

Working With a Student Who Has Any Type of Disability

- We are all more alike than we are different.
- Persons of disability have the same range of likes and dislikes as anyone else. Not all blind persons are musical, not all persons who use wheelchairs play wheelchair basketball, and not all deaf persons read lips.
- People with disabilities are like any other group of people- some will be outstanding and extraordinary; most will be average; and some will perform poorly.
- Do not use generic labels for disability such as “the blind” or “the deaf.” Say “People who are blind or deaf.” Never use “deaf and dumb” unless you want to be considered “hard of thinking.”
- Do not infer disease when discussing disability. People with disabilities should NEVER be referred to as patients or cases!
- If you are feeling uncomfortable about a situation, let the person of disability know. Also, contact the Director of Students with Disabilities at x7206
- Always speak directly to the person. If you have concerns about performance, communicate it.
- Emphasize “abilities” not “disabilities.”
- Expect that the person of disability is in a class and/or major that he/she hopes to succeed in. Be positive and proactive
- Do not focus on the disability. Focus on the issues at hand. What do you talk with other students about? The weather, sports, politics, what did you do today! Do not ask, “What happened to you?” “How did you get in a wheelchair?” “Is it hard being blind?” How would you feel if a stranger asked you, “And when did you first start losing your hair?”
- Students who have disabilities are active participants in campus life. Persons with a disability do not live in the “handicapped community.”
- Do not assume a student is having difficulty at a task. Ask if and how you may help.
- Expect all students to meet the academic requirements of a course. Reasonable accommodations do not excuse a student from learning and demonstrating that learning.
- **Information about a disability is private.** Never comment or initiate a discussion regarding a disability in front of other students.
- Issues that are essential to class should be on syllabi

* Remember, the student is responsible for making sure classroom and academic needs are known. It is the faculty person’s responsibility to work with the student in assuring educational program accessibility. The Director of Disability Support Services is here to help you both.

If you have questions or concerns about a student with a disability, please call 253-535-7206