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## **Disability Services Faculty Handbook**

Greetings!

This handbook is designed to help you better understand the process for students with disabilities. Should you ever have any questions regarding working with students with disabilities, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here to help!

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### **Americans with Disabilities Act & Section 504**

There are **two** legal mandates that protect students with disabilities from discrimination and ensure that they have equal access to all aspects of the college. These laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Title II of the ADA states: “A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.”

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

In our efforts to provide equal access, Disability Services works with students, instructors, and the campus community to ensure students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity and that all services provided are in adherence to the law.

### **Registration with Disability Services**

Eligibility for protection under the ADA and Section 504 requires the student to meet **one** of the following three criteria:

1. Have a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
2. Have a documentation of such a physical or mental condition.
3. Be regarded as having such an impairment, whether actually having the impairment or not.

Students who register with Disability Services must submit documentation of their disability. After barriers that result from the disability are established, students meet with the Disability Services Coordinator to discuss appropriate accommodations that would remove the barrier(s).

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is extremely important in regard to students with disabilities. Students have the right to choose whether or not to disclose information specific to their disability to their instructors. As a result, faculty are **not** informed on the accommodation letter as to the student’s disability; instead, they are only made aware of the accommodations that have been approved as a result of a documented disability. It is entirely up to the student to share that information, and Disability Services cannot disclose the nature of the disability without the student’s written consent.

Under no circumstances should a student's disability be discussed in front of a class or in the presence of other students. All information that a student shares with a faculty member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. Casual conversations with colleagues about a student's disability status are prohibited. Confidential disability information, to which you have access, should be released to other faculty and staff based only on a need to know basis.

If you are unsure of what questions are appropriate to ask a student with a disability, please contact the Disability Services Coordinator for assistance.

### **Syllabus**

All syllabi should include an informative statement regarding the Disability Services Office. It is also helpful to announce and read aloud this statement at the beginning of the semester. Many students are coming to BRCC straight out of high school, and many are unaware that these services are available to them.

### **Faculty Rights & Responsibilities**

Faculty have the right to:

- Maintain academic standards set forth by Blue Ridge Community College
- Expect all students, regardless of disability to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct
- Request Accommodation Plan(s) from student(s) prior to providing accommodations
- Speak with students regarding the logistics and set up of accommodations indicated on the Accommodation Plan(s)
- Deny requests for accommodations when student does not have an Accommodation Plan(s). Refer students requesting accommodations without a notification to the Disability Services Coordinator. The notification will be submitted to you either from the student or via email.

- Consult with Disability Services Coordinator regarding questions about the accommodations indicated on the Accommodation Plan(s)

Faculty have the responsibility to:

- Refer students who request accommodations to the Disability Services Coordinator
- Work with Disability Services in recruiting volunteer note takers and/or setting up extended time testing for students with disabilities
- Provide notes, class handouts, and tests in accessible formats for students with disabilities
- Ensure that online content is accessible for all students
- Allow the use of a digital recorder during lecture with Accommodation Plan approval

### **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

Students have the right to:

- Equal access to all services provided by the college
- Confidentiality with all information regarding their disability

Students have the responsibility to:

- Identify themselves as a student with a disability in order to receive accommodations
- Provide documentation describing a diagnosis, limitations, and appropriate accommodations
- Keep instructors and the Disability Services Coordinator informed as to the effectiveness of accommodation(s)
- Adhere to the BRCC Code of Conduct regardless of ability or disability

## **Accommodations**

Appropriate accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the student and the nature of the disability. Accommodations can encompass changes in:

- Practice, policy, or procedure for a student with a verified disability to allow the student equal access
- Participation and/or benefit from the College's programs, services, and activities.

Accommodations are not designed to:

- Fundamentally alter the nature of College's programs, services activities
- Cause an undue burden to the College
- Pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

If you have questions of how to provide accommodations, contact the Disability Services Coordinator immediately.

The following is a list of some of the most common accommodations, but this list is not comprehensive.

### *Common Accommodations*

- Extended time on tests/quizzes
- Preferential Seating
- Read Aloud
- Note taker
- Enlarged Font
- Use of digital recorder
- Use of a calculator
- Interpreter
- Use of assistive technology such as JAWS to read information aloud to the student

## **Disability-Related Absences**

Infrequently, a student's disability may warrant the consideration of flexibility with attendance as an accommodation. Accommodations are considered reasonable as long as they do not fundamentally alter the essential requirements of the course or cause

an undue burden. Questions to consider when determining whether or not the accommodation is reasonable are as follows:

- 1) Is there regular interaction between students and instructor as well as among the students themselves?
- 2) Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of learning process?
- 3) Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method of learning?
- 4) To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss of the educational experience of other students in the class?
- 5) What does the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
- 6) What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?

Faculty are encouraged to discuss flexibility for attendance with the Disability Services Coordinator immediately if they feel that this will alter the nature of the course.

If it is determined that disability-related absences is reasonable:

- Students are responsible for contacting their instructor(s) as soon as possible when a disability-related absence has occurred.
- Students are responsible for any material covered and must adhere to the deadlines delineated in the class (i.e. extended deadlines for assignments are not covered under this accommodation-this will need to be worked out individually with an instructor in a timely and reasonable manner).

### **Temporary Impairments**

Students are recommended to first meet and discuss with appropriate personnel (instructor, supervisor) the impact, duration and functional limitations of the temporary impairment within the classroom/learning environment before meeting with the Disability Services Coordinator. Many arrangements can be made between the appropriate personnel (instructor, supervisor) and individual without the use of Disability Services for conditions lasting less than six weeks.

Students who wish to formally receive accommodations through Disability Services must complete the appropriate paperwork and submit documentation of the impairment. Accommodations will be determined based on the needs outlined in the documentation provided.