Parent Guide for Students with Disabilities

College can be an uncertain time for both students and parents. This guide was written for parents of students with disabilities about your students' future college experience to help answer questions, explain how post-secondary disability services differ from high school services here at Fox Valley Technical College.

Transitioning to Post-Secondary Education

In college, students have a civil right to have access to their education. Parents are often responsible for advocating for their children in the high school setting. At the college level, this responsibility shifts to self-advocacy and the student. Parents are there to support and inform their students. Your student can begin preparing for college by learning about their disability, how their disability affects them academically and what their strengths and weaknesses are.

Many times, first year students are unprepared with the responsibility they are faced with in college. They are expected to meet deadlines, prepare for classes and exams and manage their time outside of class to include study time.

Parents can help by encouraging your student to problem-solve situations independently while offering support and additional help only when needed. Encourage your student to take responsibility for their academic concerns and limitations as this will be helpful in the accommodation process. They should start to practice sending their own e-mails, make their own phone calls and appointments when appropriate.

The following will help you see the primary differences in student rights and responsibilities between high school and college.

Laws

High School	College
IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Act	**ADA** – American with Disability Act of 1990, Title 11, Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
IDEA – focuses on academic success	**ADA** – focuses on equal access
Documentation: • Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 Plan • School provides evaluation at no cost to students or family	Documentation: • High School IEP and 504 may not be sufficient. Specific medical documentation may be required • If evaluation is needed, it is at students' expense

Self-Advocacy

High School	College
Student identified by school	Students must self-identify to Disability Services
Responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school	Responsibility to request accommodations belongs to the student
Teachers will reach out if they believe you need assistance	Instructors, while helpful, expect you to ask for help

Parent's Role

High School	College
Parents have access to student records/grades and participate in accommodations	Parents to not have access to student records/grades without written Release of Information
Parents are student advocate	Students are self-advocate

Instruction/Grades/Tests

High School	College
Teachers can modify curriculum/tests and/or grades	Curriculum/tests or grades are not modified. Students need to meet class competencies
Testing may be frequent. Retakes are allowed as are books and notes	Accommodations can include: extended time, reduced distraction. Testing can be cumulative and cover larger amounts of material. Test retakes are seldom an option for classes and books/notes and resources are not allowed on tests
Teachers will remind you of assignments and due dates	Instructors expect you to read and follow you syllabus which outlines due dates for assignments and tests

The Accommodation Process

Developing an accommodation plan is an interactive process between the student and the Disability Services Instructor. Disability Services Instructors are assigned based on program and/or location. To request accommodations, please follow these steps.

1. Contact Disability Services to request accommodations.
2. Provide appropriate disability-related documentation that supports the request for accommodations.
3. Develop an Accommodation Plan each semester with a Disability Services Instructor.

- Please note the accommodation plan will be emailed to the student. It is the student's responsibility to share the accommodation plan with their instructors each semester
- The accommodation process must be student initiated.
- While you may want to advocate for your student and assist in the accommodation process, confidentiality laws prohibit Fox Valley Technical College personnel from discussing information with anyone including parents unless there is written consent from the student.
- If students experience difficulties with accommodations, it is their responsibility to notify Disability Services as soon as possible.