout of the room, indicating the location of all exits, desks, raised floors, low hanging

Notes
