

TO: The Senate
FROM: The Educational Policy Committee
DATE: March 23, 1983
SUBJECT: Policy on Handicapped Students
DISPOSITION: To the Presiding Officer for Implementation

(rescinded 10/10/94)
(SD 94-8)

Preamble

While, in attempting to ensure the rights of all persons to obtain access to courses for which they are qualified, the university has established an enviable level of physical accessibility to most academic facilities, it has not established adequate procedures for advising, registering, evaluating, and record-keeping procedures for disabled students. There is a strong likelihood that the absence of such procedures is inhibiting the opportunities of handicapped students.

Such procedures should be designed to serve disabled students in a fashion which is both sensitive and realistic. They should guard against the weakening of academic standards, yet provide for reasonable modification of programs and courses to meet the needs of disabled individuals. They should ensure that instructional faculty be involved as early as possible in the counseling of their potential students who are handicapped, and recognize that a most important element in educating the disabled involves engendering an awareness in the instructor of each student's abilities. They should establish time-frames for the counseling and registration of handicapped students so that each student who, on the basis of handicap, requests special access, facilities, or other consideration makes that request in sufficient time for it to be evaluated and met. They should ensure that disabled students are not excluded from a program solely because of their handicap-related inability to complete an element of the program which, though desirable, is not an essential component of the program. They should reflect the facts (1) that although the number of permanently handicapped students is small, access to education is the one factor which is most likely to enable those students to become net contributors to society; (2) that most persons spend some parts of their lives suffering from a disability; and (3) that improvements made to learning situations for handicapped students usually improve the lot of the non-handicapped. They should also emphasize that the responsibility for academic performance lies ultimately with each student, and that a disabled student is the best single judge of his/her own capabilities.

Finally, the procedures should at all times recognize that academic decisions are, and should be, made by the faculty of the university through its designated units, and that modifications to a degree program can be made only by the unit responsible for the program. These procedures should not be construed to prohibit or discourage reasonable accommodation to handicapped students, but rather can act as a framework to ensure that the rights of every handicapped student are protected.

Resolved that, effective with the fall semester, 1983, for the spring semester, 1984, the university implement the following procedures for disabled students.

- A. Undeclared Handicap. A disabled student may choose not to formally declare the handicap, and to use the usual registration and counseling procedures. In this case, the student will not generally be entitled to special consideration in classes, beyond those which would be granted to the non-handicapped; Part B below does not apply.

- B. Declared Handicap. If a handicapped student formally declares a handicap through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), then certain procedures should be completed prior to the student's admission to a program or registration in a course in which the student will request special consideration.

1. Admission to a Program

Before admission to a program, a handicapped student should, through DSS, advise the academic unit offering the proposed major of the program sought and the nature and extent of the disability. The disclosure should be as complete as possible, and comprehensible to non-specialists.

The academic unit may then schedule an interview with the student, so that the advisor(s) can discover the extent of the student's skills, and the student can learn what the program involves. In any case, within four regular semester-weeks of the disclosure, the academic unit shall advise the student:

- a. that the handicap does not, per se, appear to prevent the student's meeting the requirements for the program; or
- b. that, while the handicap may prevent the student's fulfilling some of the requirements for the program, those requirements may be replaced by other, designated academic alternatives which the student could be expected to fulfill; or
- c. that the handicap will prevent the student from fulfilling indispensable requirements for that program, and the student should not or cannot pursue that program.

2. Admission to a Course

In order that the individual needs of disabled students may be met as fully as possible, every disabled student is responsible for evaluating a course in the context of his/her handicap before registering for that course. If the student desires, the DSS shall provide letters of introduction to enable students to have pre-enrollment access to classrooms and other academic exercises. Such visits should be conducted so as to avoid disturbance of the course.

In any case, by the end of the seventh week of the full semester prior to the session in which registration will be sought, the disabled student should, through the DSS, give written notice of his/her handicap to the units housing courses in which he/she wishes to enroll, and indicate any special accommodations requested in those courses. The units shall evaluate the requests and respond in writing to the student and the student's academic advisor within two class weeks. The response should indicate:

- a. that the student will be accommodated in the course and given essentially the same course content as the non-handicapped, evaluated appropriately, and awarded a letter grade;
- b. that the student could be accommodated in a modified course. If the modification would be such as to render quantitative evaluation inappropriate, the student may consider registering under a pass/no pass option if that option is available;

- c. that the accommodations requested by the student are incompatible with the course objectives; or
- d. that the unit has some other response which speaks to the issues of accommodations, evaluations, and grading for that student in that course.

3. Records of Modified Courses

The student's academic unit may indicate, in writing, its willingness to accept a profoundly modified course for that student's program; decisions will be made at the department level for departmental requirements, at the school level for school requirements, etc. A unit's decision shall not be binding on another unit if the student subsequently changes major. The student's academic unit should therefore ensure that records of such course modifications are maintained, and that its students' records indicate which credits have been obtained in modified courses.

4. Appeals from the Decisions of an Academic Unit

Within two weeks of an academic unit's response to a request from a disabled student, that student may institute a written appeal with the academic unit through DSS. The first step should occur within one week, and should be an informal meeting of the student, the DSS, and the academic unit's designated representative. If the situation has not been resolved, a formal meeting shall be held within 10 days, involving the academic unit's designated representative, the student, and a member of the DSS staff. If resolution does not then occur, the ultimate decision shall be made by the dean or coordinator of the appropriate major academic unit offering the course or program, or a designee.

The appeals procedure should be completed within five weeks of its initiation. If the academic unit does not respond to an appeal in a timely fashion, the appeal shall be upheld.

Approving

L. Beineke
H. Davies
M. Downs
J. Haw, chair
S. Hollander
E. Nicholson
R. Svoboda

Disapproving

Abstaining

Absent

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H. Davies			
M. Downs			
J. Haw, chair			
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