

Impact of Faculty Syllabus and Course Materials On Students with Disabilities

1 ACADEMIC FREEDOM:

Faculty make a long list of choices in developing a semester's course curriculum. Which textbook, or textbooks, should you choose? Should you include additional materials on Blackboard? Should you show a clip from a relevant video or television show? What happens when you publish your syllabus? How do these decisions impact students in your class who may have a print disability?

2 LAW:

Title II of the ADA prohibits state governmental agencies from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in the provision of public services.¹ Title III prohibits any place of public accommodations from denying an individual with a disability the full enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations provided to others.² To ensure full enjoyment, the University must make reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, which are modifications or adjustments that allow an individual with a disability full access to education and full enjoyment.³

3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROCESSES:

If a student with a disability needs an accommodation, the student must register with Disability Services (DS). DS determines what accommodations are reasonable, and this determination may involve conversations with faculty. DS provides the student a faculty accommodation letter outlining what specific accommodations are required. The student must provide this letter to faculty for the faculty to implement the reasonable accommodations.

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et. seq.*

² 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et. seq.*

³ 42 U.S.C. § 12111(9); 28 C.F.R. §§ 26.302(a), 35.150(a).

4 FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **CLASS ROSTER – NEW:**

Effective Fall 2016, class rosters will indicate to faculty, in real-time, that there is/are a student(s) in that class with approved accommodations through DS.

2. **FACULTY ACCOMMODATION LETTER:**

Faculty will not know who the student is, unless the student provides the letter from DS indicating what accommodations a particular student needs.

3. **COMPLIANCE:**

Faculty failure to comply with reasonable accommodations as determined by DS and as provided to the faculty by the student can result in liability to UCCS.

5 TIMELINE – REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS TAKE TIME TO PROVIDE:

1. **SYLLABUS:**

As soon as you post a course syllabus, a student with disabilities reviews it to see what materials are required and begins a process to convert them into accessible formats. The syllabus itself should be in an accessible format to allow students to easily navigate and find information about their weekly expectations.

2. **TEXTBOOKS:**

The student works with the UCCS Bookstore to purchase required texts. For students who require materials in alternative formats, the student has to purchase the book **AND THEN** take the book to DS who works to convert the text into the media best suited for the student's disabilities. This process takes **FOUR TO SIX WEEKS**.

3. **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:**

All additional materials that you require for a class (articles, PowerPoints, other books, websites) that are *not* accessible require a student with disabilities to go to DS to have the materials converted to accessible/alternative formats. If you do not provide the materials in digital PDFs, then DS may contact you for you to provide digital versions or hard copies or to choose different material. This conversion can take **WEEKS** and *must* be done in order to meet our legal obligations to the student.

4. **VIDEOS:**

Faculty often include video presentations in the classroom. However, if one of your students is disabled, **every video presentation – regardless of its source** - must be closed-captioned to accommodate that student's needs. This process can take **WEEKS** and the cost likely falls on your department. The Library can assist you in seeing if a captioned version of a commercial video is available for purchase, and can also assist with finding alternate accessible resources.

5. **AUDIO:**

Audio presentations must be accompanied by a transcript.

6. **TESTING:**

Testing accommodations are provided through Disability Services. If faculty do not provide the testing materials in an accessible format, administration of the test may be delayed. Faculty should not create additional administrative burdens for pre-approved testing accommodations.

6 HOW FACULTY CAN HELP?

- Adhere to Universal Design Principles when designing your courses. Accommodations are rarely needed for courses designed in this way. It is only when barriers to accessibility are inadvertently put in place that accommodations are needed.
- Utilize multiple means of presentation, engagement and expression. See National Center for Universal Design for Learning for a better understanding of UDL.
- Check the class roster early and often to see if any enrolled students require accommodations. Doing so helps you know what is expected of you and your class materials for that semester.
- Ensure your syllabus is accurate, complete and accessible at the time of posting.
 - It is expected that faculty will post all additional materials in Blackboard in an accessible format (accessible PDF or structured Word document). If you do not know what constitutes an accessible format, please seek help via the websites below before posting the material in question.
- Choose accessible textbooks. If the book is not available in any other format except printed, this will exclude access for a good portion of students with disabilities.
- Provide book lists early to ensure that all students have adequate time to acquire the book(s) and convert into an accessible format. DS requests at least four weeks before class starts.
- Provide all additional course material in accessible formats (accessible PDF or Word format).
- Only choose close-captioned videos for your classes. The library can help you find these materials. If you create a video, be sure to close-caption it before showing it in your class.
- Allow adequate time to work with the Library on finding captioned versions of your video materials when possible and to work with DS for those materials that need captioning.
- Work with the Faculty Resource Center for universal design templates for syllabus, PowerPoints, and other class materials.
- Provide all tests, quizzes and exam materials to Disability Services in an accessible format.
- Visit the DS website for faculty information at <http://www.uccs.edu/disability/facultystaff.html> and the Faculty Resource Center website for accessibility teaching resources at http://www.uccs.edu/frc/teaching_resources/accessibility.html.

