

## **FAQs about Disabilities and Education**

### **What is a disabled student, and what are “accommodations”?**

A disabled student is a student who has identified a physical or cognitive challenge to learning. Students with disabilities can receive accommodations (i.e., longer testing time, use of technology, etc.) through the Disabled Students Program & Services (DSP&S) program, located in Building 2, room 2350.

Students who have not gone through the DSP&S program do not automatically receive the above accommodations; we do not consider them to be DSP&S students until they enroll in the DSP&S program, regardless of how evident a disability may be.

### **Can I talk to the student about his/her disability?**

DSP&S students do not have to disclose the nature of their disability to anyone; it is confidential. However, many students do find it helpful to discuss their disability. You will receive no official paperwork saying that your student is in the DSP&S program, but the student may disclose that to you, or you may find out inadvertently.

Do not push the student to discuss a disability if s/he does not want to, but you have the right to ask, “Are you working with anyone right now to improve your success in college?” or “Are there some learning strategies that work well for you that I should know about?”

### **What if I suspect that a student has a disability?**

Some students not receiving accommodations may be offended at the suggestion that they may have a disability. You are not in a position to diagnose a disability, so if you suspect one and want to suggest that the student explore DSP&S, avoid saying, “It seems to me that you have a disability.” Instead, say, “Do you feel you need more time on your tests? Do you know that the DSP&S office can get you special time accommodations if you qualify?” You can also say, “Do you think you might need a learning strategy that works specifically for you? Do you know that the DSP&S office can provide you with testing and information on learning strategies?”

Many non-American cultures do not have an open approach to disabilities; there is a lot of stigma associated with having a learning or physical challenge. Do not assume that the student will automatically be forthcoming and open to the idea of talking to DSP&S about a potential disability.

### **Should students with disabilities be treated specially?**

DSP&S students should be treated no differently from any other student who walks into the Learning Center. They should be held to the same standards and expectations regarding behavior, responsibility, and diligence in study. It is the student's responsibility to behave appropriately, manage his/her time, take his/her necessary medication, and follow through with the suggestions of the tutor. Inappropriate behavior resulting from a failure to take one's medication or arrange one's time should not be tolerated, and the student may be asked to come back when he/she can exhibit appropriate behavior.

Patience with a student's progress is different from expectations of behavior. Exercising patience with a DSP&S student's rate of progress is important; frequent encouragement and modeling of good strategies is helpful.