Realizing Future Potential: Supporting Students with Disabilities

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Definition of Disability

- A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- Has a record of such an impairment,
- Or is regarded as having such an impairment

References:
Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
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<tr>
<th>Medical Model of Disability</th>
<th>Social Model of Disability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Impairment is focus.</td>
<td>Environment is focus.</td>
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<td>Stigma often attached; “separate but equal”.</td>
<td>Inclusive; identifying and removing barriers.</td>
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<td>Reactive: Wait for a student to identify and then provide accommodations for the student.</td>
<td>Proactive: Provide accessible environments to everyone.</td>
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Options After High School

Non-degree sector

- Employment
- Certificates
- Continuing Education

Degree sector

- Public Institutions of Higher Education (SUNY/CUNY)
- Private Institutions of Higher Education
- Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education

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19% of students self-identify as a student with a disability in higher education. 

(NCES, 2019)
New York State Data

Unduplicated Count of Students with Some Type of Disability (2018-2019)

- SUNY: 42.4%
- CUNY: 14.4%
- Independent: 41.6%
- Proprietary: 1.6%

<table>
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<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
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| **Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**  
  - IDEA is about success. | **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and as Amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**  
  - The ADA is about access. |
<p>| Fundamental modifications of programs and curricula are required. | No fundamental modifications are required - only academic adjustments. |
| Education is a right and must be provided in an appropriate environment to all individuals. | Education is not a right - students must meet the same admission criteria as their peers. |
| May have received modifications to the school’s behavior code. | Expected to abide by the college’s code of conduct, regardless of disability. |</p>
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<td>The school district is responsible for identifying a student’s disability.</td>
<td>Student must self-identify with the appropriate campus disability/accessibility office.</td>
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<td>The school district develops Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to define educational services.</td>
<td>Student must identify their needs and request services.</td>
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<td>The school district provides free evaluations.</td>
<td>The student needs to obtain evaluations at their own expense.</td>
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<td>Student is supported by parents and teachers.</td>
<td>Student is responsible for seeking assistance from the Disability Services Office, which exists to ensure equal access to students with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary responsibility for arranging modifications belongs to the school.</td>
<td>Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging academic adjustments belongs to the student (who may seek assistance from Disability Services).</td>
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Disability Services Office Role

- Advocate for equal access - for both the student AND the institution
- Assist faculty members with understanding and implementing academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services
- Oversee all accommodations for students identifying with our office as having a documented disability
What is an accommodation?

- Assigned by the appropriate office for a student with a disability in order to **mitigate the impact of the student’s disability on their involvement in an activity** (classroom, residence hall, etc.).
- Assigned for the purpose of assuring that the **student is not subject to discrimination on the basis of disability**.
- **Accommodations ≠ success**
- Reasonable accommodations **do not and should not** fundamentally alter the nature of the program, course, service, activity, and/or practice/policy.
Types of Accommodations

Academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services

- Modified exam administration
- Note-taking assistance
- Accessible formats of printed or web-based materials
- Interpreting, CART, Captioning
- Modification to policies, such as attendance
- Course substitutions
Types of Accommodations

Non-Academic Accommodations

• Housing accommodations
• Animals on campus
• Dietary access and accommodations
AHEAD: Sources and Forms of Documentation

- **Primary Documentation: Student’s Self-report**
  - Previous educational experiences, history of use of accommodations, and what has been effective/ineffective in providing access

- **Secondary Documentation: Observation and Interaction**

- **Tertiary Documentation: Information from External or Third Parties**
  - Educational records, including Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Psychological Evaluations
  - Medical records and reports from health care providers

Reference: Association on Higher Education and Disability
Documentation must establish disability and indicate how disability may impact a student.

- Individual Review
- Commonsense Standard
- Non-burdensome Process
- Current and Relevant Information

Reference: Association on Higher Education and Disability

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Critical Skills

• Self Advocacy and Wellness
• Time Management
• Study Skills
• Daily Living
• Geographic orientation for accessible routes to, and within, campus buildings
• Digital Literacy
  • Familiarizing with Assistive Technology
Assistive Technology

Visual Impairments
  Screen Readers, ZoomText, Control Colors

Deaf or Hard of Hearing
  Captions and/or transcripts

Motor Impairments
  Mouth stick/head wand, trackball mouse

Cognitive Impairments
  Literacy/Text-to-Speech software
  Time management, mindfulness apps

Future
  Voice recognition software
Non-Degree Programs offered on SUNY Campuses

- SUNY Geneseo
- Onondaga Community College
- Fulton-Montgomery Community College
- SUNY Orange Community College
- Buffalo State College
- SUNY Schenectady Community College
- Westchester Community College
- SUNY Cobleskill
Applying to College: Considerations for SWD

- Application
- Course Substitutions/Waivers
- Placement Testing
- Campus Visits
- Documentation
- Technology Availability
- Transition Programs
- Specialized Programs
- Counseling, Academic Coaching, etc.
- Transfer
Financial Aid & External Support for SWD

New York Specific:

- ADA Part-Time Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
- Excelsior Scholarship
- Specialized Programs (e.g., EOP, HEOP, TRiO)
- State Agencies (ACCES-VR, NYSCB, TRAID Centers)
- Scholarships
Supporting Students: Getting Started with Campus Disability Services

1. Research Disability Services Office at prospective schools
2. Once committed, students should research process and plan to make an early request for accommodations
3. Have copies of the most recent psychological evaluation or other medical documentation that states the impairment and how it affects you in living and learning environments.
4. Review what accommodations have been used in the past and effectiveness
5. Follow the process identified by the Disability Office regarding how to initiate a request for specific accommodations
What we ask of YOU

- Assess your own beliefs and attitudes toward your disability
- Familiarize yourself about different disabilities
- Use affirmative and appropriate language
- Prepare students for self-advocacy
- Know and be able to articulate the differences between high school and college for students with disabilities
- Encourage students to seek accommodations in college
- Understand the role of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities
Additional Resources

- Association on Higher Education and Disability [https://www.ahead.org](https://www.ahead.org)
- Institute for Innovative Transition [http://www.nytransition.org/about/](http://www.nytransition.org/about/)
- Think College [https://thinkcollege.net/](https://thinkcollege.net/)
- Transition Source [https://transitionsource.org/](https://transitionsource.org/)
- National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD) [https://www.nccsdclearinghouse.org/](https://www.nccsdclearinghouse.org/)
- For students: Disability Rights, Education, Activism and Mentoring (DREAM) [https://www.dreamcollegedisability.org/](https://www.dreamcollegedisability.org/)
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