

# It's Not Your "I.D.E.A." Anymore...

Keys to a Successful Transition:  
Information for Parents of Students with  
Disabilities

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## A New Experience! Your New Role!

- ◆ As Parents/Guardians you have always been the spokespersons for your students, but as of Now, that role changes...
- ◆ Your role becomes easier, but that depends on:
  - how well your son/daughter understanding his/her disability and the limitations that stem from it,
  - and how well prepared he/she is to advocate for him/herself.

# A New Experience! A New Role!

- ◆ The transition to college - includes the student becoming his/her own advocate... and parents stepping aside.



- ◆ The relationship changes - from between the school district and the parents to the university and your student.



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# The Big Change...

- ◆ Under Section 504 and the ADA, at the college level, the STUDENT must:
  - self-identify as a person with a disability,
  - provide appropriate documentation of the disability,
  - assist in the process of determining what accommodations would be effective in meeting his or her needs.

# What does that mean for Parents and Students?

- ◆ Parents – Your role must shift to a subtle hand of guidance...



- ◆ Students – new role is to take control of their future...



to ask appropriate questions,  
to make decisions on their own,  
to take action to assure a positive  
educational experience.



## What Can I as a Parent do to Prepare?

- ◆ Help your student to know and understand the limitations that stem from his/her disability.
  - Understanding the impact of their particular disability will help them to identify areas in which to consider accommodations to “level the playing field.”
- ◆ Encourage students to learn about and utilize whatever tools are available to minimize the impact of their disability and show the world who they are as a person.



## What Can I as a Parent do to Prepare?

- ◆ Encourage your student to utilize campus resources:  
Accessibility Resources Center, the Center for Learning Resources, the Academic Success Center, the First Year Success Center and/or their Faculty Advisor.
- ◆ Encourage your student to take responsibility for academic concerns and limitations...**To speak up and talk to someone when a problem arises rather than waiting until the problem is overwhelming.**
- ◆ Resist the urge to take care of it for them!

# What Can I as a Parent do to Prepare?

Help your student Understand:

- ◆ That a visit to the Accessibility Resources Center does not mean a four (4) year commitment.
- ◆ They are in control of their academic career.
- ◆ They choose which accommodations to use and when they use them.
- ◆ That there may be consequences if they choose unwisely or decide to not utilize services/campus resources they may need to support their success.
  - Some examples of those consequences may be a failing grade in a class, failing an entire course and losing credits, being put on academic probation, losing a scholarship, or possibly even being academically dismissed from school.





## What Can I as a Parent do to Prepare?

- ◆ Understand that your student's civil rights means they have the right to refuse any accommodation, but it also means that they need to fully inform themselves about their choices and what the consequences of those choices may be before deciding.
- ◆ Encourage them to make an appropriate decision, and then, let them decide.



## What Can I as a Parent do to Prepare?

- ◆ Finally, know and understand the differences between disability designation in High School and expectations of a person with a disability in College.



# What are the Differences Between Disability in High School & College?

## High School

- ◆ Parent is the Advocate
- ◆ “Otherwise Qualified” for Public Education is simply being of the appropriate age to attend elementary through high school and having a disability

## College

- ◆ Student must advocate for him/herself
- ◆ Being “Otherwise Qualified” in college means a student must meet all entrance and academic requirements



## Differences (cont.)

### High School

- ◆ School responsible for providing physical or other therapy or personal care while in school
- ◆ School responsible for providing assessment of disability

### College

- ◆ Student is responsible for personal services such as personal care, medical care and other related requirements
- ◆ Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining documentation of a disability at the student's expense



## Differences (cont.)

### High School

- ◆ School required to design special academic programs (IEP or 504 Plan)
- ◆ Teachers are expected to learn all they can about a student's disability
- ◆ Everybody knows about a student's placement for special education

### College

- ◆ Required to provide accommodations for equal access to regular academic program
- ◆ Professors only need to know the accommodation the student is requesting
- ◆ Students have a Right to disclose or not disclose a disability



## Differences (cont.)

### High School

- ◆ Absolute *Entitlement* to F.A.P.E. (Free & Appropriate Education). Required by I.D.E.A & 504 (Subpart D)

### College

- ◆ Civil Right to Equal Access to Education after meeting *Eligibility* Requirements. Required by 504 (Subpart E) & the ADA AAA



# Accommodations: High School vs College

1. Tests taken in Resource Room
2. Open book and/or use of notes on tests
3. Assistance with completing homework assignments, writing reports, and studying for tests
4. Contact parents if homework is repeatedly incomplete
5. Use a calculator to compute mathematical problems on exams.



# High School vs College (cont.)

6. Multisensory instructional approach
7. No spelling penalty or modified expectations for written assignments
8. Structured learning environment and daily routine
9. Periodically check long-term assignments
10. Untimed testing
11. Modified course expectations ~ e.g. reduced number homework problems or assignments



# What is Meant by the term “Reasonable Accommodation?”

- ◆ Reasonable accommodations are designed to minimize the functional limitations of an individual in performing a given task. ~ in the case of students in college the primary task is learning.
- ◆ These adjustments permit students with disabilities the opportunity to learn by removing barriers that DO NOT compromise academic standards.





## What is Meant by the term “Reasonable Accommodation?” (cont.)

- ◆ This is typically accomplished with services or strategies focused on the **end result**, rather than on the means by which that result is customarily achieved.



# Examples of “Reasonable Accommodations”

- ◆ A student with mobility limitations, such as a wheelchair user, may request that classroom locations be moved if they are not accessible – e.g. on a ground floor or by elevator to provide ACCESS to the classroom.
- ◆ Blind students are accommodated by receiving printed materials (textbooks, course syllabi, handouts) in Braille, on audio tapes or from live readers to provide ACCESS to classroom materials.
- ◆ A student whose physical limitations prevent them from writing efficiently or from writing at all, may request note-taking services as an accommodation. They may also use a scribe for taking exams. Thus, the student is not graded on his/her inability to physically write, but on the ability to learn and to demonstrate that they have learned the material.



# Examples of “Reasonable Accommodations”

- ◆ Students with learning disabilities may be accommodated in a variety of ways, depending on limitations of the particular type of learning disability and the limitations that stem from it.
- ◆ Examples:
  - **Dyslexia/Reading Disorder** ~ E-text books, Extended Time and/or Reader for Exams, Use of software such as Kurzweil, Scan & Read, Talking Word Processor
  - **Expressive Language Disorder** ~ Use of Computer, Extended Time Exams, Use of Assistive Software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking
  - **Visual or Auditory Processing Disorder** ~ Notetaker in class, E-text books, Extended Time Exams
  - **Dyscalcula/Math Disorder** ~ Extended Time Exams, Use of A Calculator, Use of formulas and/or samples
  - **Dysgraphia** ~ Notetaker in class, Use of Computer, Extended Time Exams, Use of Assistive Software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking



# How does a student request reasonable accommodations at UNH?

- ◆ Make a Specific Request for Reasonable Accommodations by Self-identifying as a student with a disability by completing an Intake Form and submitting documentation of a disability to the Accessibility Resources Center.
- ◆ Meet with an Accessibility Resources Center staff member to discuss Reasonable Accommodations
- ◆ Follow Appropriate Procedures for Receiving Reasonable Accommodations Each Semester
  - Complete an Accommodation Request Form and Other Appropriate Forms Each Semester
  - Pick up & Deliver Verification of Disability/Request for Accommodation Letters to Faculty in a Timely Manner
  - Ensure that Faculty are Aware of the Student's Desire to Utilize Accommodations at Each Instance. (e.g. before each exam)



## Summary

- ◆ Each student must meet or exceed the essential requirements of the University of New Haven and its programs with or without reasonable accommodations. While Section 504 and the ADA as amended protects the civil rights of qualified students with disabilities, these laws also affirm the student's right to refuse any accommodation.
- ◆ Thus, students are not required to register with the Accessibility Resources Center, identify themselves to instructors, staff, or other students as having a disability, or accept accommodations they do not need or want.



## Summary

- ◆ BUT... If students wish to compete with their peers on a “level playing field” and if they wish to enjoy their right to access and equality, they must advocate for those rights.
- ◆ There is no civil rights protection for individuals who don't identify themselves and request the appropriate accommodations.

Questions?????

How can we partner with you?

