

Disability Support Program for Students (DSPS)

FACULTY INFORMATION

STUDENTS AND DISABILITY LAW

BREAKDOWN OF THE LAWS

Students with disabilities are protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). According to these laws, *“no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall, solely by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity of any public entity.”*

Students with disabilities must meet all standard requirements for admission. With respect to post-secondary education, *“otherwise qualified”* means that the student must meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission.

A person with a disability is defined as any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including learning. It is the responsibility of the student to disclose a disability, to provide the necessary and appropriate documentation of the disability, and to request academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services necessary to equalize meaningful access to learning. At Feather River College, this process is completed through the DSPS Office.

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS, AUXILIARY AIDS, AND SERVICES

Academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services are those specialized aids, devices, and/or services available to students with disabilities (as defined in Section 56002 of DSPS Title 5 Regulations for California Community Colleges) that are in addition to the general services provided to all students. These accommodations provide students with disabilities equal access to the educational process, given the educational limitations resulting from the students' disabilities. An accommodation is any change or modification in the instructional setting, or in the way things are customarily done, that ensures equal access for individuals with disabilities. Such accommodations are not meant to alter the standards for academic performance. Rather, academic accommodations make it possible for students to access course material, for instructors to fairly assess the students' mastery of the material, and to minimize discrimination. Accommodations may include (but are not limited to) such things as extended time on quizzes and exams, extended tutoring services, use of assistive technology, use of adaptive equipment, and/or on-campus mobility assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Section 504 and the ADA are very specific regarding confidentiality issues. Students voluntarily affiliate themselves with DSPS, and we take our responsibility to protect their confidentiality seriously. The law permits dissemination of limited disability-related information when necessary for a student's educational benefit. Therefore, when we communicate with faculty, it is possible that we will disclose only the existence of, and not the nature of, a disability, along with what accommodations are necessary to equalize access to learning for a particular student. It is a violation of law for an instructor to ask intrusive questions of the student, or to discuss the student's disability with others, no matter how well-intentioned.

DISABILITY STATEMENTS

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FACULTY, STUDENTS, and the INSTITUTION

One of the most significant responsibilities of the College is to create a culture whereby everyone on campus fully understands our legal and institutional obligation to students with disabilities. It is critically important that faculty members understand their role in the process. In the evolving structure of higher education, this responsibility extends to both students in the classroom and those engaged in online and/or distance learning. As per your instructions in the FRC Faculty Handbook (Academic Policies and Procedures: Syllabus Standards/Guidelines, pages 27-28, 3.h.), you are required to include a **disability statement** in each course syllabus that you prepare. The statement is intended to inform your students that you are accustomed and agreeable to providing reasonable academic accommodations, and to serve as an invitation and a reminder to students to begin the conversation of arranging needed accommodations with you and the DSPS Director.

DISABILITY STATEMENT AND INCLUSION

Including a disability statement on your syllabus normalizes the accommodation process and helps create an inclusive and welcoming environment for students with disabilities. It represents disability as an aspect of diversity, social justice, and equity. It lets your students know that you are informed about post-secondary law, and it confirms that you recognize the importance of inclusive course design and effective provision of accommodations.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Some students are unaware that there is a department on campus that is dedicated to specifically serving those who have disabilities. The process of referral to DSPS is an opportunity for you to teach students about their civil rights. And while State and Federal laws mandate the services and accommodations that we make available, there is a level of student responsibility involved as well. It is our hope that our students will develop the skills necessary to understand the fundamental requirements of their courses, to analyze their academic strengths and limitations, to identify the resources necessary for them to be successful, and to communicate their needs for disability-related reasonable accommodations. With these tools, we believe our students will be better prepared for transfer and employment.

STRESS RELIEVER

Including a disability statement in your syllabus can decrease the stress students may feel when arranging academic accommodations. Many students are anxious about disclosing to their instructors that they have a disability and a need for accommodations. Often the fear is that they will be treated differently once the disclosure is made. Simply including a short disability statement on your syllabus can ease your students' worries and allow them to place their attention on participating and learning.

COMPLIANCE

The Office of Civil Rights requires a standardized, published procedure for students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations. Such a procedure lends assurance that decisions regarding accommodations are equitable and consistent, and it protects students, faculty, and staff. In light of this, we would like to offer some additional examples for disability statements that could be used.

DISABILITY STATEMENT SUGGESTIONS

1. Feather River College is committed to providing reasonable services and accommodations for all persons with disabilities. If you are a student who had an IEP or a 504 Plan in high school, or if you suspect that you have a learning disability or other disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which assistance would be helpful, please contact the Disability Support Program for Students office (DSPS) so that accommodations can be arranged. You can stop by the DSPS office (located directly across from the Eagle's Perch), phone 530-283-0202 Ext. 255, fax 530-283-9497, or email mlang@frc.edu to schedule an appointment. Once you have been granted academic accommodations and have been given an accommodation letter for this class, please meet with me to discuss the arrangements as soon as possible.
2. Feather River College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may need accommodations, please see the Disability Support Program for Students (DSPS) so that such accommodations can be generated. Students that receive accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss academic arrangements as early as possible. The DSPS Office is located directly across from the Eagle's Perch, or you may phone 530-283-0202 Ext. 255, fax 530-283-9497, or email mlang@frc.edu to schedule an appointment.
3. If you have a disability for which you will be needing an accommodation, I encourage you to let me know, and to arrange an accommodation plan through the Disability Support Program for Students office, as early as possible in the semester. The DSPS office is located directly across from the Eagle's Perch, or you may phone 530-283-0202 Ext. 255, fax 530-283-9497, or email mlang@frc.edu to arrange an appointment.
4. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Disability Support Program for Students (DSP&S) office coordinates all academic accommodations for students with disabilities at Feather River College. If you have, or think you might have, a disability that could impact your educational experience in this class, please contact DSPS to determine your eligibility for accommodations. DSPS is located directly across from the Eagles' Perch. Their phone number is 530-283-0202 #255, and their email contact address is mlang@frc.edu. If you are already registered with DSPS, please submit to me your specific accommodation letter for this class as soon as possible to allow adequate time to coordinate the accommodation(s).

VERBAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ALTERNATE FORMATS

In addition to incorporating a disability statement in all course syllabi, you are encouraged to include a version of the statement in the verbal announcements that you make at each first class meeting. It is also strongly suggested that you include the phrase, *"This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request,"* in all syllabi. If you need assistance with alternate formats, or if you have any other questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to contact the DSPS Director.