Supporting Students with Disabilities

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DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES
Mission and Goals

- It is our mission to remove barriers and ensure equal access for all qualified students with disabilities.

- In support of this mission, our goals are to:
  - Coordinate and provide accommodations and related support services for students with disabilities;
  - Serve as advocates for students with disabilities while promoting independence, self-determination, and responsibility;
  - Assist the University in compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), its Amendments (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
  - Provide training and support for faculty, staff, and administration regarding the needs of students with disabilities;
  - Provide consultation, information, and outreach to parents and prospective students regarding the needs of and services for students with disabilities;
  - Foster awareness and understanding University-wide of issues of accessibility and disability.
Who we serve

- Students—undergraduate, graduate, residential, and distance
- Faculty
- Staff* and administration
- Parents
- Prospective students
- Visitors
Students registered with our office

- Over 400 students registered with our office
- ADD/ADHD 43%
- LD 31%
- Psychological disorder 16%
- Medical/Chronic illness 15%
- Autism Spectrum 6%
- Hearing impaired and/or deaf 4%
- Visually impaired and/or blind 2%
- Motor impaired 6%
- Neurological disorder 5%
- Other 3%
Keep in mind

- Student must self-disclose
- Many students with disabilities will not be registered with our office
- Students with disabilities have gone through the same admissions process
- Most disabilities are NOT visible
- Each individual is uniquely impacted by their disability
- Barriers go beyond the physical
  - Attitudinal
  - Definitions
  - Institutional
What we do

- Register students with our office; accept, review, and maintain documentation of disability;
- Determine and provide reasonable accommodations;
- Accept and review documentation and approve/deny requests for housing accommodations;
- Provide accommodated test proctoring service for faculty;
- Arrange complex/special accommodations (ASL interpreters, physical accessibility needs, etc.);
- Advocate for students in getting accommodations; teach self-advocacy;
- Consult/collaborate with faculty and staff on issues of access and accommodation for students, potential students, visitors, and guests (not employees);
- Provide training for faculty and staff around issues of disability, accessibility, and accommodations.
Reasonable accommodations

- Determined by our Office through and individualized, interactive process;
- “Modifications in policies or procedures” (ADA);
- Remove barriers so qualified individuals with disabilities have equal access to classroom, support services, housing, dining, activities, etc.;
- Adjustments in the way things are usually done so that SWD have an equal college experience as their non-disabled peers;
- Reasonable accommodations are NOT advantages;
- NOT an alteration of fundamental nature of program and NOT a lowering of standards.
Equality doesn’t mean Justice
The future as I see it

- More students with disabilities going to and graduating from college.
- Increase in students with Executive Function disorders: ADD/ADHD, Autism Spectrum, Brain Injury:
  - Need more support
  - Goes beyond academic
- Increase in students with psychological disorders/mental health issues.
- Greater awareness of issues of access, greater acceptance/reduced stigma.
- Technology will help and hurt.
- Court cases will direct best practice (e.g. absence flexibility, emotional support animals).
What’s happening in our office

- Staffing
- Increasing numbers of students registering with our office (20% increase each semester since 2014)
- Increase in accommodated testing through our office (4x from Fall 2014)
- Priority registration
- Executive function coaching/mentoring
- Case management moving from Student Support Services
- Office name change
Name change

- Move from medical model of disability to a social model of disability
- Messages we want to send
- Accessibility versus Disability
- Resources versus Service
- Holistic versus Academic
- Reduction of stigma
- Better reflection of what we do
Questions

1. Beginning with the name change, how can we better position our office in keeping with our mission, goals, and trends/developments in the field? What do you think of name changes for our office? Suggestions beyond the name change?

2. How can our office better serve our constituents (students, faculty, staff, administration, guests)?
Next week: April 11-15

Monday: On the UC lawn with giveaways and awareness information

Tuesday: Wear Blue for Autism: Everyone please wear blue this day. We will be distributing buttons, pins, and wrist bands for you to wear, as well.

Wednesday: Lunch-and-Learn Workshop: “College Students on the Autism Spectrum” in the UC Multipurpose Room, 12:00-1:30

Thursday: Diversity Dialog with Autism, in Killian 102, 5:30-7:00pm

Friday: Alpha Xi Delta Light It Up Blue 5k, Central Plaza, 7pm

All week: Informational displays in the UC, throughout campus, and on social media