CAREER AND DISABILITY:
Your Rights, Responsibilities and Resources

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College Accommodations Process

• Colleges are mandated by ADAAA and Section 504
• Students disclose disability to DSS;
• Disability need not be revealed to faculty or staff;
• Reasonable accommodations are **ACCESS** based and determined by DSS;
• Syllabus = Job Description;
• Students must be otherwise qualified and must meet fundamental requirements of the course;
• Students **self-advocate** with a Faculty Letter of Accommodations.
Moving forward….

• Discuss realistic impact of your disability and functional limitations on your career choice with DSS, Career Center and/or Faculty;
• Think about how your current accommodations may translate to a particular job;
• Practice self-advocating now.
• Keep a file of your approved accommodations and documentation for future reference;
Quick Review of the ADA

• This law, which was passed in 1990 and amended in 2008, prohibits employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in all employment-related activities.

• As an individual with a disability, you are protected under this law and can request reasonable accommodations.

• All employment activities are covered: recruitment/application processes, firing, hiring, training, job assignments, promotions, pay, benefits, lay off, leave, etc.

• This part of the ADA is enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
Reasonable Accommodations

• Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions

• Employers ARE NOT required to lower quantity or quality of standards as an accommodation.

• Employers ARE NOT required to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.
Reasonable Accommodations Examples

• Providing or modifying equipment
• Job restructuring
• Part-time or modified work schedules
• Reassignment to a vacant position
• Modifying examinations, training materials, policies
• Providing readers and interpreters
• Making the workplace accessible to people with physical disabilities
Disclosure – Your Choice

- The ADA makes it illegal for an employer to ask you whether you have a disability or the nature and severity of your disability.
- And, you do not have to disclose your disability to an employer if you do not want to.
- But, if you are going to need an accommodation either on the job or during the application and interview process, you must disclose your disability in order to get the accommodation.
Disclosure – Your Decision Steps

**Step #1**: Know your own abilities and limitations

**Step #2**: Learn the duties and requirements of the job

**Step #3**: Understand which accommodations, if any, you will need to perform the job duties

**Step #4**: If you don’t need accommodations, don’t disclose. If you do need accommodations, disclose just enough information to request the accommodation
Disclosure

• Weigh the benefits and risks of disclosing. Every job opportunity is different so your decision may be different every time!

• Consider the timing of your disclosure – *when* you disclose could have an impact on the response you receive

• Offer a simple explanation of your disability and any functional limitations that will affect your job performance

• Keep disclosure conversation positive and emphasize your skills and abilities
Disclosing on the Resume/Application

• You may be disclosing your disability simply by the experiences, associations, awards, etc. that you include on your resume.

• Pros
  – Upfront and honest about your disability
  – Eliminates the surprise factor
  – Opens the door for later conversation

• Cons
  – May hinder your ability to get an interview due to the employer’s preconceived notions and stereotypes
  – Doesn’t give you the opportunity to explain before the employer makes a decision about your abilities
Disclosing Through a Reference

• A strong reference from a former employer, teacher, colleague or specialist can really help you get your “foot in the door”

• But, unless you tell them not to, a reference might mention your disability

• If you don’t want your reference to mention your disability, tell them so

• If you do, make sure your reference really understands your disability and is using the correct terminology
Disclosing Before the Interview

• If you need an accommodation for the interview, such as an accessible location or a sign language interpreter, you need to disclose your disability to the person who calls you to set up the interview.

• Pros
  – Eliminates the surprise factor during the interview.
  – Guarantees accessible interview set up.

• Cons
  – Gives the interviewer time to make stereotypical judgments before meeting you
Disclosing During the Interview

• Every interview opportunity will be unique, and you will have to evaluate each situation to decide whether disclosure will help or hinder you.
• Pros
  – You’ll have the opportunity to explain your disability and how it affects you as an individual
  – You’ll have the opportunity to emphasize your abilities and other strengths gained through your disability
  – You’ll have the opportunity to answer any questions and clarify misconceptions
• Cons
  – Your interviewer may not understand your disability and so respond negatively to your disclosure
  – Your interviewer may be surprised and uncomfortable with your disability, especially if your disability is apparent
Disclosing on the Job

• Knowing that disclosing your disability may affect your chances of being hired, you may choose to wait to disclose until you’ve started the job and the need for an accommodation arises.

• Pros
  – By waiting to disclose, you significantly decrease the possibility of being discriminated against
  – You can disclose only to the person who is responsible for providing the accommodation

• Cons
  – Your employer may feel tricked, as if you purposely hid your disability from him/her
  – Although you are protected under the ADA, waiting to disclose could negatively impact employer and colleague relations depending on the severity and breadth of necessary accommodations
Accommodation Requests

• A request should be made if there is a barrier to effective performance – before performance suffers!
• Use plain language rather than ADA terms to avoid sounding threatening
• You should have a general idea of the cost and availability for any accommodation you might need or request.
• Your employer may request documentation of your disability in order to process the request.
Job Search Engines

• Career Gateway [www.cosdonline.org](http://www.cosdonline.org) – This is a job search site specifically for students with disabilities. It is sponsored by COSD (Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities), a national organization committed to linking qualified students with disabilities to employers who are actively recruiting persons with disabilities as part of their workforce. Just click “Student Login” and then “Register” to complete a profile.

• AbilityJobs.com [www.jobaccess.org](http://www.jobaccess.org) – This is a similar job search site. It is specific to persons with disabilities, but not specific to college students/recent graduates.

• Getting Hired [www.gettinghired.com](http://www.gettinghired.com) – Career and Job Search and networking for people with disabilities.
Disability & Diversity Resources

• AbilityLinks.org [www.abilitylinks.org] – Similar to above, this site also provides access to “Information Specialists” who can help answer questions you may have about your employability.

• National Career Development Association Disability Resources [www.associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/interests_disabilities] - There are a whole list of links and resources that you may find useful on this page.

• Workplace Diversity [www.workplacediversity.com] – This site provides job search and news update information for all aspects of diversity.
Federal Disability Resources

• Office of Disability Employment Policy
  www.dol.gov/odep/ - A great resource for policy updates, career fairs and general information.
• ADA www.ada.gov – A great resource for understanding your rights and responsibilities under the law as a person with a disability.
• Disability.gov www.disability.gov – Another informational resource.
Jobs/Internships

• Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) – Recruiters come to campus to interview qualified students for a national database of prospective employees. [http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp1.html](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp1.html)

• Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) – Opportunity for students with disabilities to job shadow in a career of their interest.

• Entry Point!/ACCESS – competitive internship program for students with disabilities in science and engineering. [http://ehrweb.aaas.org/entrypoint/](http://ehrweb.aaas.org/entrypoint/)

• AAPD Internship Programs – competitive internship program for college students with disabilities. Applications due in January for summer positions. Positions available in Congressional and IT positions. [http://www.aapd.com/AAPDInternship/](http://www.aapd.com/AAPDInternship/)
Advocacy

• The Campaign for Disability Employment www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org – This is an advocacy campaign that may be of interest to you.

• National Business and Disability Council (NBDC) www.business-disability.com – This is a great site to learn which large companies are truly committed to diversity.
Resources

• The ADA: Myths and Facts [www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/ada.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/ada.htm)
• The ADA: Your Employment Rights as an Individual With a Disability [www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada18.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada18.html)
• [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)
• [www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada)
• College and Career Success for Students with Learning Disabilities, Roslyn Dolber
• Successful Job Search Strategies for the Disabled; Understanding the ADA, Jeffrey G. Allen, J.D., C.P.C.
• You Don’t Have a Disability! Career Preparation Considerations for Students with Non-Apparent Disabilities, Sarah Helm, Sarah Rodriguez, Lacy Pittman