



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

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July 2009

To: Faculty members
From: Susan Johnson, Associate Provost for Faculty
Marcella David, Special Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Associate Provost for Diversity
Re: Academic accommodations for students with disabilities

Our strategic plan, *The Iowa Promise*, recognizes the link between diversity and educational excellence. In our efforts to become one of the nation's premier public institutions, we have identified the recruitment of diverse faculty, staff and students and providing a supportive environment for success as key strategies. Disability is an important dimension of diversity, and our goal is to be welcoming and supportive for members of our community who are differently abled.

In addition, as an educational institution, The University of Iowa has legal responsibilities. The University is required by law to provide access to all of its programs and activities to UI students with disabilities and is prohibited from discriminating against these students on the basis of their disability. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is the specific requirement for faculty to provide reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act requires making public accommodations available for persons with disabilities. The UI accepts only those students who are qualified for admission and participation in its programs; however, at times an accommodation is necessary to ensure equitable access. We are writing to thank those of you who have provided—or will provide—academic accommodations to students with disabilities and helping the University fulfill its commitment to ensuring equal access.

As the University unit designated to work with students with disabilities, Student Disability Services (SDS) reviews documentation to determine if a student has a qualifying disability and identifies reasonable accommodations based on functional limitations. Through academic and other accommodations, SDS helps level the academic playing field for qualified students with disabilities. SDS shares the faculty's commitment to maintaining academic standards for all students, with and without disabilities, from admissions through graduation. The office does not endorse giving students with disabilities a competitive advantage.

At the beginning of each term, SDS advisors meet individually with students to review course syllabi and identify what, *if any*, accommodations are required. Each of the student's instructors is notified of classroom accommodations and/or exam accommodations through the Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form. **SDS advisors need to hear from you if you have any questions or concerns about necessary accommodations listed on the form (335-1462).** You also may seek the assistance of your collegiate dean's office in implementing student accommodations.

If a student approaches you about disability accommodations without a SAAR form, it is important for you to refer that student to SDS before providing accommodations. In this way, we can all remain assured students with disabilities receive the accommodations to which they are entitled and University standards are maintained.

A question and answer sheet entitled [Assisting Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Instructors](#) is intended to answer common questions about providing accommodations to students. Should you have additional questions or need assistance about working with students with disabilities, please contact Student Disability Services at 335-1462. You may refer to the Student Disability Services website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/faculty/index.html>.

Thank you for making The University of Iowa accessible for students with disabilities. Please feel free to contact us or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (319-335-0705 or diversity@uiowa.edu) with questions.

c: Wallace D. Loh, Executive Vice President and Provost
Tom Rocklin, Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students