Ross Center 101: Information for Faculty
Agenda

1. Function of the Ross Center
2. Legal context
3. Referrals
4. Registration & notification letters
5. Flexible attendance and extensions
6. Questions
What does the Ross Center do?

❖ Provide classroom accommodations for all registered students with disabilities
❖ Work individually with students to provide access
❖ Work with faculty to ensure equity
❖ Explore assistive technology with students
❖ Coordinate accommodations for quizzes, tests, and exams
❖ Provide academic coaching to eligible students

About 85% of the students we serve have “invisible” disabilities
**What are accommodations?**

- **Reasonable academic adjustments, services, equipment, etc.** that:
  - remove barriers caused by disabilities
  - provide equal access to enable students to demonstrate mastery
  - enable otherwise qualified students to access curriculum
- **Laws:** ADAAA, Section 504

- What does “reasonable” mean according to the ADAAA?
  - Cannot pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others
  - Cannot place undue financial or administrative burden
  - Cannot make a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum (e.g., presentations in a public speaking course)
  - Cannot fundamentally alter the manner in which services are provided

**Fundamental alteration**

- Determining if an approved accommodation fundamentally alters a specific course or program is an interactive process.

- Consider:
  - What are the established essential requirements of the course?
  - In what way does the accommodation alter one or more of the essential requirements?
  - Are there alternative ways in which the student can meet the fundamental objectives of the course?

- **The US Dept of Education Office of Civil Rights has clarified** that decisions about fundamental alteration must be made by a group of knowledgeable and trained individuals at the college within the program and the disability services office.

Source: OCR No. 01-16-2120
Refer directly to us if...
- A student discloses a diagnosis or disability
- A student shares that they had accommodations or special services in high school
  (key words: IEP, 504, SPED/special ed, SEN, “separate room”)

Include us in your “menu” of resources if...
- A student is struggling academically but does not mention a diagnosis or disability

Things to consider...
- Don’t assume a diagnosis
- Don’t make promises of accommodations
- Keep students’ information confidential
- Appropriate documentation is necessary to receive accommodations
Registration Process

1. Student completes registration request on our website (must have UMB email and ID #)

2. Documentation of disability
   • Functional limitations
   • Removal of barriers

3. Meeting with Ross Center staff
   • Documentation is reviewed
   • Accommodations are determined

4. Student selects accommodations for each course, each semester
   • Can be tailored to the course requirements

5. Faculty receive e-mails outlining accommodations
   • Disability is not shared with faculty
   • Accommodations are not retroactive

6. Faculty and student are encouraged to work with Ross Center with questions
**Following Notification Letters**

| Do not **deny** approved accommodations outright | - Violates federal law  
| | - Violates students’ civil rights  
| | - Can lead to OCR complaints, lawsuits, and/or Title IX investigations  
| | **However, we will work with you** if you believe an accommodation fundamentally alters your course, so reach out to us! |

| Do not **provide additional accommodations** | - Creates inconsistency, confusion, and conflict between instructors and students  
| | - Opens the door to legal issues  
| | - Only the Ross Center can determine if an accommodation is legally appropriate  
| | **Any leniency you deem appropriate should be something you would offer to any student,** not only to students with disabilities |
## Flexible Attendance / Extensions

### Flexible Attendance
- Separate from the university’s excused absence policy
- Suggested allowance: 2x the number of times the course meets weekly
  - If the course meets 3x/week, student would be entitled to 6 absences per term

### Extensions
- Extensions on assignments or test dates, generally 24-48 hours
- Not a blanket accommodation
- May not be possible on some collaborative tasks

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**We welcome conversations about what makes sense for your class!**

### Procedures and Expectations
- Student must notify you via email, generally prior to missing a class or assignment deadline
- Not required to disclose specific circumstances
- Accommodation is for **episodic symptoms**; should not be used on every assignment
We want to hear from you!

Ross Center for Disability Services
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