

Information for Parents

The transition from high school to college can be a difficult time for the parents of a student with a disability. Up until now, you have been required to play an essential role in their academic life.

We recognize that you may have reservations about your student's transition to higher education and may feel compelled to be a part of their accommodation planning at the post-secondary level. We want to assure parents that we have the student's best interests in mind and given the opportunity, will assume the role of becoming the student's advocate.

Understanding that you may be concerned about your son or daughter's ability to effectively convey their needs and speak up on their own behalf, we ask for your assistance in preparing your student for the university experience by taking the following steps:

- Assist the student in becoming informed about their disability and history of accommodations.
- Ensure the student understands and can effectively communicate their needs, strengths, interests, and challenges.
- Allow the student the opportunity to practice stating their needs and asking pertinent questions.

We believe taking these steps will help the student in becoming a competent self-advocate and pave the way for satisfying experiences with our office and with faculty upon arriving at the university.

The Intake Meeting

The initial interactions between DS staff and the student are crucial to all parties in building a solid foundation for future communications. We want for students to feel comfortable coming to us for assistance should they encounter barriers in their learning environment due to their disability. The intake meeting is a critical first step in developing this comfort and rapport with the student. It also provides the counselor with the opportunity to get a feel for how knowledgeable and confident the student is in sharing information about past services and what accommodations the student is seeking at the college level.

As such, we ask that you do not attend this meeting with the student. You are welcome to accompany them to our office and the DS counselor, with the student's

permission, will meet with you after the interview to answer questions or address concerns.

Confidentiality

Recognizing that parents have a high level of interest in the student's academic experience, we encourage students to maintain an open dialogue with you. However, the open dialogue must be between the student and their parent as DS staff members are required to follow the guidance contained in The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA. Under FERPA, DS staff members are not permitted to share information with, or provide records to, parents unless we have the express written consent of the student.

We realize that many parents may feel frustrated by FERPA regulations. However, in order to protect the student's rights and the relationship between them and their counselor, DS will hold the student's educational records confidential. In those instances where a parent would like to speak directly with a DS counselor regarding the student's accommodation records, DS will ask the student to be present.

