

QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Learners First

Office of Disability Services

FAQs for QVCC Faculty

Spring, 2009

Who at QVCC works with students with disabilities? QVCC has three disability service providers. Jim Grimord (412-7215) generally works with students who have physical, visual, hearing, medical, mobility, and psychiatric disabilities. Chris Scarborough (412-7286) generally works with students who have Learning Disabilities, ADD, and Asperger's Syndrome. John Lepore works with students with disabilities at the Willimantic Center (423-4491).

What should I do if a student requests additional time for tests because of a disability? Refer the student to Chris, John or Jim *without granting or denying the request*. If the student wishes, one of us will meet with the student and provide assistance. Accommodation requests from students that are not authorized in writing from a disability service provider should not be granted.

What should I do if a student brings me documentation of a disability? Rather than accept it, ask the student to bring or send the documentation to a disability service provider.

What should I do if a student complains that it is unfair that a classmate is getting additional time for tests or some other accommodation? You can inform the complaining student that the situation in question is authorized due to special circumstances. If the complaining student expresses a similar need, feel free to refer the student to a disability service provider.

What should I do if a student asks me to alter my curriculum because of a learning disability? Federal law prohibits colleges from altering a course or program as an accommodation. Generally, accommodations affect the way we deliver and receive content, but not the nature or amount of content.

Should I discuss a student's accommodations with the student? Yes, if you wish, provided it is done at a time and place that ensures the student's confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. The student's confidentiality is protected by federal law and all reasonable precautions should be taken. Students are not required to divulge the details of a disability and questions about details should be avoided. It would also be inappropriate to express a personal opinion about the student's accommodations or disability. (Questions can always be addressed to Jim or Chris or John.) Confidential topics should never be discussed or mentioned in front of other students. If a situation should arise where you need to immediately address an accommodation question, such as during an exam, try to do so in as private a manner as possible.

Who determines if a student has a qualifying disability that requires reasonable accommodations? The student must initiate the accommodation process by contacting and meeting with one of the college's disability service providers, signing a self-disclosure form, and providing documentation. The documentation must be from a licensed clinical professional. The disability service provider evaluates and reviews the documentation and determines if reasonable accommodations should be provided. Instructors are welcome to provide input

and suggestions about accommodations at any time. The accommodations are determined by the disability service provider, in consultation with the student. Please do not change or substitute accommodations without prior consultation with the disability service provider and the student.

What about my syllabus? All syllabi should include a brief disabilities statement. Here is an example for courses that meet at **Danielson**:

If you have a question regarding a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please contact Jim Grimord (physical, sensory, and psychiatric disabilities / 860-412-7215) or Chris Scarborough (Learning Disabilities, ADD, and Asperger's Syndrome / 860-412-7286) as soon as possible.

For courses that meet at **Willimantic**:

If you have a question regarding a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please contact John Lepore at the QVCC Willimantic Center (860-423-4491) as soon as possible.

At what point am I required to provide a particular accommodation? Accommodations take effect when you receive the accommodations memo from the student. Accommodations should not be applied retroactively to work or exams that were due prior to your receiving the memo.

You are not required to provide accommodations if the student has not given you a memo from one of the college's disability service providers. In fact, it can be problematic when an instructor starts the accommodations process with a student before the student has presented an accommodations memo, except in situations where a student's need is obvious, such as blindness.

Occasionally a student will give you an accommodation in mid or late semester because the student's documentation was received late. If the student gives you an accommodation memo shortly before an exam or project due date, you are only obligated to reasonably "do the best you can" in providing the student's accommodations for that exam or project. Also, it is appropriate for a student to opt to not use all of the accommodations listed on the memo. In situations where your time is involved, the student should be in communication with you regarding the use of the accommodation, or not.

What do I do once I have received a student's accommodations memo? Provide the accommodations listed on the memo, but no others. Refrain from commenting on the accommodations or questioning the student about the legitimacy of the student's need. Also avoid expressing personal opinions about particular disabilities or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The provision of accommodations is a collaborative effort between instructor, student, and disability service provider. As indicated on the accommodations memo, feel free to contact the disability service provider with any suggestions or concerns at any time.

How do I provide the "extended time for tests" accommodation? The "extended time" accommodation is usually up to double the amount of time that is granted to the class- for example, up to two hours for a one-hour exam. You and the student should agree on a convenient time and location and the testing should take place at a time and location that is reasonably convenient for both of you. At Danielson, some instructors utilize the Learning (tutoring) Center (412-7285); at Willimantic contact John Lepore (423-4491), who also supervises tutoring there.