

Faculty Information 11/02/2019

**STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES / MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

**OVERVIEW**

Chronic health issues and medical conditions impact a student’s performance and attendance in class. It is important to understand these conditions and determine a way that faculty can work with the student while still preserving the integrity of the class experience. Chronic health issues and medical conditions include, but are not limited to cancer, Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, respiratory conditions, cardiac conditions, HIV/AIDS. The symptoms of the disorder may vary throughout the semester, with occasional flare-ups which cause the student to struggle in the class or miss the class. It is critical for the faculty member to talk privately with the student about the impact of the disorder on the student and review accommodations. It is possible that a student may not need certain accommodations if the condition is under control. Always defer to the student as to whether or not the student choses to implement an accommodation at a given time; but be cognizant of the fact that, just because the student does not need an accommodation one week, that does not mean that the accommodation won’t be necessary the next week.

Students with chronic health issues and medical conditions may experience a higher absentee rate. Please work with the student to allow make-up work and be flexible with attendance policies, while also ensuring that you do not fundamentally alter the nature of your course. Courses which require participation as part of the grade or that include clinicals or labs may not be able to be as flexible with attendance policies. If a faculty member is uncertain whether it is appropriate to be more flexible with attendance, please contact the Director of the Student Disability Resources and Services (SDRS) so that a consultation can be scheduled. This consultation may include Department Chairs and/or Deans, to ensure that the discussion fully investigates whether attendance is a critical element with this specific class or whether the faculty member has the discretion of being more flexible with attendance policies and allowing make-up work.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY**

* Include a statement in your syllabus inviting students with disabilities who may have special needs to meet with you privately so that you may confidentially discuss the student‘s needs and reasonable accommodations. Also, at the beginning of each semester, verbally invite students with disabilities and to meet with you privately to discuss their individual and unique needs. Talk about the requirements of the class, special needs of each student (on a case-by-case basis, as each student’s needs are unique), and strategize as to how to implement the reasonable accommodations defined by the Student Disability Resources and Services Director. Never make an assumption about an individual’s abilities. Each individual is unique, and his/her disability impacts him/her in varying ways. If you have concerns, contact the Director of the Student Disability Resources and Services (SDRS).
* Many students with chronic health disorders or medical conditions will require the use of a note taker as a reasonable accommodation. Please assist the student in obtaining a note taker by either announcing to the class that SDRS is hiring note takers, or by singling out good students and asking if they would be interested in the job. Never disclose who the notes are for in order to preserve the confidentiality of the students. SDRS will provide NCR paper to the note taker who is hired and establish how the notes are to be delivered to the student.
* Be flexible with attendance policies and allow make-up work for justified absences, as appropriate. As the professor, only you can determine when a student has missed too much of the class to be successful. Should this occur, when feasible, discuss the option of an Incomplete with the student privately. Please take into account the unique challenges faced by these students and work with them as flexibly as appropriate. If in doubt, contact the Director of the Student Disability Resources and Services so that options may be more fully explored and discussed.
* Be sure that, at all times, you maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the student. If you need to discuss issues or testing arrangements with the student, do so privately.

**Texas A&M University Commerce Student Disability Resources and Services**

Gee Library, Suite 162

903-886-5150

E-mail: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

**Texas A&M University-Commerce at Frisco – 9700 Wade Blvd, University Hall 105, Frisco TX**

Frisco@tamuc.edu

(972) 377-1665

**Universities Center at Dallas – 801 Main Street, Suite C340, Dallas TX**

Dallas@tamuc.edu

(214) 954-3600

**Collin Higher Education Center – 3452 Spur 399, Mckinney, TX 75069**

CHEC@tamuc.edu

972-599-3122

**Mesquite Metroplex Center – 2600 Motley Drive, Suite 100, Mesquite, TX 75150**

Russell.blanchett@tamuc.edu

972-882-7520

**Navarro Partnership – 3200W 7th Avenue, Corsicana, TX 75110**

Virginia.monk@tamuc.edu

903-875-7619

***REMEMBER****:*

**ALL** students must meet the same academic standards for credit in your class. Standards should NOT be lowered. Students with disabilities may use reasonable accommodations, but they are held to the same academic and Code of Conduct standards as any other student.