

## **Information Regarding Attendance and Related Issues Disability Support Services**

In each course, faculty members identify and define the essential course requirements. Faculty members are not required to lower standards or make substantial modifications of course requirements for accommodation purposes. Because attendance may be integral to the educational process, professors determine attendance policies, not the DSS office. Similarly, faculty members determine policies regarding participation, make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. However, some students have very real significant medical conditions and/or disabilities that are unpredictable in nature and, unfortunately, may impact attendance and timely work completion.

Disability Support Services advises students to discuss attendance and assigned work with their professors in a timely manner, preferably at the beginning of the semester. Based on these discussions, students can make an informed decision about their ability to meet course requirements and pursue alternatives as needed.

### **WHAT FACULTY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ATTENDANCE AND RELATED ISSUES FOR SOME STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Faculty may consider a reasonable equivalent or alternative way for students to successfully complete essential course requirements without compromising course standards. The DSS office acts in an advisory role regarding any course adjustments for students with disabilities. Each situation should be considered on a case by case basis.

The **Office of Civil Rights** has provided the following guidance questions to be used when determining if attendance is essential to a course:

- Are there regular classroom interactions between the instructor and students and among students?
- Do student contributions during the class period constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the course?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance and are they noted in the course syllabus?

### **WHAT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ATTENDANCE AND RELATED ISSUES**

In most cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives. For example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences.

Students should contact their professors as soon as possible if they will be absent from a class and follow up regarding missed work immediately.

### **WHAT CAN DSS DO FOR STUDENTS?**

DSS can provide students with written disability verification letters, based on appropriate medical and/or psychological documentation. DSS carefully screens which students receive these letters. The letters address the potential impact of the student's medical condition and/or disability.

These verification letters are provided to the student, who is then responsible for giving them to each

