

BACK TO BASICS: WHAT *IS* THE ACCOMMODATION... AND WHY AM I MAKING IT?

OCTOBER 1, OCTOBER 3

This innovative workshop tackles a new problem in an old way. Lately it seems that, not uncommonly, all the students with "X" diagnosis/label on campus are receiving the same accommodations in all settings. Something is wrong with this picture! This workshop provides an opportunity to step back and look at what accommodations are available/used in higher education, why they were brought into use, and what circumstances should be evident before accommodation is assigned. If you have never had the chance to consider "why" (or "why not!!!") -- or if it has been too long since you thought about it -- this workshop is for you. Simply put, if we, as service providers, don't start doing a better job of assigning accommodations based on demonstrated need in order to assure access (rather than as a privilege associated with disability status or as a benefit assigned out of a misguided sense of obligation), we will soon find that the credibility of the accommodation process, as a means of assuring access, may be significantly damaged.

Section 504 and the ADA do not, for the most part, discuss specific mechanisms (accommodations) for providing equal access to education. WE, as service providers, developed these options a long time ago because they seemed to be necessary and appropriate to meet the access needs of students. But as the profile of students with disabilities has shifted, and the numbers have grown dramatically, we somehow seem to have lost sight of the *REASON* for the accommodation in our bandaid approach to meeting the demand. This workshop isn't about the "how-to" of accommodations -- it is about the "WHY!!!" After setting the stage with a brief discussion of the legal, philosophical and practical issues surrounding accommodation, we will review as many as possible of the accommodations that are routinely provided on college campuses today, discussing (as appropriate):

- the nature of the accommodation
- why the accommodation is made
- the functional limitation(s) linked to this accommodation
- examples of how the accommodation is used/misused
- controversial aspects of the use of the accommodation
- special considerations re: this accommodation

WORKSHOP AGENDA

(These are topics to be covered and the order of presentation – no specific times are assigned to allow for flexibility in meeting the interests of participants re: the various accommodations to be discussed.)

Defining the issues

- Legal underpinnings for accommodation
- PURPOSE of accommodation
- Recognizing functional limitations
- "Accommodation-by-label" is dangerous all around
- Let's stick with things we can control/provide for the student

Primary areas of confusion

- Right v. privilege
- Lowering expectations v. varying expectations
- Accommodation v. rehabilitation
- Accommodation v. student development

Practical considerations

- Numbers growing, staffing is not
- Knowing what to look for
- Faculty perceptions

A NON-Discussion of Documentation Requirements and Service/Companion Animals

SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- Notetakers/Notetaking
 - Extended time on tests and assignments
 - Assistive Listening Devices
 - Interpreters
 - Closed captioning/C-print
 - Attendance policies
 - Tape recorders
 - Alternate media (not how to do it, but WHY to provide it!)
 - Priority Registration
- (as time permits)
- Reduced Load
 - Quiet-proctored setting
 - Scribes/Readers
 - Preferential Seating (including furniture!)

