What You Need to Know About Disabilities

Services for Students with Disabilities Mission Statement:

Fresno Pacific University values the diversity of students with disabilities and is committed to providing equal access and opportunity for all students. Students with documented disabilities can expect to have their privacy protected while being assured of reasonable and appropriate accommodations for all educational experiences. The Academic Support Center serves as the liaison between faculty and students in the coordination of academic accommodations and services.

Definition of a disability:

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a person with a disability is one who

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major activity*
- Has a record or history of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such an impairment

*Major life activities include, but are not limited to, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself and performing manual tasks. These impairments may exist in those with chronic health impairments, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, physical disabilities, etc.

- All disabilities are covered equally by the ADA.

Accommodations for disabilities in post-secondary education:

1. Post-secondary education is not a right but a privilege in which the ADA strives to prevent discrimination.
2. Reasonable accommodations in post-secondary education provide equal access to the service provided by the institution but do not guarantee success.
3. All students must be “otherwise qualified” to do the work required at the same level as every other student.
4. Accommodations cannot substantially alter the basic requirements of classes or programs.
5. In order to ensure fairness and to protect student privacy, all requests for accommodations must be submitted to the office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

FAQs

Q. What should I tell students or parents to do if I know the student has a disability?

A. Tell them about the office of Services for Students with Disabilities and give them a brochure. Guide them to visit the website at www.fresno.edu/disability-services for more information. Tell them that I’m really nice and helpful 😊.

Q. What if a student thinks h/she may have a disability but has never been diagnosed?
A. Fresno Pacific University does not have personnel to evaluate any type of disability. All evaluations and diagnoses are the responsibility of the student. Advise the student to ask a primary care doctor for a recommendation for the appropriate diagnostician. Learning disabilities and mental health issues should be evaluated by a psychologist. Some physicians might diagnose ADHD or mental health issues such as depression or anxiety.

Q. What if a student tells me s/he has a disability but doesn’t want “special treatment.”

A. Accommodations are only provided to students who need them for a particular purpose, kind of like only people who can’t see well wear glasses/contacts. Accommodations should help to alleviate the symptoms of the disability so that the student’s true abilities can be seen.

Q. What if a student doesn’t want anyone to know about his/her disability because it’s embarrassing or painful to talk about?

A. Privacy is very important! Only the office of Services for Students with Disabilities knows what a person’s disability is—no one else! Professors are told what accommodations a student has but they are not told why.

Q. What does it mean if a person has a learning disability?

A. There are many types of learning disabilities, but it usually means that an otherwise intelligent person (often highly intelligent!) doesn’t process information the same way that most other people do. For example, a person with a reading disability can read the words, but the brain doesn’t process the meaning effectively from visual information. That person may process information much more efficiently through auditory sensory input.

Q. I have seen some students act really weird, talking to themselves, always eating alone, yelling and screaming when frustrated. Is this person crazy or dangerous? What should I do?

A. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (or Asperger’s Syndrome) do not live by the same social norms that the rest of us do. We have some students (maybe faculty and staff, too) who have ASD. They are not crazy and not dangerous. They depend on things being predictable and can be easily frustrated when something unexpected happens. A person with ASD may not know how to express their frustration and may voice their displeasure loudly. You need to stay calm, stay reasonable, and be very clear in your communication. Remind the person of what the rules and expectations are. The storm will blow over.

Q. What if I am worried that a person is a danger to self or others, but I don’t want to get in trouble for discriminating against a person with a disability?

A. Safety is the most important thing. Call Campus Safety at 453-2298 or 911. There is an obvious difference between a person voicing their own frustration and someone yelling threats.

Our Staff:

- Melinda Gunning, Director, Academic Support Services, melinda.gunning@fresno.edu, (559) 453-2247
- Susy Gonzalez-Padilla, Disabilities Assistant, susana.gonzalez@fresno.edu, (559) 453-5513
- Student workers, disability.services@fresno.edu, (559) 453-7130
Appendices

Resources:
- FPU Services for Students with Disabilities: [http://www.fresno.edu/disability-services](http://www.fresno.edu/disability-services)
- FPU Intranet training modules: [https://intranet.fresno.edu/disability-training/disability-training](https://intranet.fresno.edu/disability-training/disability-training); login required, adjuncts use Moodle login credentials, full-timers use Outlook credentials
- In Their Shoes online disability awareness program: [www.altoona.psu.edu/intheirshoes](http://www.altoona.psu.edu/intheirshoes); our college ID is sunbird1 (ignore user ID for first-time use).
- On-Site Counseling Program appointment line 453-8050.

Assistive Technology:
- Dragon Naturally Speaking—speech-to-text; enables the user to speak into a microphone and the computer types what is spoken.
  - Installed on one computer on each campus
  - For people with limited manual mobility (paralysis, carpal tunnel, loss of hand, etc.)
  - Also for people with processing disorders that inhibit the ability to spell correctly.
  - Designed to increase productivity and typing speeds in business applications.
  - Students can purchase their own copy from Nuance [http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm](http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm) (usually less than $200)
- Kurzweil—text-to-speech; will read any electronic text aloud on the computer.
  - For people with limited vision or visual processing disorders
  - Also for people with attention or focusing problems
  - Software disk supplied by our office; student must install on own computer(s).
  - Video instructions available at [http://www.kurzweiledu.com/how-to-videos.html](http://www.kurzweiledu.com/how-to-videos.html) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xe5Dhf5_mM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xe5Dhf5_mM)
  - Also has capability to help with the process of writing.
- Natural Reader—another text-to-speech program
  - It’s FREE!
  - Download at [http://www.naturalreaders.com](http://www.naturalreaders.com)
- Livescribe 3 Smart Pen—takes notetaking to a different level
  - We don’t have one yet, but it looks really cool.
  - Infrared camera in pen-tip captures handwriting and stores it in built-in memory (while writing)
  - Option to record lecture and connect to a keyword in written notes
  - Connect to an iPad, iPhone, or iPod and notes will be synced to the Livescribe+ mobile app.
  - Use stylus on app to have notes read back to you