

Focus on Disability Awareness

An Occasional Bulletin from the Office of Disability Services for LVC Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

10 Ways That Faculty Can Help Students With Disabilities

1. Make syllabus available four to six weeks before beginning of class and, when possible, be available to discuss syllabus with students with disabilities considering taking the course.
2. Make sure copies of syllabus are legible, and that information is organized meaningfully.
3. Include a statement such as "if you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please let me know so that I can assist you" in your syllabus.
4. Begin lecture/discussions with brief review of information presented last class and overview of topics about to be covered. Similarly, end each class with a brief recap of what was covered.
5. Use chalkboard or overhead projector to outline lecture material, reading what is written or what is on previously prepared, large print transparencies. Make information on board or overheads available for a brief time after class. Some professors prepare and distribute "advance organizers" of each lecture - an outline of the main topics and subtopics that will be covered, as well as brief statements about important concepts that will be introduced.
6. Highlight important points, terminology, and key concepts both orally and visually in lecture. Be alert for opportunities to present information in more than one sensory modality (visual, auditory, tactual). Use a multi-media approach whenever possible - variety in presentation maintains interest and attention.
7. When introducing new ideas, try to begin by using familiar vocabulary rather than the characteristic idiom of your field, then introduce technical terminology to convey precise meaning. Try to present concrete examples of abstract ideas.
8. Because understanding and learning new material depends greatly upon students' foundation of general knowledge about the topic, help them to bring prior learning to bear on new information. Help them forge connections with what they already know.
9. Try to elaborate lecture points by citing passages in the textbook or other readings. Pause frequently for intermittent questions, and create opportunities for class discussion of ideas. This will provide both professors and students with valuable feedback on how well the material is understood.
10. When possible, use a textbook with an accompanying study guide.