Disability Support Services
Faculty & Staff Training 2013

Disability Support Services (DSS) is committed to making UAB programs and services accessible to students with disabilities. To prevent discrimination based on disability in all UAB student programs and services, the primary goal of DSS is to ensure an accessible university environment by working with students, faculty, staff and community agencies to provide appropriate accommodations.

Disability Support Services Staff
Allison Solomon, Director
Brittany Gregg, Counselor
Valerie DuBose, Assistant Director
Cara Blakes, Graduate Assistant

UAB Faculty and Staff Resources:
1. Disability Support Services www.uab.edu/dss; 934-4205; dss@uab.edu
2. UAB Accessibility Website www.uab.edu/accessibility
3. DO-IT website (Disability, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) Faculty Resources Room http://www.washington.edu/doit/
4. AHEAD website for information on Universal Design http://www.ahead.org/resources/universal-design

DSS provides accommodations for various types of disabilities including:
Attention deficit disorders, Learning disabilities, Mobility disorders, Psychiatric disorders, Sensory disorders, Systemic (health-related) disorders, Traumatic brain injuries

Student Application Process:
1. Complete an application
2. Provide documentation of their disability
3. Our office thoroughly reviews student’s documentation and requests case by case
4. Intake interview with staff member
5. Additional staffing and final determination of accommodations

The accommodation process once students’ documentation is complete:
1. The student meets with a DSS staff member to discuss accommodation requests.
2. DSS prepares an accommodation letter for the instructor of each course.
3. The student delivers each accommodation letter to the appropriate instructor.
4. The student discusses with the instructor how accommodations will be implemented.
5. The student schedules test accommodations (if applicable) with the instructor.

Syllabus Statement:
Instructors should include a statement in every syllabus which instructs students with disabilities about receiving accommodations. (SEE PAGE 10 IN FACULTY HANDBOOK at www.uab.edu/dss under “Faculty Resources”)

Handling Accommodation Letters & Student Requests:
Students who are registered with DSS are given an Accommodation Letter for each class which they give to their instructors. This letter states the accommodations they are eligible to receive.

- Discuss all accommodations with the student. Don’t assume they will or won’t use the accommodations. It is important to have a conversation about the accommodations they plan to use.
- Instructors are not required to provide accommodations for students who do not have an Accommodation Letter from DSS. Furthermore, instructors are not required to provide any accommodations not listed on the Accommodation Letter from DSS.
- Students with disabilities need to be held to the same expectations as all students. Altering technical standards or “watering down” the curriculum are not considered reasonable accommodations and are not advised.
- If you have any questions or concerns about accommodations listed on the Accommodation Letter, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Important Legal Considerations:

- If a student qualifies for accommodations, UAB is legally responsible for providing reasonable accommodations (as determined by DSS) for qualified students. Because faculty are the ones in the classroom, the responsibility to provide accommodations falls on the faculty member. DSS rigorously determines appropriate accommodations.

- Students must be able to perform the essential functions of a program, with or without accommodations. For example, if time is an essential function (CPR example), then in that particular case, time may not be an accommodation.

- You cannot ask someone if he or she has a disability. This is against the law. However, you can let them know that you notice they are having difficulties completing tests, difficulty in class, etc. and inform them of available campus resources (i.e. DSS, counseling services).

- If you know a student has a disability, you cannot ask them to disclose their diagnosis to you. They are not required to inform you of the nature of their disability. An individual’s diagnosis is confidential and it’s up to the student to determine if they wish to disclose.

- The US Department of Education’s expectations as well as Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act have impacted accessibility standards for the following areas:
  - Online Courses (should be compatible with Assistive Technology)
  - Videos (all videos utilized in class or online should be captioned)
  - Web Design (should be compatible with Assistive Technology)

The implications are far-reaching and the expectations are simple…if you make something available to students, it should be accessible to all students.

Disability Support Services – Contact Information
Phone Number: 205-934-4205
E-mail: dss@uab.edu; Website: www.uab.edu/dss