TRANSITIONING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

How to support and prepare students for the college transition.

4/19/18
Ability Services Goals

- **Goal 1: Fostering Independence:** Empowering students by helping them build their self-awareness and self-advocacy skills to effectively communicate their needs, strengths, learning style, and barriers.

- **Goal 2: Reducing Barriers:** Arranging reasonable academic accommodations to best ensure that students can maximize the use of their inherent abilities, and provide them the supports required for their educational learning and academic opportunities.

- **Goal 3: Promoting Inclusively:** Providing initiatives to help establish a culture of understanding and awareness of the particular disability population on campus at UWRF. Advocating for accessibility in the learning environment, and educating the larger campus community on disability issues.
## High School Versus College Accommodations Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary responsibility for identifying and evaluating student-specific needs belongs to the school.</td>
<td>The responsibility for disclosing barriers and requesting specific accommodations belongs to the student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student receives IEP or 504 Plan as determined by the academic needs of the student, and supported by FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education).</td>
<td>Relevant and recent medical evaluations, supplied by the student, should clearly support the need for each requested accommodation.</td>
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<td>Modifications and significant changes to class assignments and objectives are allowed.</td>
<td>Any modification that alters the objective or the requirements of an assignment or the course will not be allowed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents and teachers are heavily involved in advocacy and student decision making.</td>
<td>Student is responsible for being one’s own advocate in communicating academic barriers, strengths, needs, and concerns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents have access to student records and can actively participate in the accommodation process.</td>
<td>Parent cannot access student records unless the student signs a release of consent to share information.</td>
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How to Access Services

- In order to receive academic accommodations, students are required to independently seek out services.
- Students must provide documentation from a licensed clinician to support their need for accommodations.
- An IEP and 504 can be a helpful tool to get started, but in order to make the best determination on what will be required at the college level, completing the Ability Services Collaborative Document can guide the accommodations process and can be significantly helpful in supporting the student’s accommodations.
- Students need to be able to explain independently their diagnosis, and how it affects them.
- Students are required to set-up an intake meeting with Ability Services to have the opportunity to learn from the student what barriers the student faces in higher education, while also learning about their strengths and learning style.
- Students will independently give their accommodation memos to their professors. If the student does not complete this task, they will not be given their requested accommodations. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure they are following the appropriate steps to receive accommodations.
Educational Support Plans

- Educational Support Plans are used to list the accommodations that can be:
  - **Appropriate** – means they actually address the impairment, and
  - **Reasonable** – means they don’t reduce an essential course objective

- The ESP is also used for the student’s record to help recall accommodations

- Students choose to use the office as little or much as they want.
Accommodation Memo

- Letter that states the type of accommodations that the student is eligible for through Ability Services.
- The letter does not indicate any information about the student’s diagnosis, only the accommodations they receive.
- It is suggested that student’s visit their professors’ office hours to talk about their own learning needs and how they can effect them academically.
## Accommodation vs. Modification

<table>
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<th>REASONALBE ACCOMODATIONS</th>
<th>MODIFICATIONS (NOT ALLOWED)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TESTING Extended time (1.5x)</td>
<td>Changes to course curriculum or requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distraction reduced location</td>
<td>Exam retakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of laptop for essay exams</td>
<td>Altered or modified assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions read aloud</td>
<td>Modifications are not allowed in Higher Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer or paid note-takers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurzweil 3000/Firefly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large print</td>
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<tr>
<td>Braille E-text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferential seating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair or table adjustments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dragon Naturally Speaking</td>
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- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects a student’s right to privacy concerning their records. There are some types of information such as grades, financial aid, class schedules, or conduct records that family members might like to receive, but FERPA guidelines prohibit UWRF from disclosing without consent from a student. This means that even if a family member or another third party is paying the bills, they cannot access a student’s educational or financial records without the student’s consent.

**TIP:** Since students are required to share and communicate information with their parents at the college level, it is recommended that student’s practice initiating communication and sharing information with their parents, even if it is a difficult task.
What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy refers to a person making a deliberate or purposeful choice to speak up for his/her needs and/or ideas.

One of the biggest struggles our office faces when incoming students come into college is underdeveloped self-advocacy skills.

Tip: Students should be actively involved in IEP meetings and direct students to answer questions about their goals and needs.

It is important that the student know where they will be required to advocate for themselves, and for students ask themselves, “What do I need to know about myself before I can advocate in this situation?”

Students need to be self-aware in order to effectively advocate for themselves in college.

Does the student know how their disability affects them? Students should be learning at least one thing new about their disability and their needs every new school year.
Navigating Campus Life

- Not all supports needed will be managed by the Ability Services Office.
- Students should write out sources that he/she should connect with when they come to campus, based on student need (STUDENTS HAVE TO BE SELF-AWARE IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS TASK TO FIND THE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES).
- Students are required to make an appointment to connect with all of the services on campus. TIP- Have students practice scheduling their own appointments by their junior year of high school.
- Prepare the student by having them be informed on all of the resources the college may provide. It is important to do this for prospective colleges during college visits to determine if the college has the supports the student needs to have an equal access to opportunity. The student should research and list out the supports available at each college they are exploring. Students can use this information to make a reasonable determination as to which college best supports their needs. The supports that are offered at each college should be taken into consideration when students are selecting a college.
UWRF Campus Resources

Campus Supports

- **Tutoring Services**- 8 locations on campus focused on these areas: Ag Science, Business, English as a Second Language, Math Help Center, Physics Center, General Tutoring and Study Skills, Writing Center. If no tutor options are available it is the student’s responsibility to email tutoring@uwrfedu. This a free resource included in tuition.

- **TRIO/SSS**- Students who are registered through the Ability Services Office are eligible for the supports that are offered through this program. Program participants receive access to one-on-one academic coaching, leadership and community service opportunities, career/graduate school advising, opportunities to participate in social/cultural activities, financial literacy, and assistance with accessing campus service.

Campus Supports Continued

- **Counseling** – is a free service that is covered with tuition charges. Students will have the opportunity to make 1:1 appointments with campus counselors to address individual social and emotional needs. Services provided by the Office of Health and Counseling: individual counseling, group counseling, art therapy group, weekly meditation classes, individual counseling with a therapy dog, lightbox (SAD), wellness visit with a healthcare provider, monthly pet therapy, yoga group, and biofeedback machine to monitor stress.

- **Career Services**- is a student-focused office that provides comprehensive career planning services to UW-River Falls students and alumni. By providing expertise, resources, and support, we empower individuals to make and implement well-conceived career plans. This is a free resource to students that they can access throughout their educational journey.
Understanding College Expectations

- Students who are on track to attend college should be monitoring their syllabus independently for upcoming tests and assignments.

- Students are not assigned Case Managers in Higher Education. Students are required to navigate and work with multiple offices to obtain the supports they need.

- Increasing student’s communication with support staff, to help them in practicing accessing resources from multiple individuals.

**Important:**

- There are no academic modifications in college. Students are only allowed to receive accommodations. An accommodation may be used to describe an alteration of environment curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned task.

- A modification is described as a change in the curriculum.

**TIP:** College bound students, should start to phase out modifications in their junior and senior year. Reducing modifications can help develop students problem-solving, study skills, independence self-awareness and advocacy.
Quick Tips and Questions for Preparing Students

~ Does the student experience test anxiety?
~ What are some strategies that may help the student to better manage this?

**TIP:** Teach students to replicate the testing environment as close as possible when studying. Students should make sample tests, and practice taking them in a quiet location and apply time pressures to practice managing testing anxiety.

~ How are the student’s self-direction skills?
~ Are they able initiate tasks without the prompt from a staff?

**NOTE:** Professors will not check-in with students when they miss an assignment or to monitor progress. Make this expectation clear to students. Just because a professor is not communicating a concern, does not mean one does not exist.
Quick Tips and Questions for Preparing Students Cont.

~Is the student able to explain how their disability effects them academically?
   **TIP:** Have students create a self-disclosure letter identifying the nature of their diagnosis, how it effects them, their strengths, academic barriers, and helpful strategies that have aided in their success.

~What is the student’s learning style?
   **TIP:** Share with students the seven learning styles and have them identify which styles they resonate most with (Visual, Aural, Verbal, Physical, Logical, Social, and Solitary).

~What is the student’s communication preference?
   **TIP:** Have students identify their preferred communication style and practice professional communication with the preferred style first. Then, work through their ranked order to work on developing all professional communication styles (electronic, in-person, over the phone).