

Planning for the Transition to 2 & 4-Year Colleges



Welcome!

Presenter:

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Agenda

- Preparing for changes at the college level
- Main points about different college processes
- Tips-once at college
- Ideas for transition activities that can help students prepare
- Helpful resources



Planning for the Future



- **All students** are likely to face **some challenges** as they begin their college experience
- Students with disabilities will need the same skills as any other college freshman plus the **ability to compensate** for their disability
- Research widely recognizes that **readiness** for college **extends beyond academic skills** and achievements
- Some students may not have **adequate skill development to independently manage all aspects** of a college setting
- **Unrealistic expectations** of the types of **services** in college and being **uninformed** about the **process to access** accommodations, can leave students and parents surprised and unprepared

So...what are some things you should know?

What's Different in College?

- No more protections under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). **No special education services, No IEP/504 Plan, No automatic rights**
- College students are protected by **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** which are **civil rights laws** that ensure **the same access** to activities, materials and services **that all students have**. Prohibits discrimination based on disability
- Colleges are **not required to** fundamentally alter/modify curriculum, tests, assignments or **provide** services of personal nature (1:1 aides)
- Colleges have **no legal responsibility to identify students with disabilities** or involve parents in decision-making. Students must **sign a waiver** to give access to specific information
(FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
- If students are **not making satisfactory progress** they may become **ineligible for financial aid** and may eventually be dismissed from the college

Students should know what their **civil rights** are under the law, so they may effectively advocate for themselves



Admission to College

- A Regents/Local/or High School Equivalency (HSE) **diploma is required** for admission to NYS four year colleges/universities and most community colleges (as a matriculated student)
- Each college has the right to determine its **own admissions policies**
- Students must meet the same **admission criteria, academic & technical standards** required for participation in a class, program or activity; and **code of conduct** required of all students (they must be “**Otherwise Qualified**” despite their disability)

Consider taking any remedial courses before enrolling as a full-time student. Realize summer courses are condensed due to shorter timeframe.

Remedial Coursework (below college level)

- Is not calculated in the grade point average(GPA) requirement
- Credits do not count toward graduation requirements
- Can impose a financial and time burden



TIP



Foreign Language Requirement

- Students with learning disabilities have difficulty acquiring basic skills or academic content due to difficulty **using or understanding spoken or written language**
- Committees on Special Education often **exempt** students with disabilities from the foreign language requirement which can have a long-lasting effect
- Colleges can determine if a foreign language is an **essential component** of a plan of study, and if so, that component need not be altered, waived or substituted
- Disability **documentation** will be needed to support a **request** for a substitution



Students: Consider attempting World Language classes in middle/high school. If unable to pass, it **may** be considered partial documentation(a history) that supports the request for a college course substitution(i.e. American Sign Language).

Schools: Consider documenting data-based rationale(of a substantial language-based learning disability) for foreign language exemption decisions, separate from the IEP.

Class Schedules



- Realize **academic advisors** will likely be **unaware** of a student's possible **need for accommodations**. Students should consider their needs for:
 - Extended time on tests
 - Amount of free time between classes
 - Attention span/length of class (3 hrs., 1.5 hrs., 1 hr.)
 - Time of day (transportation needed, effects of medication)
 - Difficulty/type of course (mix it up)
- **On-line courses** require strong self-direction; self discipline; and time management skills

Students can seek feedback from Disability Services Office prior to or after registration. Ask about teaching styles of instructors to ensure a good match with the student's learning style(if possible). Schedules can be changed if done early enough.



Student Question:
**How many hours per week do you currently study
for one high school class?**



- 3 hours
- 2 hours
- 1 hour
- 0 hours - I don't study

TIP

In college, students will generally need to study/work on assignments at least **6 hours per week** for each class (x 4 classes = **24hrs/per week**)

Student Coursework



- Students must **make arrangements outside of class-time**, to seek help from instructors
- Instructors expect students to consult the **course syllabus** throughout the course, know exactly **what is expected, due dates,** and how assignments will be **graded**
- Each instructor has their own **attendance policy**
- Education comes from a wide variety of sources, some of which **may be inaccessible** to a student with a disability
 - Lectures
 - Writing assignments
 - Read, Study, Research
 - Working with others, Labs, Projects
 - Class Discussions
 - Videos, Overheads, Writing on board
 - Web-based courses/assignments

Disability Services (DS) Office



- **Determines eligibility** for accommodations
- Provides college **support and advocacy** services
- Can help students develop **learning strategies**
- Will refer the student to **additional resources** on campus
- Students must **disclose directly** to the **Disability Services Office** and submit documentation
- Accommodations must be **requested in a timely manner** or they may be denied
- **Services** at a 2-year community college **may differ** from services provided at a 4-year college/university

Check with each college-this office **can go by other names** (i.e. Office of Accommodative Services, Student Resource Center, Student Support Services, Office of Accessibility)



Sources of Documentation



1. Student's Self-report

The student is a vital source of information regarding how they may be limited by an impairment



Students can **expect discussions** about the need for accommodations; narrative of their experience of disability, barriers, and effective/ineffective accommodations

2. Observation and Interaction

The impressions and conclusions formed by higher education disability professionals during interviews and conversations with students



Looking for the connection between the **impact of the disability**, the **described barrier**, and the **requested accommodation**

3. Information From External or Third Parties

May include educational or medical records, reports and assessments created by health care providers, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system



Colleges may request **within reason**, additional documentation of a **diagnosed disability** and the **impact** it has on learning. Most colleges do not provide diagnostic evaluations

Be familiar with laws. The Americans with Disabilities Act-Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) explains that requiring extensive medical evidence of impairments undervalues the individual's history and experience with disability. Colleges **can't create** documentation processes that are burdensome or **have the effect of discouraging students from seeking protections and accommodations** to which they are entitled.



Potential Evaluators

Physical/medical disability

Physician or health care professional

Specific learning disability

Psychologist or Learning Disabilities Specialist

Psychological/emotional disability

Psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist

Best Practice for Documentation

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

- Lists the **credentials** of the evaluator(s)
- A **diagnostic statement** identifying the disability
- **Description** of
 - the diagnostic **methodology** used
 - the current **functional limitations**
 - the **expected progression or stability** of the disability
 - **current** and **past** accommodations, services and/or medications
- **Recommendations** for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or corresponding support services

Colleges **do not prefer or require** high school **504 Plans** as documentation of a disability. Any reference to Section 504 pertains **to the law only**. Submit available documentation before seeking an additional evaluation.

TIP

Accessing Accommodative Services



Accessing **disability services is a separate process** from the admissions process

- ✓ **Requesting** accommodations is **voluntary**
- ✓ No deadline
- ✓ No cost to student

Accommodations from high school **do not automatically transfer** to a college setting-an IEP or 504 Plan does not “follow” the student to college

- If eligible, the student will pick up an “*Accommodation Letter*” which **only identifies the approved accommodations**, not the disability (which is confidential)
- Student must understand how instructors will be informed of approved accommodations and **can choose if and when to use them**
- May be required to request a new accommodation letter at the **beginning of a new semester**

Once approved, accommodations will remain in place at that college. Transferring to a different college will entail a new, yet similar, process.

TIP



Print Disability-Alternate Format

Some students experience barriers to **reading standard print** or **accessing instructional materials** (*i.e. reading disability, visual impairment, mobility impairment*)



- Printed materials can be **converted** into an accessible, **alternate format** (*i.e. electronic text, audio books, large print, or Braille*)
- **Screen reader** software (*Assistive Technology*) can **read** the written words(**e-text**) **out loud**
- Alternate format **requests** must be **submitted and approved well in advance** of need

Students can make an appointment for a demonstration on how this works.
Text-to-Speech software is installed on most computers in college learning labs/centers.



Examples of Reasonable Accommodations



- Extended test time (up to double time)
- Tests read (by computer software)
- Separate testing location
- Use of computer (spell check/typing)
- Use of calculator
- Books in alternate format
- Use of assistive technology
- Access to class notes (note-taker)
- Recording lectures
- Priority registration

Residential Accommodations
(advance notice required) *May be asked for documentation from a physician*

- Accessible rooms/bathrooms
- Fire strobe equipped rooms
- Attached / suite bathrooms for close bathroom proximity or increased privacy
- Extra refrigerator to store medication
- Single rooms (limited)



Accommodations can change based upon the situation. Students must be able to **meet the technical standards of a profession**. Inform DS office if accommodations are not producing the **expected results or are not provided/denied** by the instructor.

Coping With Stress



Poll: Give a Thumbs Up

- If you would say that most students know what strategies they can use to help them deal with stress **AND actually use those strategies consistently?**
- With a lack of coping strategies, students may: miss classes, engage in unhealthy or risky behaviors, develop mental health disorders or drop out

Know where and how to access mental health/crisis services both on campus **and in the local community**



How Can Students Prepare?



- **Participate** in all transition **planning meetings at school**-this provides an opportunity to make choices and improve problem solving and decision-making skills
- **PRACTICE educating others** about their disability/learning style and what's needed to be successful in an academic setting (self-advocacy skills)
- **PRACTICE asking questions** at home, in school and in the community
- Start using a **weekly/monthly planner**/cell phone (calendar, timers, reminders etc.) to improve time management/organization skills
- Expand **independent living skills** (meal preparation, banking, personal care, use of public transportation options, making appointments)
- Attend **college events, visit campuses** while classes are in session

In-School Transition Activities



- Match individual **strengths to career choices/college majors**
- Practice **electronic communication skills** including sending emails and attachments
- Learn different methods of **note-taking systems** (from textbook, from listening)
- Learn and practice **study skill strategies**(to increase concentration, decrease procrastination, boost memory, test preparation)
- Learn how to make use of **library/media center resources**
- Explore and experiment with **available assistive technology** options
- **Identify types of clubs** available at each college of interest (a good way to meet other students with similar interests)
- **Discuss alternate options**(“Plan B”) - What if plans to attend college change or things do not work out once there?

Confidence-Building Starts Now

- It's normal to feel a mixture of excitement and apprehension
- In college, students are considered adults, in charge of their education and needed services, so parents must be ready to empower rather than rescue
- Students must have their own reasons for attending college



- With practice, self-advocacy skills will grow and students will feel more comfortable using them
- **Don't doubt your ability.** There are many students that have overcome disabilities and found successful academic lives and rewarding careers
- Remember, the college accepts students who **they believe have the potential to graduate!**

Resources

Going to College

Offers information and activities for high school students with disabilities about preparing for and going to college. Has resources for school personnel and parents too.

<http://www.going-to-college.org/>

Going to College
A resource for teens with disabilities

Overview | My portfolio

1 My Place
2 Campus Life
3 Planning for College

My Place
Learn how to use your strengths, learning style and interests to set goals for college.

Campus Life
What to expect in college and what professors will expect from you. Tips for good grades, accommodations and using technology.

Planning for College
Learn what you can do now to prepare for and apply to college.

• Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR):

- Coaching and Communication Supports for Post-Secondary Education and Employment
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/new-services-meet-wioa-requirements-vocational-rehabilitation>
- Do You Want a Job That Requires a College Degree?
<https://vimeo.com/483376782>

• College campus disability resource database <https://www.cedardatabase.org/index.php/>

- **Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology(DO-IT)** University of Washington, Seattle.
Accommodation strategies sorted by academic activity and by disability

<https://www.washington.edu/doit/resources/disabilities-and-accommodations/accommodations>

Any Questions?

Thanks for Attending!

Please complete our brief evaluation

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GOOD LUCK!