Accommodating Students With Disabilities In The Classroom

Katy Washington, J.D., Ph.D.
Director, Center For Educational Access
November TFSC Lunch and Learn Series
November 2016
Center for Educational Access

**Mission**
Leading University efforts in facilitating an inclusive and accessible environment for students with disabilities through
- innovative practice,
- informed educational discourse,
- exceptional accommodation provision, and
- collaborative programming.

**Purpose**
Facilitating campus access for students with disabilities, chronic health or temporary limitations.

**Legal and Policy Mandates**
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)
- University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series
Receiving Accommodations at the University Of Arkansas

• Students self-identify by contacting the CEA to initiate the registration process

• Students schedule an “access plan meeting” to discuss needed services and provide CEA with documentation from appropriate professional

• Accommodation requests are reviewed by staff in light of supporting documentation and barriers they may experience at the university

• Approved accommodations are listed on faculty notification letters emailed by CEA staff and must be requested by the student for each semester needed
Facilitating Accommodations: Student Responsibilities

- *Follow appropriate registration procedures* with the CEA
- *Request faculty notification letters* to be sent to instructors each semester
- *Meet with each instructor* to further discuss specific related to accommodations
- *Give reasonable notice* for requested accommodations (i.e., NOT the day of the exam)
- *Meet the expectations of the course*
- *Report any difficulties to the CEA immediately*
Students Decide…

• **If and when to register with CEA**

• **Once registered**, if and when to request or modify accommodations

• **What to do if:**
  - Student is struggling or not coming to class or is doing great but causes you concern
    - If appropriate, reach out to the student (simple as an email)
    - Express concern but allow the student to guide the conversation. Don’t diagnose the student or make assumptions.
    - Refer to appropriate resources (CLASS+, academic coaches, CAPS, CEA, DOS, etc.)

• **Receive notification of accommodations at different points in semester**
  - Review accommodations listed and consult with CEA with questions
Facilitating Accommodations: 
CEA Responsibilities

• *Meet with students* to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations
• *Email Faculty Notification Letters* upon student request
• *Serve as a resource to faculty* to determine the best way to provide accommodations, the appropriateness of certain accommodations, and consult on student issues
• *Serve as a resource to students* when disability-related issues arise in courses
• *Facilitate accommodations* such as note-taking, accommodated exam administration, and interpreting and transcribing and alternative text conversion.
Facilitating Accommodations: Faculty/Instructor Responsibilities

- After receipt of Faculty Notification Letter, make arrangements with students with disabilities to meet accommodation needs
- Maintain the student’s confidentiality
- Facilitate accommodations as listed on accommodation letter/packet
- Contact CEA if accommodation requests do not align with course expectations or method of delivery – do not unilaterally decide not to provide it without consulting CEA first
- Hold students with disabilities to an equal standard to others in the class (i.e., grading, behavior)
Recommendations for Department Exams

Make advance arrangement for exams

• If exams are given in department
  • For appropriate location - talk to faculty advisor/department secretary/building supervisor for ideas on appropriate and available locations within department
    • Minimize all distractions – there is no such thing as a distraction-free environment
      • No hallways, no offices with ringing phones or conversations, etc.
  • Be clear to students on process to receive accommodations on exams (who to contact, location of exam, etc.).
Faculty have three responsibilities surrounding the test administration in the Test Center:

(a) **Review Student’s Appointment Time**

(b) **Upload The Test (**MOST IMPORTANT**)**
   - At least two days prior to the test administration. This can be done by clicking on the link within the reminder email to UPLOAD your exam.

(c) **Send Test Instructions (**2ND MOST IMPORTANT**)**
   Test instructions can be communicated to the Test Center via:
   - The “Notes” section when UPLOADING the test and/or
   - Completion of a Test Instructions Form which is located on our website and attaching it to an email OR hand deliver the test to the Test Center.
   - Please provide contact information (phone or email) where you can be readily available in case questions or concerns arise during the test.
Note-taking Services

In most cases, students are responsible for:

• **Selecting the "Note-taking Services" accommodation** when requesting Faculty Notification Letters for classes in which a note-taker is needed.

• **Confirming their request** for a note-taker by logging into CEA Online Student Services from the CEA Website. CEA will then email instructor(s) with an announcement to recruit a note-taker.

• **Contacting CEA** at ceanotes@uark.edu
  - If an assigned note-taker is NOT received within two class periods of the class announcement. If no one has volunteered after the second announcement, CEA will contact students in class to personally ask for volunteers.

• **Emailing ceanotes@uark.edu if student has already chosen a note-taker.** (Note-takers must sign up through CEA Online Student Services from the CEA website.)

Please note:

• Any assistance instructors can offer **once note-taker announcement received** (i.e., identifying note takers from within class) is welcomed. The sooner the student has access to this accommodation, the better!
Accommodation/Class Management
Juggling Act

Things you can do when you have limited time/resources to make arrangements and still need to balance other student needs

• *Exam accommodation* arrangements – generic instruction template
• *Note taker* arrangements – personally select student to serve during week 2
• *Unique nature of some courses* and the applicability of accommodations – consult with CEA if there are concerns
• *Attendance* and *attendance flexibility* – use Attendance Flexibility Agreement and consult with CEA if there are concerns

Consult with CEA!!
Questions?

Thanks for all you do to assist students with disabilities and to make the University of Arkansas accessible!