Advising Students with Disabilities at Trinity University

If an advisee discloses to you that s/he has a disability, please refer her/him to Disability Services for Students (DSS) so s/he can receive the appropriate accommodations on campus. DSS is located in 215 Coates University Center (above the Bookstore).

Specific topics you should consider when advising a student with a disability include:

1. **Course Load**
The transition from secondary to postsecondary education can be difficult for any student. For a student with a disability, this transition can present additional challenges and concerns. The student, in most cases, is transitioning to an independent management of the disability. For students with learning disabilities and AD/HD, this may mean learning how to effectively study and complete homework assignments without reminders and/or assistance from parents or guardians. It also may be the first time the student has had to manage her/his medication independently. For a student with a mobility impairment, college may be the first time s/he has had to navigate an unknown community independently. Students with disabilities usually are accustomed to a set routine, and transitioning to college means establishing an entirely new plan. This transition, along with the academic transition of more difficult classes and heavier workloads, can create a great amount of stress, particularly during the first semester. Therefore, students with disabilities should begin their first semester with a lighter course load than subsequent semesters. *Typically, 12 hours is a good starting point.*

A student with disability may be allowed to take a reduced course load as an accommodation. A student who is eligible to receive this accommodation will be allowed to take fewer hours than those indicated in the Trinity University Courses of Study bulletin, but not fall below half-time, while still maintaining her/his status as full-time student. DSS will provide the student with a letter in support of the reduced course load accommodation, which s/he will be responsible for sharing with you.

2. **Time of Day**
Students with certain disabilities should consider the time of day they choose to take their classes because they may perform better during specific times of the day. Encourage the student to think about what time of day s/he performs at an optimal level, both with alertness to pay attention and participate in classes, as well as to complete class readings and homework assignments. Also, encourage the student to think about any current medications s/he is taking and how these may affect her/his sleep and/or study habits. A student who requires routine doctor appointments will also need to
consider the time of day s/he chooses to take their classes in order to construct a schedule which will allow her/him to maintain these appointments.

3. **Time between Classes**
The amount of time scheduled between classes should also be taken into consideration by students with certain disabilities. For example, a student with mobility impairments may have difficulty arriving to a class on time if it is scheduled immediately after another class in a different building. Additionally, a student who will use the accommodation of extended time for exams and quizzes may want to consider avoiding back-to-back classes in order to guarantee this accommodation will not interfere with another class.

4. **Disability-Related Absences**
Students with certain disabilities may be eligible to receive disability-related absences as an accommodation. This accommodation is provided to a student who may not be able to attend all of the class sessions due to disability-related reasons (e.g.: chronic fatigue and/or pain, seizures, or migraines). When you advise a student who utilizes this accommodation, ask her/him if s/he has spoken with the instructors of her/his selected classes about the attendance requirements. If consistent attendance is an essential element of the course, the student may want to consider another class.

5. **Academic Requirement Modifications**
Students with disabilities may be allowed modifications to the academic requirements of a program as an accommodation due to the nature of their disability and how it affects their ability to meet such requirements. Allowing a student with a learning disorder affecting reading and/or written expression to take alternate courses in place of the foreign language courses is an example of such a modification. If a modification to an academic requirement is approved, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs: Curriculum and Student Issues will notify the student, the academic department involved, the Office of the Registrar, and you, the student's advisor. DSS will also be provided with a copy of the decision.

Please see “College 101: Students with Disabilities: Advising and Course Selection”, which is distributed to incoming students who have self-identified to Disability Services for Students. Additional online resources for advisors include the following:

- National Academic Advising Association’s *Advising Students with Disabilities*
- DO-IT’s *Equal Access: Universal Design of Advising*
  [http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/equal_access_adv.html](http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/equal_access_adv.html)

Should you have any questions regarding advising students with disabilities, please feel free to contact the Coordinator of DSS by phone at extension 7411 or by email at dss@trinity.edu.