

**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES
FACULTY HANDBOOK**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to provide faculty and academic staff at Bowie State University (BSU) with basic information about students with disabilities and suggestions for interacting with such students. Bowie State University believes that individuals with disabilities must be included in all aspects of university life. Additionally, the University must also ensure its compliance with *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, state policies, as well as the University's policies, which parallel the Federal requirements. Faculty should bear in mind that there are highly technical and legal requirements for accommodating college students with disabilities.

DSS keeps abreast of requirements for accommodating college students with disabilities so that members are generally aware of their obligations and where to go for assistance. Our office provides resources and expertise so that faculty and staff can devote their energy to instruction and administrative duties. Since needs and disabilities of students vary considerably, this Handbook should be viewed only as a general guide to the instruction of disabled students. We have included some suggested adjustments that can be made in the academic environment in teaching style and in a laboratory to enable full participation.

Disability Support Services is charged with ensuring that identified students with disabilities are receiving accommodations and services to which they are entitled. Identification to the Disability Support Services is voluntary. It is considered to be the student's responsibility. Once students are identified, Disability Support Services then determines which services and accommodations are appropriate. Students are required to provide appropriate documentation of their disabilities unless the nature of the disability and the accompanying needs are obvious.

An accommodations letter is then developed which the student should present to his/her faculty. The accommodations letter indicates that the student is registered with Disability Support Services and what accommodations will be required for that student. Students requesting accommodations who are not registered with Disability Support Services should be referred to our office.

One disability group that has increased dramatically in recent years and for which there is the continued development of information about appropriate and reasonable accommodations is students with learning disabilities. In addition to increased growth in the overall population of students with learning

disabilities, there are considerable differences in the types and extents of the learning disabilities among individuals as well as the services and accommodations they require and to which they are entitled.

For additional information, questions, concerns or suggestions, please contact Disability Support Services, located in the Thurgood Marshall Library Room 079. The telephone number is (301) 860-4067.

This Handbook will present an overview of the major disability groups that faculty are likely to encounter, the characteristics of each disability and the appropriate accommodations and suggestions for working with students with disabilities. Since needs and disabilities vary considerably, this Handbook should be viewed only as a general guide to the instruction of disabled students. Also included in this guide are suggestions for the academic environment to encourage the full participation of disabled students.

As the table illustrates, the number of identified students with disabilities, particularly students with learning disabilities has been increasing steadily during this period of time. It does not appear that this trend will change in the near future. Concurrent with increases in the population of students with disabilities, there have been increases in the request for accommodations and services. For example, requests for note-takers and readers have increased significantly. Note-taking services are provided for students in more than one classes. Not only does it take considerable time to coordinate, but there is also a cost factor. Another accommodation such as sign language interpreters for deaf/hearing impaired students requires much less time to coordinate but is extremely expensive; even minor increases for this service result in dramatic increases in costs. However, regardless of the associated costs, the University is obligated to provide services that are deemed to be reasonable and appropriate at no cost to the student.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Disability Support Services is to ensure that students with disabilities have full access to all programs and services at Bowie State University. This Office also seeks to educate faculty, staff, and administrators regarding disabilities in an effort to create greater sensitivity towards individuals who are disabled. Moreover, we attempt to provide the necessary support systems and skills for effective communication throughout the campus community.

The Office coordinates services that directly impact students, faculty, staff, and visitors who have disabilities. These services are based on the specific needs of individuals according to their disabilities. They consist of, but are not limited to, notification to professors regarding recommended accommodations for courses, extended time on tests, note-takers, scribes and readers, taped texts, alternative testing, consultation with professors, physicians, psychologists, and other specialists such as Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals, sign language interpreters, and the Resource Center, which provides various types of adaptive equipment.

Disability Support Services restates the rights and responsibilities of the University and of individuals with disabilities, in an effort to reach adequate resolutions to problems that are free of contempt and opposition for concerned parties. Our goal is to provide such requisite support, in coordination with the cooperation of the campus community, so that those individuals with disabilities can function effectively and obtain the best education that Bowie State University has to offer.

Our Philosophy

Students with disabilities are students who will be assessed by the same standards that apply to all students. The faculty is not expected to lower its expectations nor its standards. The various services and accommodations provided by Disability Support Services are designed to give students every opportunity to be full participants in the academic process. Accordingly, Disability Support Services seeks to minimize or eliminate the need for faculty to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. This approach emphasizes the students' responsibility and independence. This will allow the faculty to devote its attention to instruction. As well, Disability Support Services also provides an appropriate level of counseling regarding accommodation services.

The Admissions Process

There are specific university guidelines as well as Federal laws, state legislation, and federal regulations that require equal treatment of applicants with disabilities. This means that the nature or severity of a disability may not be used as a basis for the consideration of admission at the undergraduate or graduate level. Additionally, universities must not limit the number of qualified disabled students. Overall, applicants with disabilities at the undergraduate or graduate level must be considered for admission in the same manner as other applicants.

Standardized or other admissions tests can be specially administered to disabled persons who may need additional time. Large print, Braille, and recorded exams also can be provided in addition to readers and scribes. If a student needs to take any exam in a quiet, separate room, that accommodation must be made. However, it is the responsibility of the individual to request proper accommodation.

Bowie State University's Accordance Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Bowie State University to make sure that all of its services, facilities, and accommodations are made accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Reasonable Accommodation

What is a reasonable Accommodation? In the context of higher education, it is easier to define what is not reasonable and assume that if the accommodation needed does not clearly fall under those guidelines, it is probably reasonable! There are three kinds of accommodations that are not considered reasonable: (1) It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation or allowing participation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; (2) It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation means making a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum (educational viewpoint) or a substantial alteration in the manner in which you provide your services; and (3) It is not a reasonable accommodation if it poses an undue financial or administrative burden.

<http://www.bucknell.edu/Documents/Accessibility/Yarrow-What-is-a-reasonable-Accommodation.pdf>

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

The two major challenges to blind and partially sighted students in a university environment are the massive amount of printed material to be accessed and the negotiation of the campus terrain.

Accommodations for the Visually Impaired Students

Most blind students use a combination of accommodations, including note-takers, readers, books printed in Braille, enlarged print books, recorded books and lectures, and special computer access technology such as speech output. Use of such aids may cause a delay in accessing some materials. Early access to course textbook lists and syllabi can help streamline the process.

Computer Access

For blind and low vision students, there is excellent adaptive computer technology available at Bowie State University, and many students have their own. An important fact to keep in mind with blind and low vision students is that many of them have not been taught Braille. Therefore, they must listen to all of the materials that other students read. This complete reliance on listening poses challenges and may slow down the pace at which they can process information, as it takes longer to listen to a book than to read a book. Additionally, the student probably tapes class lectures instead of taking notes and will have to listen to portions of those tapes to review for exams. Thus, a request for additional time to complete assignments is legitimate.

HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Partially Hearing Impaired

Students with hearing loss may vary widely in the degree of loss and the means they use to compensate for that loss. Some individuals may be deaf with little or no use of residual hearing aids. Others will wear hearing aids that somewhat improve hearing, but even the latest technology in hearing aids provides the wearer with distorted hearing at best. Most people with hearing loss will develop lip-reading skills, but even the most skilled lip-reader will understand only about 60-70 percent of a conversation and even less of a lecture.

Students with hearing losses may have speaking voices that are quite easy to understand and may choose to communicate orally. Others may be very hard to understand or may choose to use sign language as a means of communication. If a student is signing and comes to see faculty without an interpreter, it is necessary to use a pad and pen or a computer word processor to communicate in writing. If a student communicates by speaking and is difficult to understand, it is important that the instructor let the student know that he or she is having trouble understanding. In addition, a person with hearing loss may nod and appear to understand what someone is saying but may miss an important point. It is often a good approach to stop frequently to ask the person to repeat what was understood and to clarify any missed information.

When a student with a hearing loss identifies himself/herself, it is important to determine how to best meet that person's needs. It is important similarly for faculty to talk with the student about his/her preferred teaching style (lecture, board work, group discussions, films, or videos). Additionally, faculty should ask the student to suggest ways to access the information presented in class.

Suggestions for Communicating with the Student Who is Hearing Impaired:

-Look directly at the student and speak in a clear modulated tone--speaking louder does not help.

-Try not to stand with your back to a light source or window--it makes it difficult to read lips.

-Address the student even if an interpreter is being used.

-When writing on the blackboard, do not speak with your back turned. Use overheads

when it is possible.

Accommodations for Hearing Impaired Students

Use of a sign language interpreter or an oral interpreter: (An oral interpreter is used by people with a significant hearing loss who do not know sign language. The interpreter articulates the professor's words for the individual and uses gestures and facial expressions.)

-Use of a volunteer note-taker.

-Use of a tape record lectures for later transcription, with the instructor's permission.

Use of a phonic ear.

(The professor wears a wireless microphone and the individual uses a receiver. This allows the person to hear only the professor's voice amplified and screens out background noise that hearing aids would amplify.)

Evaluation Methods

Generally, written examinations should not present any difficulties, but an oral presentation or a group project may require a different evaluation. Please keep in mind that students who have been deaf since birth and are sign-language users have a different concept of syntax from a native English speaker/writer. This may sometimes result in writing that is somewhat awkward, and such students may need to be referred to the Writing Center for assistance. American Sign Language should be regarded as a foreign language.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Students with physical disabilities may have multiple disabilities that require a variety of accommodations, or they may only need an accessible classroom location. It is important to remember not to assume anything about a particular type of disability, but to ask students to describe their needs. For example, many students who are visibly disabled may have complete use of their arms and hands and are able to take notes and written exams. While others who do not appear disabled may have nerve damage that prevents them from taking notes or written exams. When there is a student with an apparent disability in the classroom, faculty may inquire casually before or after class to find out if there are any specific accommodation the student requires.

Types of physical or mobility impairments may include cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, spinal chord injuries, Spinal Bifida, mobility impairment, amputees, arthritis, lupus, diabetes, medical illness, and cystic fibrosis.

Accommodations

The relocation of classroom or other activities to ensure physical access requires that field trips and other off-campus activities must be physically accessible.

- A student who uses a wheelchair may frequently be a few minutes late due to the distance or terrain he/she has to traverse. It is appropriate for faculty to discuss the situation with the student and seek solutions.
- For field trips, faculty should ask the student to assist in the selection of sites and modes of transportation.
- Classes taught in laboratory settings may require some simple adjustments to the work stations. It is important to work directly with the student to create an accessible work station so that the student is able to participate as fully as possible in lab assignments.
- For students in wheelchairs, it is important to ask what type of assistance they require rather than merely pushing the wheelchair.
- When talking for a long period of time to a student who uses a wheelchair, one should sit down in order to make the student feel more comfortable.
- A student may need to use a scribe or adaptive equipment for examinations.
- Faculty should try to include students who cannot speak in group discussions.
- Faculty can discuss with the student to more effectively include him/her in class discussions.

- Extra time should be given to students to complete written examinations.

(Appropriate accommodations for individuals will be stated in the accommodation letter sent to faculty by the ADA Coordinator).

PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

Psychiatric disabilities may not be apparent. Nevertheless, they can have a dramatic impact on interpersonal skills and behavior, hence negatively affect the learning process. In some cases, there are helpful and appropriate accommodations. Some of the more common psychiatric disabilities among college students include major depression, manic depression, bipolar disorder, severe anxiety disorders such as panic attacks, social phobias, or post traumatic stress disorder, sleeping disorders, eating disorders, substance-related disorders, schizophrenia and dissociative disorders. Most individuals with psychiatric disabilities are involved in therapy outside of Bowie State University, and many are currently taking medications to help relieve their conditions.

If a student requests services or reasonable accommodations, Disability Support Services requires recent and adequate professional documentation. Reasonable academic accommodation for students with psychiatric disabilities may include extra time on exams, a quiet testing space, taping of lectures, and tutorial assistance. Some students may benefit from the use of other campus resources to enhance study skills, time management, interpersonal communication, counseling, and career planning.

Helpful Hints for Faculty Who Teach Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

If a student with a psychiatric disability approaches a faculty member to reveal his/her disability, the student should be referred to the Counseling Center located in Room 001 of the Thurgood Marshall Library.

It is important to neither ignore nor attempt to treat a psychological disorder. Faculty should only discuss a student's behaviors or accommodation needs as they relate to the course. Any information the student discloses regarding his or her disability is confidential unless he or she gives permission or requests a faculty member to consult with other campus departments.

If the student exhibits inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, faculty should discuss the matter privately with the student in order to delineate the limits of unacceptable conduct. Students are expected to follow the University's code of conduct.

If a student exhibits abusive, threatening, or disruptive behavior, faculty should consult with or refer the matter to any of the following offices: Chairperson of the Department, Counseling Center, Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs, Coordinator of Disability Support Services, or Campus Police.

Students with psychological disabilities should be given the same respect as other students.

LEARNING DISABILITIES/ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

One disability group that has increased dramatically over the past three years, and for which there is still little specific information about appropriate and reasonable accommodations, is the learning disabled.. In addition to increased growth in the overall population of students with learning disabilities, there are considerable differences in the types and extents of learning disabilities among individuals as well as the services and accommodations to which they are entitled.

Learning disability is a general term that refers to a variety of specific impairment disabilities that create difficulty with information processing. Disability Support Services requires very extensive diagnostic assessments to verify the disability and the accommodations needed. Persons diagnosed with a learning disability exhibit significant discrepancies in one or more areas of achievement, aptitude, or information processing.

Definition of Learning Disability (LD)

A learning disability is a disorder that affects the manner in which individuals, with normal or above average intelligence process, retains and expresses information. A LD is commonly recognized as a significant deficit in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or problem solving. Individuals with learning disabilities also may have difficulty with sustained attention, time management, or social skills.

Learning disabilities are presumably due to central nervous system dysfunction. A LD exists cross-culturally and occurs among people of all racial and ethnic groups. A learning disability may persist throughout life, but the problems manifested may change depending upon the learning demands and the setting. It may cause problems in grade school, then disappear during high school, and then resurface again in college. It may manifest itself in only one academic area, such as math or foreign language.

Conversely, it may impact an individual's performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines. Because a learning disability is not visible, teachers, parents, and peers often do not understand the challenge faced by individuals with this type of impairment. Consequently, many adults with learning disabilities often have to "prove" to others that their invisible disabilities are a handicap.

What a Learning Disability is not

A learning disability is not a form of mental retardation or emotional disorder. A LD is primarily due to other handicapping conditions, environmental or cultural influences.

Even though it may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions, LD is not the result of these conditions.

Characteristics of Students with Learning Disabilities

LD students exhibit some or all of the following characteristics in the skill areas listed.

Reading Skills

- Slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with the level of difficulty of the material.
- Uneven comprehension and retention of material.
- Difficulty identifying important points and themes.
- Incomplete mastery of phonics, confusion of similar words, difficulty integrating new vocabulary.
- Skipping of words or lines of printed material.
- Difficulty reading for long periods.

Written Language Skills

- Difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper.
- Difficulty with sentence structure (e.g., incomplete sentences, run-ons, poor use of grammar, missing inflectional endings).
- Frequent spelling errors (e.g. omissions, substitutions, transpositions), especially in specialized and foreign vocabulary.
- Difficulty effectively proofreading written work and making revisions.

- Difficulty in writing long compositions.
- Slow written production.
- Poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, and trouble with spacing, overly large handwriting).
- Inability to copy correctly from a book or the blackboard.

Mathematical Skills

- Incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g. mathematical tables).
- Reversal of numbers (e.g. 123 to 321 or 231).
- Confusing operational symbols, especially + and x.
- Difficulty copying of problems correctly from one line to another.
- Difficulty recalling the sequence of operational concepts.
- Difficulty comprehending word problems.
- Difficulty understanding key concepts and applications to aid problem solving.

Organizational and Study Skills

- Poor organizational skills.
- Time management difficulties.
- Slowness in starting and completing tasks.
- Repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught.
- Lack of overall organization in taking notes.
- Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs.
- Inefficient use of library and reference materials.
- Difficulty preparing for and taking tests.

Attention and Concentration

- Trouble focusing and sustaining attention on academic tasks.
- Fluctuating attention span during lectures.
- Easily distracted by external stimuli.

- Difficulty juggling multiple tasks.
- Hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention.

Oral Language Skills

- Inability to concentrate on and to comprehend rapid spoken language.
- Difficulty in expressing concepts.
- Difficulty speaking grammatically correct English.
- Difficulty following or having a conversation about an unfamiliar idea.
- Difficulty telling a story in the proper sequence.
- Difficulty following oral or written directions.

Social Skills

Some adults with learning disabilities have social skills problems due to their inconsistent perceptual abilities. These individuals may be unable to detect the difference between sincere and sarcastic comments or they are unable to recognize other subtle changes in tone of voice for the same reason that a person with a visual perceptual problem may have trouble discriminating between the letters “b” and “d”. Difficulties in interpreting non-verbal messages may result in lowered self-esteem and may cause some adults with learning disabilities to have trouble meeting people or working cooperatively with others.

Helpful Hints for Faculty Who Teach Students with Learning Disabilities

- Encourage students to make an appointment during office hours to disclose their learning disabilities. Ask students who identify themselves how you as a faculty member can assist in facilitating the learning process.
- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus. If possible, make it available before registration week.
- Clearly spell out expectations before a course begins (e.g., grading, material to be covered, and due dates).
- Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered during that period. At the conclusion of the class, briefly summarize key points.
- Speak directly to students and use gestures and natural expressions to further convey meaning.

- Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard or use a student handout. Terms should be used in context to convey greater meaning.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.
- Announce reading assignments well in advance for students who are using taped materials. (Note: It takes an average of four weeks to get a book recorded).
- If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide for optional student use.
- Provide adequate opportunities for questions and answers, including review sessions.
- Allow students to record lectures to enhance their notes.
- Provide, in advance, study questions for exams that illustrate the format as well as the content of the test. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.
- If necessary, allow students with learning disabilities to demonstrate mastery of course material using alternative methods (e.g., extended time limits for testing or oral exams in a separate room).
- Encourage students to use various types of campus support services (e.g. pre-registration, assistance in ordering taped textbooks, alternative testing arrangements, specialized study aids, peer support groups, diagnostic consultation, study skills, developmental skills courses, and academic tutorial assistance).

OTHER DISABILITIES

There are many other disabilities that can affect a student's ability to function successfully at a university. Among these are HIV or AIDS, severe allergies or respiratory disorders, epilepsy, arthritis, chronic back pain, active sickle-cell anemia, diabetes, gastro-intestinal disorders, multiple chemical sensitivities, chronic fatigue syndrome, or repetitive strain injuries.

Temporary disabilities or conditions may include surgery-related limitations, recovery from serious illness or hospitalization, complications from pregnancy, fractures, and temporary but serious visual problems.

Depending on the nature or duration of the condition, these students may be eligible for reasonable accommodations for a specific period. This may include temporary note-taking assistance and testing accommodations.

The policy regarding testing these students is to discuss with them the types of accommodations which they believe are applicable to their condition.

If you are concerned about the validity of their concerns, please feel free to call Disability Support Services.

Primary Considerations

When an auxiliary aid is required, a disabled individual must have the opportunity to request the auxiliary aids of his or her choice. This first choice must be given primary consideration unless it can be demonstrated that another equally effective accommodation is available. For example, some deaf students may use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication, and some blind students may be more efficient with Braille than with taped materials.

Other Considerations

Auxiliary aids or accommodations, including communication accommodations, must be provided for public lectures, conferences, programs, and other departmental and campus activities when requested with advance notice by disabled individuals.

Some of the aids or communication accommodations may include alternative media conversion to Braille, large print, cassette tapes, assistive listening systems, TDD access interpreting services for deaf individuals, accessible meeting sites and seating, note-taking assistance, or reading services. All departmental publicity about such events should include a brief statement to the effect : "Individuals with disabilities should contact the department to request reasonable accommodations."

Relocation of Classes or Other Activities to Accessible Locations

It may sometimes be necessary to relocate a class, activity, or meeting to an accessible site if it is the most effective or immediate method of providing accessibility for disabled individuals. A disabled individual must not be denied the opportunity for full participation in any program or activity sponsored by the University because of a physical access problem. It is the responsibility of the department or group sponsoring the activity to ensure access for disabled students. Disability Support Services should be contacted if assistance is needed.

Animals

Some students may have specially trained or certified animals such as seeing-eye dogs for blind students or hearing dogs for deaf individuals.

Lab Safety

Students with disabilities and their professors who have concerns about lab safety should meet to discuss and resolve any concerns or issues. Faculty may consult with Coordinator of Disability Support Services about any alternatives, including the use of a lab assistant who functions as a disabled student's eyes or hands. Special equipment or technology or the modification of lab furniture also may be required.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities that are properly registered with Disability Support Services according to definitions under both *Section 504* and the *ADA*. The language in both documents requires "changes in policies and procedures that are necessary to provide goods, services, facilities, or privileges to individuals with disabilities."

These accommodations are required of the University unless it can be demonstrated that "making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations" (i.e., modifications that extend beyond the classroom but do not affect a change in the curriculum, or those which do not impose an undue administrative or financial burden on the university). Students cannot be charged extra fees for any auxiliary aids that they may need to participate in a program or service.

Procedures for Accommodations

Students with disabilities have the same responsibilities as all other students regarding class attendance and assignments. Those who are absent due to illness or hospitalization must contact their professor and/or the Disability Support Services to discuss arrangements for making up assignments.

Faculty should sign off on the accommodations letters sent by the Disability Support Services Coordinator. Students who require extended time for exams must inform their faculty as well as Coordinator of Disability Support Services about the length of time needed to accomplish various tasks.

If a student has a commonly known disability, his/her professor/instructor may engage in a discussion with the student about accommodations if there are academically related performance problems; namely, failing grades in courses or class work, or continuing absences.

Student Registration with the Disability Support Services

The disabled students at the University should inform Disability Support Services of the existing disability and demonstrate that the disability substantially limits a major life activity. The University is not responsible for seeking out disabled students or for initiating the proper accommodations for them.

Procedures for Registration

Students must register with the Disability Support Services before classes begin each semester. Students must have documented proof of their disability (ies) from a medical doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, vocational rehabilitation counselor, or other licensed professional. There must be a stated recommendation of reasonable accommodation by the evaluator in the above mentioned documentation. Handwritten documentation will not be accepted.

Procedures for Meeting Disability Requirements

The student must meet the academic and non-academic requirements of the University in order for the institution to be obligated to provide accommodations.

After notification of acceptance to Bowie State University, students with special needs who require interfacing with the Health Services Office must provide a detailed health history and must schedule a meeting with the Director of the Health Services Office to discuss their needs.

At the beginning of each semester, students must make an appointment with all of their instructors/professors to discuss their specific needs. These appointments should be scheduled for some time during the faculty's normal office hours.

Confidentiality

All information related to the student's disability is confidential. It will not be made available except to ensure that appropriate accommodations are being provided. The University has no legal right to release neither information nor documentation pertaining to the disabled students. This information can only be released upon the written request of the individuals.

Procedure for Confidentiality

Students with disabilities will sign a consent form, if necessary, that authorizes the release of information and medical records to the faculty and Office of Student Support Services in order to obtain special accommodations and/or services.

Waivers

The University reserves the right to maintain academic requirements, allowing no change that would demonstrably create a significant alteration in an essential aspect of the curriculum. Waivers of non-essential requirements will be left to the discretion of the University. For adjustments in academic requirements, the Coordinator of Disability Support Services will consult with the appropriate departmental Chairperson or Dean for proper review. The authorization is to be renewed every semester.

Temporary Disability

Temporary disability will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the duration or the expected duration of the impairment as well as the limitation on life activity (ies).

ADA Accessible Locations

Exams and classes will be held in ADA accessible locations. If the original location for the exam or class is not ADA accessible, alternative accessible arrangements will be made in advance.

“Disruptive” Disabled Students

Poor judgment, irresponsible behavior, and lack of impulse control do not constitute an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity. Basic personality traits do not rise to the level of impairment.

Bowie State University may withdraw such a student or compel the student to undergo psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment when it has made a factual determination that the student has demonstrated overt conduct or behavior indicating that the student poses a significant or appreciable risk of harm or danger to him/herself or others. The University may also withdraw a student who poses a substantial risk of being unable to meet reasonable university standards for safe participation in its programs. Moreover, Bowie State University is not required to retain or readmit a student with a disability whose behavior poses a direct threat to the safety of others.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND AUXILIARY AIDS

Academic Accommodations

University policy, state, and federal laws require that students with disabilities be provided effective auxiliary aids and accommodations.

This means that when students with documented disabilities identify themselves or present an accommodation letter from Disability Support Services, faculty should immediately begin to work with the disabled students so that they will be able to participate in the academic activities of non-disabled students.

Disability Support Services: Role, Responsibilities, and Services

The Coordinator of Disability Support Services is responsible for ensuring that disabled students who are identified and registered with Disability Support Services receive the necessary academic accommodations and auxiliary aids. The coordinator's responsibilities also include determining eligibility for participation of students with disabilities in the academic accommodations process based upon a review of appropriate documentation, determining the appropriate accommodation for each student based on the individual's need, ensuring that the student receives the appropriate accommodation, and interacting with administrators and faculty when appropriate.

Disability Support Services and the students with disabilities will assume most of the responsibility for arranging and providing accommodations; however, there are certain areas where the assistance of faculty is necessary. All of these services are provided at no charge to the student. There must be a documented disability and related need for services or accommodations. There are written procedures for the services and accommodations provided by Disability Support Services. It is the student's responsibility to contact Disability Support Services to discuss and review procedures.

However, there are appropriate restrictions or limitations on some of the services and accommodations provided. Therefore, Bowie State University and Disability Support Services reserve the right to determine the most appropriate and effective disability accommodations after consultation with disabled students.

The provision of any disability service or accommodation neither ensures nor guarantees a students' success on/or in any test or course. The following are some of the Academic Auxiliary Aids and Accommodations:

- Priority registration for classes
- Early syllabus
- Advocacy for appropriate and reasonable accommodation
- Note-takers, readers, scribes

- Textbooks on tape; large print texts
- Special adaptive equipment such as Braille and computer technology
- Consultation (s) with students, professors, or teaching assistants about disability accommodations for courses
- Referral of students suspected of having a learning disability or Attention Deficit Disorder.

The services provided by Disability Support Services are:

- Academic Advisement in consultation with associated departments
- Classroom accommodation
- Alternative testing
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Academic Accommodations and Auxiliary Aids
- Part-time enrollment
- Referral to tutorial services on campus
- Testing accommodation (extended time, readers, taping of exams, scribes, large print and separate space)
- Special seating in classes
- Orientation and mobility training for blind students
- Removal of architectural barriers that limit or deny program access
- Permission to record lectures
- Recommendation to relocate classes or other campus activities scheduled in inaccessible locations

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY, AND STUDENTS

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

An individual with a disability has the right to equal access to programs offered at Bowie State University.

Individuals with disabilities have the same obligations as other students to meet and maintain the institution's academic and technical standards.

Individuals with disabilities have a responsibility to identify themselves as needing accommodations in a timely fashion. When the disability is not obvious, the student must provide documentation from an appropriate professional.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities to learn. They have a right to reasonable accommodation in various aspects of their educational experiences such as location, delivery system, or instructional methodologies that limit access, participation, or their ability to benefit.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community. This includes access to services, benefits, activities, housing, and transportation. These services must be comparable to those provided to any student.

Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to advocate for their own needs and to seek information and assistance, as is necessary, required for them to be effective.

Individuals with disabilities must provide documentation not older than three years from an appropriate professional if the disability is not obvious, but if the individual is "regarded as being disabled," it is the responsibility of the individual to demonstrate or document how his/her disability limits his/her ability to benefit from a particular instructional method or evaluation criteria when a request is made for accommodations.

Individuals with disabilities have the right of confidentiality of all information and can choose to whom information pertaining to their disabilities should be disclosed.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to information regarding the availability of auxiliary aids, and other possible accommodations, as well as the procedure for making a request for special assistance.

Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to follow published procedures for making such requests and must do so in a timely fashion. Information on the procedure can be obtained in Disability Support Services.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to appeal a decision by the Institution regarding auxiliary aids or modifications; and must be informed of procedures for initiating an appeal. Information on the appeals process can be obtained in Disability Support Services.

When requesting accommodations, individuals with disabilities have a responsibility to demonstrate or document how their disability affects a particular delivery system, instructional method, or evaluation criteria.

Individuals with disabilities have a responsibility to actively participate in the search for accommodations and auxiliary aids. This responsibility extends to working with the Institution to seek financial assistance from government agencies and private sources.

Rights and Responsibilities of Bowie State University

Bowie State University recognizes that it has the following basic rights and responsibilities.

To identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing a quality academic program, while ensuring the right of individuals with disabilities.

Bowie State University has the right to identify and establish the abilities, skills, and knowledge necessary for success in its programs and to evaluate applicants and students on this basis.

Bowie State University is responsible for ensuring that its recruitment information and activities are available in accessible format and facilities for all students.

Bowie State University must evaluate applicants solely on their abilities and ensure that an evaluation method or criterion does not unfairly discriminate against an applicant with a disability.

Bowie State University must select and administer tests used to evaluate students to ensure that test results accurately reflect aptitudes or competencies and do not discriminate against an individual with a disability. Tests designed to measure specific skills related to fundamental course goals are allowable, even when the disability impacts those skills.

Bowie State University has the right to identify and establish the skills and knowledge that are fundamental to academic programs and courses and to evaluate each student's performance against these standards. Fundamental program and course standards are not subject to modification.

Bowie State University can adjust, substitute, or waive any academic requirement that unfairly discriminates against a student with a disability and that is not essential to the integrity of the student's academic program.

Bowie State University is responsible for making reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability in the delivery, instructional method, and evaluation system of a course.

Bowie State University must ensure that all programs including, but not limited to, academic offerings, housing, transportation, student organizations, counseling, and career services are accessible and usable.

Bowie State University has the right to request documentation no older than three years as proof of a disability. The documentation must support the request for accommodation. The University has a right to deny a request if the documentation fails to verify a need for a accommodation (s), or if the individual fails to provide requested documentation.

Bowie State University has the right to refuse any unreasonable accommodation, or one that imposes an undue hardship on the university.

Bowie State University has the right to select and recommend accommodations that are equally effective for individuals with disabilities.

Bowie State University has the responsibility of informing employees, applicants, and students about the availability of Auxiliary Aids and the types of possible accommodations available, as well as the procedures for requesting them.

If a request is denied, Bowie State University has the responsibility to inform the individual of his/ her right to appeal the decision and the procedures for initiating an appeal.

Responsibilities of Bowie State University Faculty Include:

Discussing with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services any concerns related to the accommodation (s) or arrangement (s) that have been requested by the student during their initial contacts.

Determining the conditions under which an exam is to be administered (e.g., open book; use of notes; computer with word processing; including spell check; formula sheet; calculator; scrap paper; dictionary, etc.).

Providing appropriate accommodations, either personally or by making arrangements with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services.

If a student's exam is to be administered outside of class, assuring the timely delivery of the exam, along with all necessary instructions and materials for proper administration. The faculty members may also make arrangements with the student for the delivery and return of the exam.

Assuring the confidentiality of information regarding students with disabilities.

Disability Support Services does not give advance notice to faculty of disabled students who are enrolled in their classes. Students are not expected or required to provide faculty with detailed documentation about their disabilities. In fact, from a legal standpoint, it is strongly advisable that faculty not expect or request such detailed documentation from the student. It is, however, entirely appropriate for faculty to request that the student provide verification from Disability Support Services that he/ she is registered with Disability Support Services.

It is important to remember that the large majority of Bowie State University students with disabilities have non-visible disabilities such as learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, low vision, partial hearing, and loss of hearing. They also may have psychiatric disorders such as major depression and permanent medical conditions such as diabetes, multiple chemical sensitivities, Grohn's disease, lupus, chronic fatigue syndrome, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Some students also may have temporary disabilities or conditions. In the case of students with visible disabilities, their needs and accommodations may be more apparent than those with learning disabilities or other non-visible.

TESTING AND EXAMINATIONS

Testing Accommodations

Some students with different types of disabilities require special testing accommodations. The provision of appropriate testing accommodations for many students with disabilities is required by law. Depending on the disability-related needs of the students, testing accommodation may include:

- Extended time (usually double time, but may be extended even longer for those with print or motor disabilities),
- Reading or writing assistance,
- Alternative formats (Braille, large print, and cassette tape),
- American Sign Language interpretation for oral directions about test,
- Computer accessibility,
- Accessible test site,
- Quiet test space,
- Completing scantron answer sheets, and
- Rest period.

Faculty that prefer to administer exams in their own office/department are responsible for all scheduling, quiet space, readers, computer access, and proctors, if needed. While there are numerous testing accommodations that may be appropriate or legally required, there are some that may be inappropriate, unfair, or not legally required.

This depends on the type of testing used and how the disabled student can most effectively demonstrate his/her knowledge. Listed below are some testing accommodations that are not generally recommended unless the method or procedure is offered to or required of non-disabled students in class.

Unlimited time for tests (- Extended time such as double time is appropriate, but there is no requirement for unlimited time).

Oral Examinations (-Oral exams in which the instructor and student engage in dialogue are not necessarily required. Oral exams differ from written exams that can be taped or read verbatim to the student who is blind or learning disabled.)

- Alternative tests for disabled students might require a different grading or evaluation system. For example, different but comparable questions might be appropriate for a blind student who cannot view diagrams or other graphics.

Clarification of Test Questions

- Clarification of test questions, such as cueing, prompting, or coaching, is not required as a disability accommodation. However, if all students in the class receive clarifications about test questions, then disabled students should have access to the same clarification.

Taking Tests at different times or on different days

- If the instructor is concerned about cheating or the integrity of the exam, it is perfectly appropriate and legal to require the disabled student to take it at the same time as the class, with the recommended accommodations.

Take Home Examinations: - Take home exams are not required unless this is the evaluation method for other students in the class.

ATTITUDES AND MYTHS

Attitudes

The first step in teaching students with disabilities seems obvious, to treat them simply as students. After all, they come to attend college for the same reason that other students do, and they bring with them the same range of intelligence and scholastic skills. The temptation to overcompensate for a person's disability is one of the biggest problems for faculty members.

Giving an unfair advantage to a disabled person is almost nearly as bad as refusing a legitimate request for accommodations.

Faculty must use the same standards to evaluate a disabled student's performance; otherwise he/she can develop an unrealistic impression of the disabled student's talents and abilities. People with disabilities must be given the same feedback and criticism and, yes, bad grades, as anyone other student. Overcompensation can make life easier for the student in the short-term, but much more difficult in the long run.

The above and other related issues are attitudinal conflicts that sometimes arise when one works with disabled students and which more broadly reflect many societal attitudes about disability. Other actions or attitudes that could be construed as exclusionary include avoiding contact or interaction with disabled individuals.

Myths

Myth 1:

The myth of the helpless invalid manifests itself in excessive deference and solicitousness. It is very important that disabled individuals learn critical skills for future independence.

Myth 2:

The myth of the heroic invalid cripple, places the disabled person on a pedestal, which, makes it difficult for him/ her to assimilate and to function.

Myth 3:

The "spread" phenomenon occurs when we assume that a person with a particular disability has other mental, social, or physical deficits. This generalizes from a single disability and assumes that there are also intellectual, social, and other physical deficits.

GRADUATE DISABLED STUDENTS

Graduate students with appropriately documented disabilities also are eligible for reasonable accommodations. Graduate students with disabilities must be considered for accommodation (s) on the same basis as non-disabled graduate students.

Graduate assistantship may also require reasonable accommodations for their jobs. The administrator or supervising faculty should consult with Disability Support Services about the proper procedure for accommodation.

DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION AND DISCLOSURE

Students who require or qualify for reasonable accommodations must have the appropriate professional documentation on file with Disability Support Services. All documentation is confidential. For adjustments in academic requirements, the Coordinator Disability Support Services will consult with the appropriate Chairperson and or Dean for proper review.

FLUCTUATING SYMPTOMS

Some disabilities or the side effect of medication may result in marked fluctuation of behavior or performance. Some of these disabilities may include multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, AIDS/HIV, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, lupus and psychiatric disabilities. It is not uncommon that a student with a disability like one of the above will need an accommodation on one occasion, but will not need it at another time.

STATEMENT OF SYLLABUS

One of the most effective ways that faculty can indicate their willingness to accommodate students with disabilities is to have a statement on their syllabus such as the following:

“Students with disabilities who may need reasonable accommodation for any sort of visible or non-visible disability should report to Disability Support Services located ...”

LIBRARY ACCESS:

The Thurgood Marshall Library provides access and necessary assistance such as retrieving materials from accessible study areas and resource/reading rooms for disabled students.

CLASSROOM RELATED ISSUES

Tape Recorded Lectures:

Some students need to tape record lectures as a part of their accommodations. Faculty concerned about copyright infringement, the sharing of tapes, verbatim notes, or having class discussions on tape may require students to sign agreement forms.

FREQUENTLY ASKED DISABILITY QUESTIONS

What types of accommodations does Disability Support Services provide for students with disabilities?

- All disabilities are served. They may include learning, medical, physical, emotional and psychiatric. They may also be continuous or temporary.

What services does Disability Support Services provide for persons with disabilities?

-Disability Support Services provides assistance to individuals with disabilities to function as independently as possible in the University setting. Specific services include but are not limited to extended time on tests, note takers, scribes and readers, adaptive equipment for the blind and visually impaired, sign language interpreters, and counseling.

What documentation is needed for a medical disability?

-Disability Support Services should receive medical information before a student receives accommodations. That information should come from an appropriate medical professional and should include the diagnosis, prognosis, any limitations, and the impact of the medical condition on the individual.

What is an accommodation?

- An accommodation is a specific support that allows for equal opportunity for the person with a disability to function as well as the non-disabled person.

What is a reasonable accommodation?

- A reasonable accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis with review of the documentation, situation, and impact of the person's disability.

How does a student obtain a reasonable accommodation?

The student must get documentation of his/her disability from a medical doctor/psychologist or specialist in the area of the specific disability, including diagnosis, prognosis, limitations imposed by disability, maintenance plan and any concerns of the professional regarding accommodations. The student must also schedule an appointment with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services. In the meeting the student's situation will be discussed and his/her documentation reviewed. Appropriate accommodations will be determined based on the impact of the disability. The student will sign appropriate paperwork. With the student's permission, a letter stating the accommodations for which the student is eligible will be sent to each faculty member.

Why does one student receive different accommodations than another student with the same disability?

- Students get accommodations on the basis of written documentation from the appropriate professional. This may include a physician, psychologist, audiologist, or ophthalmologist. The students receive only those accommodations that make them able to function on a level playing field with those who do not have disabilities, while still making them responsible for their own learning. The impact that the disability has on the individual's ability to function in a given situation is important and is a determining factor when considering accommodations.

If a student has a mental illness and is on medication and functions well, is there any guarantee that he/she will not be discriminated against if that illness is discovered?

- The *Americans with Disabilities Act* covers individuals with physical and psychiatric disabilities. Even though someone is currently not substantially limited in one or more of his/her major life activities, he/she would be guaranteed protection under the law based on his/her record of having disability as well as if he/she were "regarded as being disabled." A person's ability to function in the classroom will depend on his/her skills and academic experience, not merely on whether or not he/she has been diagnosed as having a psychiatric disorder.

Is an individual with an addiction disability protected under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*?

- Yes, but only if that person is in recovery. Those individuals who continue to engage in the addictive behavior are not protected under the law.

Are there special admission procedures for students with disabilities?

-Students must first be admitted to the University under regular admission requirements. Once admitted, it is the student's responsibility to notify Disability Support Services of his/her need for services. Disability Support Services will not know of the enrollment otherwise. As soon as a student has been accepted for enrollment at Bowie State University, he/she should contact Disability Support Services to schedule an appointment to bring his/her documentation or arrange to have the documentation sent. If the student will be attending the orientation in the summer, he/she should be sure he/she has sent his/her documentation ahead of time.

What is a "temporary disability"?

- A temporary disability is a medical condition that prevents an individual from participating at the University for more than three working days. Examples may include serious illness, surgery, or other medical conditions.

What services can Disability Support Services provide for a student with a temporary illness?

-Disability Support Services can explain the procedures, assist the student in obtaining the appropriate documentation, and notify the instructors of his/her illness. However, if a student is able, the Disability Support Services always

recommends that the student contact his/her instructors to discuss arrangements. Then the instructors are able to make the necessary accommodations for the student. Other accommodations are provided on a case-by-case basis.

What role do parents play in the process?

- Students who are 18 years old or older are legally recognized as adults. In this case, the student is responsible for his/her own accommodation requests and disability-related decisions. However, students are encouraged to have an open dialog with their parents. Parents can be a wonderful source of support.

As a faculty member, may I request information about a student's disability?

-Disability Support Services cannot release that information unless the person with the disability gives us permission. What is important is the impact of the disability on the student's learning in your course.

I have a student with a temporary disability (i.e., has been out ill for a week) who wants to have extra time to turn in his/her assignment and make up a quiz. Do I have to give him/her extra time or allow him/her to make up a quiz?

- Our primary goal for students is learning, and, with that in mind, you may work with Disability Support Services to determine an equitable plan to address each student's needs. Disability Support Services serves the student once appropriate medical documentation has been received and the student requests our help. Temporary disabilities are not covered under *Section 504* or the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Is it my responsibility as a faculty member to arrange for test pick up/deliver?

- No, not initially. The students should initiate this discussion with their instructor(s). Arrangements can then be made with Disability Support Services about how the test will be delivered. Please feel free to call the office at extension 2-4067.

There is a student in my class whom I suspect has a disability. Should I suggest that he/she go to Disability Support Services to get services?

- Yes. Many students are referred to the Office out of concern by faculty members. We do not diagnose disabilities; however, the staff can interview the student and make suggestions and a referral when appropriate.

What are the consequences if I do not provide the requested adjustments?

- The student can take legal action against you and the institution. In 1993 the Education Department reported that its Office for Civil Rights determined that 86 colleges had violated the rights of students. This was almost twice the number of cases recorded in 1992. In addition, 325 inquiries into possible violations were recorded in 1993.

Is it fair to other students to grant accommodations to those students who are disabled?

- It is unfair not to grant accommodations. The accommodation "evens the playing field" and ensures that the student's knowledge is being tested, not his/her disability. A disabled student learns and performs more successfully with certain accommodations which would be unlikely to aid a non-disabled student. For example, one of the most frequently requested accommodations is for additional examination time. Studies have shown that giving additional time to non-disabled students will not affect their performance on an exam. However, disabled students receiving additional time perform better.

How can I tell when a student is "faking" a disability?

- That students feign disabilities in order to receive special consideration is a common myth. No student who truly understands the nature of a disability would want to "fake" having one. If you have any reason to question whether or not a student has a disability, contact Disability Support Services. The student must have documentation on file to verify that he/she has a disability.

Must I evaluate the academic work of a student with a disability differently from that of other students who do not have disabilities?

- No. You should not evaluate the academic work of a student with a disability differently from that of students who do not have disabilities. A good rule of thumb in evaluating a student's academic performance is to treat all completed work equally. All students must ultimately perform at the same level if they are to receive the same grades.

I want to give students with specific learning needs as much assistance as possible, but where do I draw the line on ensuring that students take advantage of available help and accommodations?

- All students are responsible for their own academic achievement. Each student must be personally responsible for class attendance, assignments, and all other course material. It is up to the individual student to seek outside help and to utilize agreed upon classroom adjustments.

What are some guidelines regarding confidentiality of disability-related information?

- Any information, documentation, or issues related to the student's disability must be considered confidential and only shared with faculty on a need-to-know basis . You should not expect to see diagnostic information for a particular student. Of course, you need to know what accommodations are necessary and appropriate in meeting an individual student's needs, but only with permission of the student. The information you receive about a student's disability is confidential. It cannot be shared with a third party without the student's permission. Any discussion that you have with a student about his/her disability and/or accommodations should not be in a public setting, such as the classroom.

Whom should I contact if I have further questions or comments?

- For any issues regarding students with disabilities, contact Disability Support Services, located in the Thurgood Marshall Library, Room 079 or call 301-860-4067