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Philosophy & Preamble

Students with disabilities attending St. Norbert College will be integrated as completely as possible within the college community even though the college does not offer a specialized program for persons with disabilities. All students, including those with disabilities, are subject to the guidelines outlined in the college catalog and The Citizen: A Student Guide to the St. Norbert College community (Student Handbook).

St. Norbert College is committed to providing equal opportunities for success to students with disabilities. Keys to success in pursuing an education at St. Norbert College are:

- Timely preparation and planning for college.
- The ability to realize personal strengths and limitations.
- The assertiveness to seek assistance when necessary.
- Involvement in academic and extracurricular activities.

Involvement in the St. Norbert College community will prepare the student for success after college by giving the student the opportunity to develop personally, intellectually, and spiritually.

The office of Academic Support Services offers a variety of support services. All support services are elective and must be requested by the student. The policies and procedures adopted by Academic Support Services at St Norbert College are guided by the following statutes:

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

A. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), Section 504

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first nation “civil rights” legislation for persons with disabilities.

Section 504 is a program access statute that applies to entities that receive federal funds. (It is this mandate that has promoted the development of disability support service programs in colleges and universities over the last 20 years.) It requires that “No individuals with disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by an executive agency.” A “program or activity” is defined as including all of the operations of a local educational agency, system of vocational education, or other school system.
Subpart E of Section 504 deals specifically with institutions of higher education. It requires that institution (public or private) be prepared to make appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable modifications to policies and practices in order to allow the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs and activities available to students without disabilities.

Under the provisions of Section 504, colleges may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of his/her disability, and requested reasonable accommodation are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all education programs and activities.

Section 504 specifies that colleges may not limit the number of students with disabilities admitted, make pre-admission inquires as to whether or not an applicant has a disability, use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of students with disabilities because special provisions were not made, exclude a student with a disability from any course of study, or establish rules and policies that may adversely affect students with disabilities.

B. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (PL 101-336)

The ADA consists of five sections or “Titles”. Title II addresses public entities including community colleges. Title II mandates that a public entity, including its educational programs, shall make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures when modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of a disability unless these modifications present undue hardship or substantially alter a program. Title II also requires the provision of accessible facilities and auxiliary aids and services by public programs.

The ADA, initiated in 1990, reinforces the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act and extends compliance requirements to all state and local entities regardless of federal funding. The ADA requires that “No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”
Recent Legal Decisions & Implications

1. **The college must provide the accommodation.** After providing documentation of their disability, students are not required to assume the responsibility for securing a necessary accommodation. The college is required to prove reasonable accommodation for a student’s known disability so that the student has an equal opportunity to participate in the courses, activities, or programs. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled that a college could not charge students for necessary accommodations.

2. **Expense of accommodation is not undue hardship.** Providing an auxiliary aid or incurring an expense to ensure access would not constitute undue hardship to the college. In determining what constitutes an undue hardship, the OCR views the entire financial resources of the college rather than any single department.

3. **Accommodation must be documented.** The college may refuse to grant a student’s request for an accommodation that is not specifically recommended in the student’s documentation.

4. **Handouts in alternate format.** If a student with a visual impairment is enrolled in a class, the instructor must provide all handouts in the alternate format requested by the student. In addition, all handouts must be made available to students on the same day they are distributed to students without disabilities.

5. **Classroom must be accessible.** The classroom’s location must be changed to provide accessibility for a student with mobility impairment. The college does not need to make every classroom accessible but must provide for the participation of students with disabilities when “viewed in its entirety.”

6. **Material on reserve in the library.** The instructor must make course material on reserve in the library available in alternate formats for students with visual impairments.

7. **Extended time.** Extended time is a reasonable accommodation for a student whose documentation specifically calls for that accommodation. The college is required to ensure that the student is provided additional time to complete tests and/or course material in order to provide an equal opportunity for that student.
8. **Confidentiality of diagnostic information.** Faculty and staff do not have the right to access diagnostic information regarding a student’s disability. Faculty and staff need only know the accommodations that are necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity for the student.

9. **Personal liability.** An individual faculty member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be help personally liable.

10. **Academic freedom.** Academic freedom does not permit instructors to decide if they will provide special aids and services for students with documented disabilities in the classroom.

11. **Testing accommodations.** Accommodations for testing such as readers, scribes, or the use of adaptive equipment must be provided for a student with a documented disability.

12. **Students may file a grievance.** A student with a disability may not only file a claim with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, but they may also file a complaint with HUD.

13. **Personal services and aids.** The college is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care, or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses.

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**STUDENT DISABILITIES POLICY**

**Definition of Disability**

St. Norbert College subscribes to the definition of disability stated in the AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) and section 504 of the REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973:

A person is disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; if he or she has a history of disability…

The College does provide limited diagnostic services to determine the presence or type of disability. The College does provide supportive services to students who present documentation of disability.
The College’s Responsibility to Students with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS. Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to either the College environment or to academic processes which make it possible for students with disabilities to perform the functions necessary for fulfillment of College degree requirement. Reasonable accommodations include neither those which require significant difficulty or expense for the College nor personal items, such as eyeglasses.

Responsibilities of a Student with a Disability

Any student who seeks accommodations for a disability is expected to:
1. Provide appropriate documentation, sufficient to identify the nature and extent of his/her disability, to the Director of Academic Support Services.
2. Request necessary services and/or auxiliary aids in a timely manner. The student is requested to provide information regarding needs for accommodation at least six weeks in advance of the beginning of an academic term so that the College can respond appropriately.
3. Meet with the Director of Academic Support Services at the beginning of each academic term for a needs assessment and secure the appropriate “Request for Accommodations” form.
4. Inform appropriate College personnel of his or her accommodation needs. Such “appropriate personnel: may include but not limited to, instructors, residence life staff, academic advisors, campus security personnel, and staff of Health and Wellness Services.
5. Immediately report any problems or concerns associated with the granted accommodations.
6. Provide updated information to the Director of Academic Support Services should his/her needs change.

Responsibility of the Director of Academic Support Services

The Director of Academic Support Services will:
1. Review the documentation to validate the disability and ensure that the student qualifies for services as a student with a disability.
2. Grant the request for reasonable accommodation in the form of services and/or auxiliary aids that are supported by the student’s documentation.
3. Coordinate the granted accommodations.
4. Assist the student in advocating for their documented needs.
5. Assist faculty in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
Responsibility of the Faculty

Faculty members dealing with a student with a disability are expected to:

1. Assist in maintaining the confidentiality of the student with a disability. The student is required only to supply the information related in his/her accommodation plan. The student is not required to present to the faculty member the documentation of the disability. If the student willingly discloses information about the disability, the faculty is not allowed to share that information with other staff, students, or faculty without the informed, written permission of the student, as required by law.

2. Provide a statement in the syllabus indicating how a student with a disability may be granted an accommodation. Reviewing the statement the first day of class is also helpful to the student.

3. Encourage students with disabilities to use the available campus resources to ensure their success. These campus resources may include but not limited to the tutoring program, the TA’s of the discipline, the Health and Wellness Center, and Academic Support Services.

4. Encourage students with disabilities to meet and discuss any issue related to the course and the needs of that student.

5. Contact the director of Academic Support Services with questions or concerns about accommodations or a student with a disability.

6. Provide the requested accommodation as indicated on the “Academic Support Services Accommodation Request Form.” The faculty member should endeavor to accommodate the student with the assistance of Academic Support Services.

Students with Disabilities and General Education Requirements

Approved by General Education Committee December 2, 1994

For students with learning disabilities or, in some cases, students with physical disability, the General Education Committee shall make decisions about General Education Requirements in accord with the following policy:

1. The student shall have a medical and/or psychological assessment prepared by a licensed and/or certified professional that diagnoses the problem and suggests appropriate academic accommodations. The assessment shall be on file in the office of Academic Support Services.

2. With consultation between the Director of Academic Support Services and the faculty members who teach the student, the College shall provide the reasonable and appropriate accommodations identified in the assessment as means of meeting the specific learning
needs of the student so that she/he is able to meet the General Education Program requirements.

3. Substitution of a course in order to meet distribution area requirements shall be considered by the General Education Committee only if the college is unable to provide any other appropriate accommodation or if testing demonstrates incontrovertibly that the student is incapable of meeting a distribution area requirement through selection of one of the approved courses.

4. The allowable substitution shall be determined by the General Education Committee in consultation with the Direction of Academic Support Services and the faculty in the discipline(s) from which a substitution is being considered.

5. Appeals regarding requests for appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations are made to the Academic Accommodations Review Panel in accord with the “Appeals Process for Disputes Regarding Academic Accommodations.”

PROCEDURES

The Office of Academic Support Services offers and coordinates services to St. Norbert College students with disabilities. The staff is available to assist the student, but the responsibility for making needs known rests with the student.

General Services provided by Academic Support Services:

Academic Accommodations:
Tutoring
Counseling referral
Testing adaptations
Note takers
Textbooks in non-print format
Interpreters for the deaf
Assessment of learning styles and study skills
Instruction on study skill techniques
Liaison with faculty regarding accommodations
Special equipment (limited availability)

Access Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations for individual needs
Reasonable accommodations for Residential Life Assignments
 Appeals Process – Disputes Regarding Academic Accommodations

B. Informal Procedure
   a. The student or faculty member who believes he/she has a valid basis for complaint regarding a requested academic accommodation shall first attempt to resolve the issue with the student or faculty member involved. If this effort proves unsuccessful, the complainant will discuss the concern with the Director of Academic Support Services who shall investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the disagreement in a timely manner. If a resolution is not achieved, the complainant may then initiate formal procedure. The appeal should be made within five working days of the unresolved complaint.

C. Formal Procedure
   a. A written appeal shall be directed to the Associate Academic Dean who forwards it to the Academic Accommodations Review Panel which is comprised of three appointed faculty members representing each of the academic divisions: (a) a person knowledgeable about disabilities; (b) a member of the General Education Committee; and (c) a faculty member at large.
   b. The complainant will prepare a general description of the complaint and sign the statement (in a case which the complainant has been diagnosed with a developmental Express Writing disorder, the Panel will waive the requirement for written statement and allow the complainant to present his/her case orally). The Associate Academic Dean shall solicit a written response from the other party and submit all documents to the Panel.
   c. The Panel will consider the petition as well as the response of the other party, and investigate further as it deems appropriate. The Panel will conduct a hearing if either party so requests.
   d. The Review Panel will render a decision regarding the complaint within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. The decision will be communicated in writing to the student, the faculty member, the Director of Academic Support Services and the ADA/Section 504 Officer of the college.
   e. Either party, if he/she chooses, appeal through the College’s Affirmative Action Officer to the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.
Interaction and Communication Tips

Many of us lack experience interacting with individuals with disabilities. Observing the following principles may help to ease discomfort and contribute to more successful interactions with students with disabilities in the classroom and one-on-one:

1. Maintain an open mind about what a student with a disability can or cannot do. Let the student determine her or his own capabilities.
2. Act as an advocate for treating students with disabilities with the same dignity and respect you would any student.
3. Always address a student with a disability directly. Speak clearly, at a moderate pace and volume, and allow the student time to respond. Do not address the student’s companions, including interpreters and aides, instead of the student.
4. Do not speak more loudly than usual to a student with a hearing disability. The louder the voice, the more likely the sound will distort when passing through a hearing aid.
5. When communicating with a student who has a hearing disability, make sure there is sufficient lighting and that your mouth is not obscured. Be prepared to repeat or rephrase what you are saying to facilitate comprehension.
6. Face your class while you lecture. Turning towards the blackboard while you talk makes it difficult for any student to hear what you are saying. All students benefit, especially those with visual and hearing impairments.
7. It is okay to offer assistance to a student with a physical disability. Please ask before assisting the student.
8. Listen attentively when talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. Never pretend to understand. Repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue in and guide your understanding.
9. Do not lean or hang on a person’s wheelchair. The chair is part of the individual’s personal body space.
10. Do not be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions such as “See you later,” or “Did you hear about this?” that seems to be related to a person’s disability.

Advising Students with Disabilities

Advising students with disabilities presents many challenges to the college advisor. However, skilled advising can go a long way towards ensuring the success of a student with a disability. To effectively advise a student with a disability, it requires a thorough understanding of the student’s goals as well as the student’s disability, the barriers the college may have inadvertently
created and the resources the college provides that can be used to assist the student in pursuing his or her educational aspirations.

- **Become familiar with difficulties.**
  Advisors who become familiar with the difficulties imposed by a particular disability can logically deduce the importance of some advising practices. For example, if the student is taking medication; are there certain times of the day when the student is less alert? This could have important implications when developing a course schedule. In a similar fashion, students experiencing clinical depression often have more difficulty in the morning. Depending upon the amount of time allowed to pass from one class to another, any student with a mobility issue might have difficulty with classes scheduled back to back in different buildings. Students needing extended time for exams also must schedule appropriately.

- **Become aware of educational barriers.**
  Educational barriers are less visible but no less demanding for students with disabilities. Students with learning disabilities often have difficulty with structure and organization. Instructors who break material down into small sequences and then present it in a logical step-by-step fashion serve them well. Advisors should attempt to learn something about the teaching style of various instructors and enroll students with disabilities accordingly.

- **Know the rules of your institution.**
  It is also important for advisors to know the rules and regulations of their institution. Only if you know the rules are you in a position to take advantage of them for the benefit of the students with whom you are working. Students may qualify for a course substitution. Advisors need to know the procedures for such things as obtaining a course substitution if they hope to assist students who qualify.

- **Develop collaborative relationships with key campus resources.**
  Finally, when working with a student who has a disability, an advisor would be wise to develop collaborative relationships with faculty, financial aid, counseling and other organizations within the college. This can be one of the most important tasks an advisor can undertake.
Description of Disabilities

Approximately 428,280 postsecondary undergraduate students identify themselves as having disabilities. This counts for approximately 6% of the student body. The number of students with disabilities is gradually increasing due to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the public school system. Better diagnostic methods have also lead to the better understanding of students who have experienced difficulty in the classroom.

Although students with similar disabilities may require different accommodations, it is useful for faculty to be aware of typical strategies for working with students who have various types of impairments. With this basic knowledge you will be better prepared to ask students to clarify their needs and to discuss accommodation requests. The following provides basic information on the disability and the typical accommodations:

**Learning Disabilities**: documented disability that may affect reading, processing information, remembering, calculating, and spatial abilities. Accommodations for students who have specific learning disabilities may include:
- Note takers
- Extended time, alternative testing arrangements
- Computer with speech output, spell check, and grammar check

**Mobility Impairments** may make walking, sitting, bending, carrying, or using fingers, hands or arms difficult or impossible. Mobility impairment results from any causes including amputation, polio, club foot, scoliosis, spinal cord injury, and cerebral palsy. Typical accommodations for students with mobility impairments may include:
- Note take, lab assistant
- Accessible locations for classrooms, labs and fieldtrips
- Adjustable tables and/or seating
- Computer equipped with special input device (i.e., speech input, alternative keyboard)

**Health Impairments** affect daily living and involve the major body systems and or other body parts. Typical accommodations for students who have health impairments may include:
- Note taker
- Extended exam time
- Flexibility of attendance requirements
**Mental Illness** includes mental health and psychiatric disorders that affect daily living. Examples of accommodations for students with these conditions may include:

- Note taker
- Extended time for exams
- Non-distracting environment for exams

**Hearing Impairments** may make it difficult or impossible to hear or understand lectures, access multimedia materials, and participate in discussions. Examples of accommodations for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have an auditory processing disorder may include:

- Interpreter, FM system, note taker
- Open or closed captioned films
- Written directions for assignments and lab instructions
- Preferential seating and elimination of unnecessary background noise

**Asperger Syndrome** is a neurobiological disorder first recognized in 1944. The syndrome was not included in DSM IV until 1994. It has been recognized only in the past few years by professionals. The syndrome is characterized by autistic-like behaviors. The Asperger Syndrome individual has normal intelligence and language development. There are marked deficiencies in social and communication skills.

Individuals with Asperger Syndrome exhibit a variety of characteristics and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Persons with Asperger Syndrome show deficiencies in social skills, have difficulties with transitions or changes, and prefer routine. Obsessive routines and preoccupation with a particular subject of interest are two other characteristics. Individuals with Asperger Syndrome have great difficulty reading nonverbal cues and cannot judge personal space. Asperger Syndrome individuals are often overly sensitive to sights, sounds, tastes, smells and feel of objects. Asperger Syndrome individuals perceive the world very differently. The Asperger Syndrome individual often exhibits behaviors that appear to be odd or unusual and those behaviors are the results of neurological differences.

Individuals with Asperger Syndrome have normal intelligence and often have exceptional skill or talent in one specific area. They may be viewed as odd or eccentric. Their vocabularies may be very well developed, however they may exhibit odd prosody and peculiar voice characteristics. These individuals are often very literal.

**What can you expect from a student with Asperger Syndrome?**

- Beginning of the semester is very difficult for these individuals. Their behavior will improve over the course of the semester.
- Individuals with Asperger Syndrome may tend to ask and answer too many questions. They may want to respond to every question or talk about a topic that is on the fringe of your lecture material.
- Inappropriate social behaviors (expelling gas, touching body parts, or other behaviors that often only very young children exhibit).
- Their vocabulary is usually very well developed. However, they tend to be very literal.
- They may not have the ability to appropriately interact with their peers.
- Students with Asperger Syndrome have limited use of gestures, inappropriate facial expressions, and clumsy body language.
- Their level of frustration or anxiety may be displayed as anger. They may strike out at others if the level of frustration or anxiety becomes more than they can manage.

What strategies can you use to maintain the appropriate classroom environment?

- Limit the number of responses the individual can give in any one lecture time (2 responses and 2 questions – number will depend on the type of course you are conducting).
- If the student displays inappropriate social behaviors, directly and firmly ask the individual not to display these behaviors. Give the student the option of leaving the room if they have the need.
- The student with Asperger Syndrome may need accommodations. These accommodations are going to vary. The accommodations will not be the same for all Asperger Syndrome individuals.
- Group work for students with Asperger Syndrome will be very difficult. Members of the group may find this student to be odd and difficult. You may want to have a private discussion with members of the group. You may not disclose the disability but focus on acceptance of the student with Asperger Syndrome and ask the group to try to discover the student’s special skills.

Instructional Approaches to Students with Disabilities

Many teaching strategies that assist students with disabilities are known also to benefit non-disabled students. Instruction that is provided in an array of approaches will reach more students than instruction using one method. The following are teaching strategies that will benefit all students in the academic setting.

Students surveyed reported the two most helpful things professors can do to facilitate student learning:

- Speak slower when lecturing
- Speak louder in large classrooms
Required text
• Select a text with a study guide or one which has study features built into each chapter

On the syllabi
• Include a statement that encourages students to inform faculty members of their special needs as soon as possible to ensure that those needs are met in a timely manner
• Make a verbal announcement, stating this information for students who may not be able to read print syllabi

Before the lecture
• Write key terms or an outline on the board, or prepare a lecture handout
• Create study guides
• Assign advance readings before the topic is due in the class session
• Give students questions that they should be able to answer by the end of each lecture
• Present written information in an audible form as well as a written form (be sure to provide all written course materials to no-print readers in accessible formats and in a timely manner, i.e., at the same time everybody else gets these materials.)

During the lecture
• Briefly review the previous lecture
• Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, graphs
• Provide visual aids in alternative formats for non-visual learners in the class
• Allow the use of audio recorders
• Emphasize important points, main ideas, key concepts
• Face the class when speaking
• Explain technical language and terminology
• Speak distinctly and at a relaxed rate, pausing to allow students time for note-taking
• Leave time periodically for questions
• Administer frequent quizzes to provide feedback for students
• Give assignments in writing, as well as orally

Grading and Evaluation
• Consider alternative test formats and multiple grades for various tasks
• Work with the student promptly to make testing arrangements with Academic Support Services to provide prescribed accommodations.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Students who use Academic Support Services are directed to meet with the individual professors during office hours at the beginning of the semester in order to discuss how their disability may impact the specific course. The student will provide the professor the “Accommodations” form that indicates the accommodations for that student. Some students choose not to identify themselves, thereby choosing not to utilize recommended class/test modifications, for various reasons. Other students may be involved in a learning disability assessment for much of the semester and may find they are eligible for support services in the middle, or even at the end of the semester. It is important to realize that any student requesting classroom accommodations must make reasonable requests for appropriate accommodations.

**Questions and Answers**

1. **What do I do if I suspect a student has a disability?**

   Do not tell a student you think he/she has a disability. Approach the student as you would any other student having difficulty in the class. Inquire about what might be impacting the student’s progress in the class. A student with a disability will likely disclose at this time if the difficulties are disability-related. Refer the student to Academic Support Services if he/she discloses a disability or indicates he/she suspects a disability. If neither of these scenarios occurs, we recommend providing the student with a list of campus resources, including Academic Support Services.

2. **Is a student required to divulge the nature of the disability?**

   No, students are not required to tell you the nature of their disabilities or to provide copies of their disability documentation. Students requesting reasonable accommodations do have to provide you with an Accommodation form confirming that they have a documented disability and listing the approved accommodations.

3. **Do I need to accommodate the student’s disability without any written verification from Academic Support Services?**

   No. Students who have been verified for services have written confirmation. If a student does not have a “Reasonable Accommodation” form, please refer him/her to our office in JMS 116.
4. Who is eligible for exam accommodations and who determines what accommodation they receive?

Students with disabilities who have functional limitations that would impact their ability to take exams may be eligible for accommodations. The most common accommodations are extended time and the use of a quiet room. While it may sometimes seem that students with disabilities are advantaged in testing arrangements over their non-disabled peers, each accommodation is carefully considered and supported by the documentation of their disability. Accommodations are provided only to ensure that a student’s performance on an exam is representative of their mastery of the subject, rather than a reflection of their disability.

5. Should I grade students with disabilities differently?

No. Students with disabilities need to be held to the same academic standards as other students. You are not required to provide specialized materials to the student, or to change your teaching method.

6. How do I submit test that will be proctored by Academic Support Services?

Tests are to be forward to Academic Support Services over email or faxed or delivered. It is appreciated if tests are forwarded at least 24 hours in advance. If you have questions, please contact Academic Support Services. Completed tests will be delivered to the faculty member’s office unless an alternative location is requested.

7. What are note taking accommodations?

Some students with disabilities have difficulty taking notes in class because of a disability. To accommodate this disability, Academic Support Services provides an opportunity for the student to receive copies of someone else’s notes. The accommodation is provided only when the student is in class; it is not a substitute for attendance.

8. How can I assist a student in getting a note taker from the class?

A student who wants an in-class note taker will give the professor an Accommodation Form asking for their assistance in recruiting a student-note taker from the class. For privacy reasons, it is important not to identify the student with the disability. The note taker will deliver the notes according to the arrangements that are made. Please refer the note taker to Academic Support Services to complete the appropriate paperwork and to receive further instructions.
9. In the past I have had a student with a disability in my class who was very disruptive. He told me that he was late as a result of his disability and that there was nothing I could do about it. He also interrupted my class lectures and group work, and when reprimanded told me that he was protected by the law. Is that true?

All students, regardless of disability status, are required to display appropriate behavior and meet the academic expectations contained in your syllabus. Students are expected to behave civilly, attend class and participate appropriately. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be made but you are not required to modify academic standards to accommodate inappropriate or disruptive behavior. In addition, Faculty is recognized by having jurisdiction over academic matters such as class attendance, tardiness and due dates for assignments.
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www.bradley.edu
www.calstatela.edu
www.northampton.edu
www.washington.edu/doit

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