I. Student Disability Resources and Services (SDRS) will determine on a case by case basis and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations whether the animal is a reasonable and appropriate accommodation for the identified disability. Owners who are in the process of requesting the use of a service or assistance animal are not permitted to have the animal on campus until the process is complete.

a. **Service animals:** The SDRS Director will inquire if the dog is required because of a disability and how the dog assists the individual, including what work or tasks the dog has been individually trained to perform and require documentation to substantiate the disability completed by a treating physician, licensed professional, or qualified mental health provider. This documentation permits A&M - Commerce to determine that: (1) the individual has a disability and that (2) there is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance that the animal provides. Determination of reasonable accommodation will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the following: does the animal pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others; would the animal pose an undue financial and administrative burden on A&M - Commerce; or would the animal fundamentally alter the nature of any of A&M - Commerce’s programs or operations.

b. **Assistance animals:** SDRS will require documentation on the letterhead of a treating physician or qualified mental health provider which permits A&M - Commerce to determine that: (1) the individual has a disability (2) the animal is necessary for the individual to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their A&M - Commerce residence, and that (3) there is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance that the animal provides. Determination of reasonable accommodation will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the following: does the animal pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others; would the animal pose an undue financial and administrative burden on A&M - Commerce; or would the animal fundamentally alter the nature of any of A&M - Commerce’s programs or operations.

c. **Animal’s paperwork requirements:** Before a service or assistance animal is permitted on campus as an accommodation, its paperwork must be on file with SDRS.

   i. **Health and vaccination records:** The animal must have an annual exam from a licensed veterinarian that does not identify health issues sufficient enough to prevent the animal from providing the necessary assistance to the individual. The animal must also have updated vaccinations, including but not limited to, the general maintenance vaccine series and any vaccinations deemed necessary by a licensed veterinarian. The animal must also wear a rabies vaccination tag.

   ii. **Licensing:** Owner must follow all local or home town licensing laws and tag laws. City of Commerce licensing requirements for dogs:

      a. No owner shall have a dog within the corporate limits of the city when the dog has no valid license and tag issued by the city.
III. Owner responsibilities regarding use of a service or assistance animal

A. Members of the A&M - Commerce community with a Service Animal: The supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. The owner must be in full control of their animal at all times, as outlined below. Service animals in A&M - Commerce housing may not be left for extended periods of time either unattended or to be cared for by someone other than the owner. The owner is expected to insure the health, safety, and humane treatment of their animal and submit annual proof of immunizations to the Student Disability Resources & Services Director or A&M - Commerce Human Resources Officer. A&M - Commerce personnel shall intervene if the animal is found unattended, in need of care, or is causing a disturbance.

i. Under control of owner:
   - The animal must be under the owner’s direct physical control with a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the owner is unable because of a disability to use these, or the use of one of these would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If so, the service animal must be otherwise under the owner’s control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).
   - The animal’s behavior must not be disruptive to its surroundings or other members of the A&M - Commerce community. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, jumping on people, barking, growling, taking food from dining area tables, or taking personal belongings of individuals other than the owner.

ii. Proximity to owner: While on campus, in areas including classes, public areas of residences, food venues, or assembled gatherings, the animal must be in close physical proximity to the owner.

iii. Identification: A service animal must wear some type of commonly recognized service animal identification symbol when in public.

iv. Clean up and grooming requirements: The care of the animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. The animal must be housebroken. The owner shall:
   - Always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the dog’s waste and immediately remove and dispose of the waste. Members of the A&M - Commerce community who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of animal waste are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. A&M - Commerce is not responsible for this task.
   - Keep the animal clean, well groomed, and free of pests. If A&M - Commerce facilities are used to bathe the animal, the owner will clean the area when done.

B. Members of the A&M - Commerce community with an assistance animal in University housing: The animal is only permitted within the owner’s residence. The supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. The owner must be in full control of the animal at all times, as outlined above
in Section III.A. Assistance animals in A&M - Commerce housing may not be left for extended periods of time either unattended or to be cared for by someone other than the owner. The owner must insure that the animal is housebroken and observe cleanup and grooming requirements outlined above in Section III.A. The owner is expected to insure the health, safety, and humane treatment of their animal and submit annual proof of immunizations as required to the SDRS and Residential Living and Learning (RLL). A&M - Commerce personnel shall intervene if the animal is found unattended, is in need of care, or is causing a disturbance.

IV. Lack of cleanliness and damages caused by the service or assistance animal

i. All residents of the residence halls are responsible for any extra cleaning required or damage to A&M - Commerce property which is caused by them. The owner shall also be responsible for any extra cleaning required or damage to A&M - Commerce property which is caused by the service or assistance animal.

ii. The owner's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests during the regularly scheduled housing inspection. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence or work area will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a university-approved pest control service. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment.

iii. The owner's residence may be inspected to ensure it is being properly cleaned and that sanitary and safe conditions are being maintained. If required, the owner will be billed for the expense of the additional cleaning required.

iv. The owner's residence may be inspected for physical damage during the regularly scheduled housing inspection. The owner will be billed for the expense of any damage to the residence or the furnishings within the residence that are caused by the animal.

V. Managing disabling conditions and concerns of all members of the A&M - Commerce community

A. Within A&M - Commerce facilities, members of the A&M - Commerce community with medical condition(s) that are affected by dogs (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact SDRS if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a dog in a campus facility and require accommodation.

B. Within all of A&M - Commerce housing, the health and well-being of all roommates, suitemates, and building occupants will be considered.

- Members of the A&M - Commerce community with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact SDRS if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to an animal and require accommodation. Students are encouraged to contact SDRS as early as possible to afford adequate time to make other housing arrangements if needed.
- Roommates/suitemates will be made aware of the planned presence of an animal in their residence by RLL staff.
VI. Exclusion of a service or assistance animal

A. Reasons for consideration of exclusion of a service or assistance animal:
A&M - Commerce may pursue the process for determining if a service or assistance animal should be excluded from campus for the following reasons:

- The animal is not under the direct physical control of the owner.
- The animal’s behavior is disruptive to its surroundings or other members of the A&M - Commerce community.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
- The animal’s presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity.
- The owner fails to comply with any of her/his responsibilities under this policy.

B. Process for consideration of exclusion of a service or assistance animal:

Any member of the A&M - Commerce community may submit a complaint about a service or assistance animal, identifying one or more concerns in the areas listed above in Section VI.A.

1. Persons with concerns are to contact a member of Public Safety or Residence Life. A statement will be taken.
2. An investigation will be commenced by the appropriate department and a determination will be made with respect to any alleged violations of this policy. The determination will be provided to the owner and the individual submitting the complaint.
3. If the investigation determines that any provision of this policy has been violated by a student, the matter will be referred to the Judicial Affairs/Assistant Dean of Campus Life and Student Development for proceedings consistent with the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.
4. In addition to the warnings and sanctions outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, a finding substantiating the violation of this policy may also lead to the exclusion of the animal.

Student Signature _______________________________     Date __________