Faculty Letter: AY 2015/2016

Dear Faculty:

Disability and Access (DA) has developed the following informational letter for your use and understanding of DA procedures as you prepare and develop your semester course curriculum and materials.

**Suggested syllabus statements:** We have supplied suggestions which create awareness of services for students with accommodations and for students who think they are in need of academic accommodations. These are found on the Faculty Resources web page at <http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/dac/facstaff/>.

**Livescribe Smartpens:** Disability and Access provides Livescribe Smartpens to some students who are eligible for a notetaking accommodation. These pens record the class while the student takes hand-written notes. Students are reminded that the audio recording is for their use only and may not be shared with other students under any circumstances. Students are instructed to delete the audio recording as stated in the Equipment/Software Loan Agreement.

**Note:****St. Olaf does not have a policy that prohibits any student from recording a class.**

**Digital and print reading materials:** All course materials, including e-textbooks, web articles, PDF files, Moodle pages, videos, PowerPoint slides, and course packs used or assigned for your class must be accessible -- that is, readable by text-to-speech screen readers for students with print disabilities, or in the case of videos, captioned for students with auditory or processing disabilities.

**For print material:** Since many scanned documents are not automatically text-recognized, they will need some additional work before posting to your website, e-mailing to students, or displaying on your Moodle Page. Please visit our [Faculty Resources page](http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/dac/facstaff/) for more information on creating accessible materials.

**For video:** Please ensure that any video material used in your class contains subtitles, and that subtitles are enabled when you show it. If video content you have selected for your course is not already captioned, please consider locating an alternate video, or having the video captioned by a captioning company.

**For course packs:**

· Make certain that print articles are scanned from clean text (with no underlining or margin notes).

· When scanning books, press hard at the center binding to avoid shadows, since text appearing in the shadow is unrecognizable to text-to-speech or Braille conversion programs.

· Make sure the text is straight on the page, and not copied askew, since inaccurate text recognition will occur.

***If you need assistance with or clarification of any of these accessibility concerns, please contact Laura Knobel-Piehl at 507-786-3288.***

**Information regarding Accommodations:**

Students request accommodations because they choose to use their right to equal access to the academic curriculum and environment, as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act as Amended, 2008. It is a student’s responsibility to arrange any necessary academic accommodations through DA. The accommodations are determined and approved by a DA Specialist after a thorough interview with the student and review of the student’s documentation.

**Accommodation Letters:** Disability and Access (DA) will notify faculty of approval of the student’s current academic semester accommodations. All letters are emailed to the student and copied to the instructor. **The accommodation letter is approved for one (1) academic semester only**. Students are required to meet every term with their Access Specialist to review and renew their accommodations, based on the barriers encountered by the student, within the course requirements/environment. The student’s Access Specialist, Nancy Cheeseman, MA, NCC, LPC; or Laura Knobel-Piehl, will email this letter, every semester. Please save these letters so that you can access them during the semester as needed.

Students are expected to contact you directly to discuss their accommodations after the letter has been delivered. **Students do not need to disclose the nature of their disability or diagnosis, please do not ask the student for this information.** **If a student does self-disclose a disability and you have not received the appropriate accommodation letter via email**, **you should not provide accommodations until formally approved; please refer the student to Disability and Access to complete the necessary procedures for accommodations.**

Neither your standards of quality, integrity, nor the essential elements of your course should be changed or compromised because a student has an accommodation. **Accommodations are never provided retroactively.**  **Faculty are not to accept an accommodation letter that does not have the current semester listed.**

**Concerns about students:** If you have concerns about the academic performance (including attendance and participation) of a student with an accommodation letter or if you need help figuring out the best way to work with a student with an accommodation letter, please contact the Access Specialist listed on the accommodation letter. Disability and Access works closely with the class deans and receives copies of [Continuous Reporting Systems (CRS)](http://wp.stolaf.edu/deanofstudents/crs/) reports for DA-registered students. DA meets with students who are referred to us by the dean, faculty, and staff, to discuss academic challenges and to determine if accommodations are necessary and warranted. If a student is **not** determined eligible for disability accommodations, we will assist the student in locating other student resources on campus (such as academic support and tutoring, counseling, etc.). It is very important that instructors send CRS forms for any struggling student early in the term.

**Testing:** Students with the accommodation of extended testing time and/or a separate room for testing are required to consult with you a week before a test to finalize testing arrangements. **If you are able to arrange an alternate testing location near the regular classroom, that option is preferred.** If you cannot arrange the location, the student will submit an online form to the ASC **three (3) school days prior to the exam**, and we will locate a room.

If the student takes an exam in an ASC-provided location, you are responsible for delivering the exam to the ASC. You may do so by hand-delivering a hard copy of the exam in a sealed envelope during our office hours (M-F 8-5), or by emailing the exam as an attachment to *ASC Office Coordinator BreAne Hampsher (hampsher@stolaf.edu)*. **We ask that you deliver the exam no later than 8:00 a.m. the day of the exam.** An ASC student worker will be responsible for returning all completed exams in a sealed envelope directly to your office.

If a student requests testing accommodations and has not spoken with you previously, you may ask the student to take the exam in the classroom and then stay after class or move to a nearby classroom to accommodate the extended time. However, since you have not had adequate time to arrange an alternate room, it is very reasonable to refuse to do so at the time a test is to begin. If the student comes to the ASC to request a testing room the day before or the day of the exam, the ASC will try to make arrangements if a room is available. If there is no room available the student will need to take the exam in class. Call the Academic Support Center (ASC) at ext. 3288 if you need help solving an unexpected testing situation. ASC is the primary contact for all alternate testing arrangements.

**Confirmation of testing arrangements:**  Once we have arranged a testing location, you and the student will receive an e-mail from the ASC contact person spelling out the details. Please read the email carefully and make sure it corresponds with your understanding of the arrangements.

**Alternate testing and the Honor Code:** Included in the confirmation email is the amount of time student has to finish the exam based on whether they are allowed regular time, time and one half, or double time. When the student signs the Honor Code she/he is stating that she/he stayed within the time limits. Students taking tests in an alternate testing site are asked to leave their backpacks and cell phones in the Academic Support Center (ASC). For faculty arranging the testing room, we suggest informing the students where they need to keep their backpacks and cell phones.

**Testing arrangements for multilingual students:** It is solely the professor's discretion whether to provide time and one half on exams for multilingual students. This decision is *not* an academic accommodation provided by Disability and Access. Whenever possible, these tests should be administered within the classroom at the regular exam time. The ASC does not arrange testing rooms for multilingual students, unless they are students with documented disabilities. ***Please contact Anne Berry (berryag@stolaf.edu) or review the*** [***http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/***](http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/) ***for more information.***

**Attendance accommodations:** Some students have an accommodation that states that the disability may have an impact on class attendance and the requirements and parameters of attendance may need to be redefined. This accommodation does not mean that the student has unlimited “excused” absences. Please contact Nancy or Laura to discuss the requirements and to determine reasonable accommodations for your particular class.

**Grades:** Accommodations are the way that St. Olaf protects a student’s civil rights and “levels the playing field” for students with disabilities. Please hold students with disabilities to the same standard as you hold other students in the class and grade them accordingly.

**Other useful information:**

**Disability and Access staff are available for individual consultation, staff meetings, retreats, class presentations:** Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about disability, access, and accommodations, by arranging an individual meeting or consultation, or by inviting us to attend department meetings or retreats, conduct a “new faculty tutorial” on Accessible Services (such as developing coursepack and materials, video content or other digital), or speak to students in education/pedagogy classes on topics of disabilities. Refer to DA webpage <http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/dac/facstaff/> for additional information.

**Test Anxiety and Disability Accommodations:** Test anxiety, in and of itself, is not considered a disability. Also, test-taking is not considered a major life activity as defined by law and therefore does not meet the criteria for eligibility for disability accommodations/services on campus. However, anxiety symptoms can impair a student’s ability to demonstrate what he/she knows. When it spreads to social and work life, anxiety can be a symptom of a bigger disorder, which could necessitate disability accommodations. If faculty observe behaviors which may warrant further investigation into difficulties in the testing process, please refer the student to DA for an in-depth interview to determine eligibility for accommodations.

The [Counseling Center](http://wp.stolaf.edu/counseling-center/), located at Boe House, also has staff qualified to 1) discuss causes and assessment of test anxiety disorders and 2) determine when to refer students for disability accommodations. Faculty can refer students who express “test-anxiety” difficulty to the following resources, which are available for **all** students:

**Academic Support Center:** Tutoring, study skills, test-preparation skills development, and other academic support. Buntrock Commons, 2nd Floor, Room 108 (507-786-3288) [wp.stolaf.edu/asc](http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/).

**Multilingual students:** Please contact Anne Berry (berryag@stolaf.edu)

or review <http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/multilingual-student-support/> for more information.

**Writing Help:** In-person writing consultations for any stage of writing process and craft, such as: brainstorming ideas, strengthening theses, developing thesis support, organizing paragraphs, and refining sentences. Located in Rolvaag Library, by the reference desk. Drop in or call 507-786-3288 to make an appointment.

**Speaking Help:** Consultants help students to argue clearly and coherently in speech, to organize and develop thoughtful presentations of their work, to listen and respond to each other in discussion, and, in general, to develop the speaking skills that enable them to be responsible and knowledgeable citizens of the world. Location in Tomson 110, or call ASC 507-786-3288, or drop by! Walk-in appointments *may be possible if a consultant is available*.

**Stress Management:** [Counseling Center](http://wp.stolaf.edu/counseling-center/) located at Boe House , 1308 St. Olaf Avenue, the second house on the left as you walk down St. Olaf Avenue from campus.

**Strategies for students without formal accommodations:** Faculty may use discretion to approve informal test accommodations, e.g. extra time, quiet room, breaks, alternative format, make-up exam. Faculty are encouraged to consider alternatives to exams such as: research paper, oral presentation, project-based. Faculty can encourage students to come to their offices and/or attend class review sessions as a way to reduce additional stress.

**Temporary Condition Accommodations:** DA can provide services to students experiencing a temporary health condition (such as broken limbs, concussion symptoms, or short-term healing associated with surgery) that limits the student’s ability to function in the classroom and/or physical environment. Temporary conditions are not considered permanent disabilities, and academic accommodations may need to be reviewed and approved at regular intervals. Students with a temporary condition need to follow the same eligibility process as students with permanent disabilities. The student needs to meet with an Access Specialist for an intake interview and provide documentation to determine eligibility for academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services. Not all temporary conditions are eligible, and it is therefore possible that an accommodation may not be provided in a specific circumstance.

**Universal Design for Learning:** What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles for curriculum development that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather, flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. (Source: Center for Applied Technology. [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org/)).

Sincerely,

Nancy Cheeseman, MA, NCC, LPC (cheese1@stolaf.edu)

Laura Knobel-Piehl (knobel@stolaf.edu)

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