Director’s Note

With the consolidation of the University’s Downtown Denver campus and the Health Sciences Center campuses, opportunities exist to expand and/or provide comparable student services on all campuses. One example of this is our office - the Office of Disability Resources & Services (DRS).

In February, DRS expanded our program to include the students at the two health sciences center campuses. We opened a temporary office at the 9th Avenue location and will establish a permanent office at the Anschutz campus in the near future.

In this newsletter, we will introduce you to the staff, explain our role on campus and provide general information regarding disability-related issues for students and faculty in the postsecondary setting.

We are very excited about the opportunity to assist the students, faculty and staff at the HSC. We look forward to meeting you and working with you.

Feel free to stop by our office and/or send us questions via e-mail.

Meet the Staff

Lisa E. McGill is a nationally certified counselor who has worked in both inpatient and outpatient settings prior to entering the college and university environment approx. 20 years ago. She has been involved in the disability community at the local, state and national level. Most recently she completed a two year appointment as the National Coordinator of the DisAbility Concerns Knowledge Communities for NASPA: Association of Student Affairs Professionals. Also, she is the Chairperson Emeritus of the Rocky Mountain Unit’s Board of Directors for Recording the Blind and Dyslexic.

Sherry Holden joins our staff with over 25 years of experience working with persons with disabilities. She worked at the University of Colorado Hospital’s Rehabilitation Unit for the past 16 years. In this position, she provided resources, information and technical assistance for patients to assist them with their disabilities. She has an extensive history of advocating and protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and was part of the grass roots effort to enact the ADA.

We hope our combination of clinical and educational experiences will assist the HSC community provide equal access to those students with disabilities pursuing a health profession.
Purpose and Role - Disability Resources & Services

There purpose of our office is broad and includes the following:

1) Assessment – we meet with the student & conduct an interview/assessment and review documentation from a licensed professional to determine if the condition rise to the level of a disability in the postsecondary environment. If it is determined the student is an otherwise qualified student with a disability, accommodations will then be provided to assist the students with demonstrating their abilities not their disability.

2) Advocacy – we will assist the student in addressing any issues, concerns related to accommodations, equal access to an education, etc.

3) Referral services – we can refer students, faculty, and/or staff to local resources which may assist with addressing disability-related issues.

4) Educational Outreach – various training modules are available to assist faculty and staff, i.e. interacting with persons with disabilities, the accommodation process (educational & clinical settings) and an overview of legal issues (Sect. 504, ADA, current case law).

Accommodations – What are they?

Accommodations are often discussed as tools or adaptations that are provided to ensure equal access to an education. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act have established broad parameters clarifying that universities may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and they must provide meaningful access to the institution’s services, programs, and activities.

Determining accommodations for students is a dynamic process. We must carefully consider each individual's disability-related needs within the context of the specific postsecondary setting. In other words, what are the limitations and what should be provided to level the playing field?

Accommodations include but are not limited to:

- Notetakers in the classroom
- Textbooks in alternate format (digital audio – CD, enlarged print)
- Interpreter or Captioning Services

Training Modules

We have training modules ready to go. If you would like to learn more about the following topics for your academic department and/or student group, just contact our office.

Topics include:

- Interacting with persons with disabilities
- Overview of legal issues
- Accommodation Process

Each presentation is approximately one hour in length and can be adapted for your specific audience.

The role of accommodations is to provide equal access to an education. There is no guarantee of success.

While accommodations are provided by the university at no cost to the student, personal services must be provided by the student, i.e. personal attendant.