**Santa Ana College (DSPS)**

**Faculty Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **How do I refer a student to DSPS?**

If you are not sure whether the student has a disability, the best way to refer them is objectively point out what the student is doing that leads you to believe he/she needs assistance. For example, “I see that you are having trouble completing this assignment,” or “I see that you struggle during tests. There are many on-campus resources that can help.” Then list for the student all the resources you are aware of such as the Tutorial Learning Center, EOPS, DSPS, etc. Offer to walk them over to the selected area. This will show the student you care about his/her success and you are willing to help them make the first move.

1. **How do I know that the accommodation the student has requested is appropriate and legitimate?**

If the student presents to you a letter of accommodation from the Santa Ana College DSPS office, the student has provided the college with proof of a disability under the legal definition of the word.

1. **What if I do not agree with a recommended accommodation?**

Contact the DSPS faculty who has approved the students’ accommodation to discuss why you think the accommodation is not appropriate for your course. If an alternative accommodation is suggested, it must first be discussed and approved by the student before making any changes to the accommodations.

1. **How can I be sure I am doing what is necessary to provide academic access?**

The most successful way to ensure academic access is to discuss with the student in private what his/her needs are. No two students with disabilities are alike. Only a personal conference with the student in which you discuss both the course demands and the students’ accommodation needs is likely to provide both parties with a satisfactory outcome. It is a good idea to put into writing what you and the student agree so that it minimizes confusion. We always recommend to students that they have a personal conversation with all their instructors.

1. **Am I being asked to compromise academic standards or give the student with a disability an advantage?**

No! If the existence of the disability has been verified, the accommodation should have the purpose of providing an equal opportunity to the student. To compromise academic standards or “water down” the requirements would not assist the student to acquire a competitive degree. The student with a disability should fulfill all the essential course-related requirements.

1. **Can I fail a student with a disability?**

Yes. It is possible to fail a student with a disability. The laws mandate access to education, not guaranteed academic success. When a faculty member has provided reasonable academic accommodations, they have done what is required to comply with the law. If the student does not meet the course requirements, then failing a student is proper and lawful. All students have the right to fail as much as they have the right to succeed. The following is a compliance checklist that may be helpful:

* Stand by academic standards and freedoms, which include full and equitable access to academic programs.
* Provide verbal and written notice to your students of your willingness to accommodate. For example, "I encourage students with disabilities to discuss accommodations with me."
* Communicate clear and concise expectations for performance to your students. Distinguish between essential and non-essential components of the course.
* Respect requests for reasonable accommodations. (The DSPS office facilitates obtaining these alternative formats).
* Permit students to use auxiliary aides and technologies that ensure access (examples: note takers, sign language interpreters, readers, scribes, research assistants, tape recorders/players, assistive listening devices).
* Assure that your course materials, whether printed or electronic, are accessible and available in alternative formats (examples: Braille, computer electronic text, large print, internet, CD/cassettes).
* Consult with DSPS if you have questions when a student requests accommodations.
* Keep student disability-related information strictly confidential.
1. **By making certain accommodations to students with disabilities, am I not discriminating against the other students who would probably prefer such things as extended time for tests, etc.?**

Technically, it may appear that preferential treatment is being given to students with disabilities; however, the objective of the legal requirement is to help the student compensate for a life function which is not the same as that of other students in the class. Through the accommodation, we attempt to provide the student with the same opportunity that other class members have without special measures. The law allows, and in fact requires, that special needs be met.