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Statement of Disability Support Services

Valparaiso University and its faculty have a legal responsibility to provide reasonable accommodation for students who have a diagnosed specific disability but are otherwise qualified for the course or degree program. Any modifications in the manner in which a course is conducted are restricted to changes in the format of instruction or evaluation. Such modifications must not change the academic standards or basic content of the course. Substitution of specific courses in a degree program or general education must not change the standards or basic educational goals of the degree.

Director, Sherry DeMik, Ph.D. 126 Miller Hall, 824 LaPorte Avenue Valparaiso, IN 46383 (219-464-5456)

Learning Accommodations and University Support available through Disability Support Services

1. Additional Academic Advising: smaller semester course loads, long-term planning, and individual attention.
2. Careful selection of courses and sections; aid in accessing tutors; extended time on exams (up to two times the standard time allotment); alternate administration of exams; aid in selecting notetakers for individual classes; front row seating; with concurrence of the University CAPS Committee, occasional substitution of course work required for graduation.
3. Priority registration coordination.

These services are not designed to provide remediation, but rather to accommodate and support a situation which facilitates the student's ability to acquire, process, and communicate information. Accommodations and services are determined by the nature of the individual's diagnosed condition and are provided by Disability Support Services, Miller Hall 126 (464-5456), Valparaiso University. Each academic accommodation is determined on an individual basis and made available to the extent that it does not compromise the University's [Honor Code](#) and the academic integrity of the student's program.

Application for *Disability Support Services*.

As an incoming applicant through the Office of Admission, Valparaiso University.

As a currently-registered Valparaiso University student.

If you are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, learning disabled, or have neurological or physical concerns, please contact the Office of Admissions or

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the Disability Support Services office, Miller Hall 126, so that plans can be made as soon as possible to support your special needs in the classroom.

1. You should apply to your local Department of Rehabilitation Services for supportive funding.
2. You should make sure that your diagnostic work has been reassessed within the last three years. This testing must have been completed by a medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. It must include a clear diagnosis and specifically outline areas of accommodation which will be necessary for your academic success at Valparaiso University.
3. Once admitted to the University and Disability Support Services you will need to sign an [Authorization for Release of Information](#). This will allow Disability Support Services office to inform professors who teach the courses you register for each semester of your immediate needs to be successful in your course work.
4. You will need to meet with the Disability Support Services office at the beginning of each semester to authorize the release of information to new professors.

Student Responsibilities and Hints:

1. Be sure to maintain contact with your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor at home about your progress and any needs you may have.
2. Students must have a copy of a complete assessment no more than three years prior to admission to Valparaiso University. The testing must include not only the official diagnosis but assessment results and recommendations for academic support (classroom learning accommodations).
3. In order to be enrolled in Disability Support Services students must make an appointment with Sherry DeMik by calling 219-464-5456. or by calling Paula Katsahnias, 219-464-6956. You may want to arrange a meeting during the Summer FOCUS Program or early during the Fall Welcome Days.
4. You will be asked to sign a *Authorization for Release of Information* form so that personnel from Disability Support Services may share your situation with appropriate faculty members. Confidentiality about your situation is very important to all of us at Valparaiso University but we shall need this waiver in order to talk with those who will be able to help you in your learning endeavor.
5. If you will need to obtain textbooks from *Recording for the Blind*, you, on your own, must submit an application giving diagnostic information indicating the long-term need for taped texts. There is a nominal life-time fee for this service. Forms must be signed by a certified professional. You should do this as soon as possible. Applications may be obtained from:

Recording for the Blind
20 Rowel Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
800/221-4792

6. If you will need a four-track variable-speed tape recorder that plays the taped textbooks from *Recordings for the Blind*, this is provided through:

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20542

These tape recorders may be obtained from the Public Library located in the County Seat of the county in which the student resides. This is a free service. The application to obtain a tape recorder through this service must be signed by a certified professional and may be sent to:

State Library of Ohio
Talking Books Program
65 South Front Street
Columbus, OH 43266-0334

7. We shall write a letter together which lists the important classroom accommodations necessary for your academic success. You will then return the next day (or we shall mail the letter to you during the summer) to receive copies of the letter which you will share with your individual teaching faculty for the following semester.
8. You will arrange a meeting with each professor as soon as possible but no later than the end of the second week of classes. You will present the Disability Support Services letter and discuss the specific accommodations needed. Together you will come to agreement about which classroom accommodations will be necessary. Those accommodations should then be held on record with your informational file in the Disability Support Services office.
9. Set realistic goals and priorities for course work.
10. Be prepared to request 'reasonable accommodations' in your course work so you can learn and demonstrate your knowledge of course material.
11. Become knowledgeable and comfortable about describing your disability so you can advocate for yourself with faculty.
12. Keep a written calendar with all relevant dates, assignments and appointments. Do not try to keep a schedule in your head.
13. Sit toward the front of the classroom to maximize your contact and to reduce distractions.
14. If approved, use a tape recorder during lectures. Selectively tape-record key points using the 'pause' switch. Get permission to tape lectures from individual professors during the first class period.
15. Listen to the tape or review your written notes as soon as possible after class to refresh your memory and to fill in any gaps.
16. Estimate how long given class assignments will take, generally planning on two hours outside of class for every hour in class. Build in study breaks.
17. If you learn better by listening to others and then discussing what you have learned, start a study group.
18. Make notes of any questions you might have so that they can be answered before the next exam.
19. If you are having trouble or feel overwhelmed, talk with the professor immediately. Do not hesitate to seek help. It is critical that you link up with campus supports before you fall behind in your work.
20. You are responsible for knowing the nature of your disability and how the disability impacts learning and which accommodations best enhance your ability to learn.

21. You have the responsibility to advocate for reasonable accommodations from your professors and from ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES. Learning to be a self-advocate is essential to achieving independence and success in college.
22. You are encouraged to find classmates who are willing to share notes. You are to take notes if possible so that you have a basis for comparison of the notetaker's notes. By borrowing notes, you often find a study partner. Photocopying notes or providing carbon paper for an immediate copy of notes have both been effective methods.
23. Register for classes as soon as you are eligible and order taped texts immediately. If your recorded text will not be ready in time to start classes at the beginning of the semester, request to be trained in the use of the Adaptive Technology computer workstations. Each workstation has software that will allow your text to be read to you through the computer.
24. If you are experiencing personal problems such as adjustment to college, dealing with your disability, with a roommate, a relationship, or a family concern, call the Student Counseling Services Center (5002) and ask for an appointment. State that you are a participant in the Disability Support Services if you wish.
25. If you are unsure about selecting a major and want additional help and support in this process, call the Career Center (5005). An interest interactive video program with follow-up career counseling is available.
26. If you become ill or must miss class for any reason, call your professors as soon as possible, preferably before class, and explain that you will not be in class. If you are notifying the University of an extended illness, call the Dean of Students office at 5411. You are still responsible for all information given in class so make appropriate plans to get the materials.
27. If your diagnosed disability requires testing accommodations you may wish to consider these:
 - a. Taking the test in isolation away from classroom distractions. Make arrangements with the professor ahead of time to take the exam in a quiet office or arrange to take it in Huegli Hall by special arrangement with the professor.
 - b. You may need increased time to process information on a test. You may request up to two times as long as the normal time if this is part of your learning accommodation. All arrangements are to be made with the professor.
 - c. If you need to type your exam answers on a typewriter or computer, make these arrangements with your professor.
 - d. If you need oral exams these must also be arranged with the professor.
 - e. If you need to answer the exam into a tape recorder this must also be arranged with the professor.

NOTE: The Valparaiso University *Honor Code* is one of the distinctive characteristics of the University and all students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policy, as well as writing and signing it on all written work.

Adaptive Techonolgy - Computer Work Stations

Disability Support Services has, in addition to the standard university-used software, *WindowEyes* designed by G.W. Micro and *An OpenBook Unbound Ruby Edition* designed by Arkenstone. Both are 'talking' packages that allow the

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student to 'hear' the text as it is seen on the computer screen. *WindowEyes* reads aloud any Windows-based application while *An Open Book Unbound* reads aloud scanned documents - i.e., textbook pages. For more information on the use of the adaptive technology software call Sherry DeMik at 464-5456.