

University of Wisconsin Faculty Document 1071

Madison 2 May 1994

Report of the Committee on Access and Accommodation in Instruction

In April of 1993, the University Committee constituted an ad hoc committee to develop a campus policy on access and accommodation in instruction for students with disabilities. Committee members were Bob Christiaansen (Kinesiology), Read Gilgen (L&S Learning Support Services), David Griffeath (Mathematics), Charles James (German and Curriculum and Instruction), John Moore (Chemistry), Michael Streibel (Curriculum and Instruction), Kenneth Streit (Law School), and Edna Mora Szymanski (Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education). The committee was also assisted by Donna Jones (Office of Affirmative Action and Compliance) and Trey Duffy (McBurney Disability Resource Center).

The committee has met regularly since its appointment. Representatives from the McBurney Center were invited to describe current procedures and policies. Two students with disabilities, who were involved with the McBurney Center, attended on occasion to provide feedback. The committee members developed, debated, and refined the policy line by line. Thus, the attached policy represents the results of a consensus process.

Current federal and state legislation (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Wisconsin State Statute 36.12) prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in university programs. Title II of the ADA requires that the campus provide persons with disabilities with reasonable access to services, programs, and activities. The Chancellor has appointed an ADA coordinator (i.e., Donna Jones, the Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Compliance) to ensure compliance with the ADA by facilitating campus-wide implementation of the this legislation.

The legislation requires that academically qualified students with disabilities must be reasonably accommodated in instruction. Faculty have an important role to play in securing such accommodations because at the University of Wisconsin-Madison they have primary and statutory responsibility for academic and educational activities. The following policy describes the relevant principles, processes, and structures.

UW-Madison Faculty Policy on Access and Accommodation in Instruction

We believe in the right of all students who are enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to full and equal educational opportunity. Disability should not be the basis for exclusion from educational programs. All students are entitled to an accessible, accommodating, and supportive teaching and learning environment.

Responsibility for shaping the teaching and learning environment and maintaining the highest academic standards rests with the faculty. Responsibility for implementing legislation regarding persons with disabilities rests with faculty, deans, and the Chancellor (through the campus Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator). Shared governance and cooperation between faculty and college and campus administrations is necessary to ensure that reasonable and timely accommodations exist for students with disabilities. Instructional content, pedagogy, assessment, environment, and individual difference must all be taken into account. The UW-Madison Faculty Senate adopts the following principles, structures, and processes:

Principles

Implementation of policies requiring reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty, in a timely manner, of their need for special instructional accommodations. Faculty, either directly or in coordination with the McBurney Center, are expected to work with students to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Such accommodations may be provided by the McBurney Center, directly by faculty, or through other arrangements mutually agreeable to the student and faculty member. If the suitability or venue of a proposed accommodation is uncertain, the instructor should provide the best possible accommodation until the situation has been reviewed through established appeals processes, unless doing so would constitute an undue burden on the faculty member or department, or a demonstrably unfair advantage to the student.

Structures

- A. The University Committee shall charge the appropriate faculty committee(s), which will include student and academic staff representatives, to work with the ADA coordinator (1) to recommend relevant instructional accommodation policies to the Chancellor, and (2) to review access and accommodation appeals not resolved at the school/college level.

- B. Deans of schools and colleges shall regularly provide faculty and instructional staff with appropriate training and information regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation, and about appropriate and available technical assistance.

- C. Chairs of departments shall designate a member of the faculty, and directors of instructional support units a member of that unit, to serve as an Access and Accommodation Resource Coordinator (AARC) with the responsibility to inform faculty, staff, and students about accommodation issues and policies, appropriate responses to student disability accommodation requests, and available appeals procedures. In schools or colleges in which there are no departments, or in which the school or college is the major focal point for educational programs, deans may, alternatively, appoint an AARC at the college level.

The AARCs shall also communicate regularly with the Division Level Representatives (DLRs). The DLRs have been designated by Deans and Directors to facilitate the processing of academic staff and classified employee disability accommodation requests (per the Disability Accommodation Policy for Classified Employees, 1/31/92; and the UW-Madison Academic Staff Disability Accommodation Policy, 3/1/93).

Processes

- A. The University of Wisconsin-Madison shall provide access and accommodation-related training and information to students, faculty, and staff on a regular basis. This includes, but is not limited to, notifying students through appropriate media and communications networks that they are responsible for communicating their need for disability access and accommodation to course instructors as soon as possible -- preferably before the beginning of a semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized.

- B. Departments, schools and colleges shall review the reasonable access and accommodations needs of their students on an annual basis, and provide a written summary report to the next level of academic administration. College level reports to the Provost shall be shared with the University Committee.

- C. The Chancellor and deans will assist departments and other instructional units in locating and obtaining the resources needed to provide reasonable access and accommodation for students with disabilities.