

Three Rivers Community College

Services to Students with Disabilities

Statement of Purpose

Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for individuals with disabilities. To this end, TRCC seeks to ensure that no qualified person is excluded from participation in, is denied the benefit of, or otherwise is subjected to discrimination in any of its programs, services, or activities. Achieving full participation and integration of persons with disabilities requires the full cooperation and effort of all TRCC faculty and staff. The college will strive to maintain excellence in its services and to deliver those services equitably and effectively.

Definitions

Disability. A student's assurance of equal educational opportunity rests upon foundations of federal law, specifically the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. By federal law, a person with a disability is any person who: 1) has a physical or mental impairment; 2) has a record of such impairment; or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking or learning.

Qualified. A qualified individual with a disability is a person with a disability who meets essential academic and technical standards for acceptance and participation in the college and its programs with or without reasonable modifications, auxiliary aids and services, or removal of barriers.

Defining Reasonable Accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job activity, or facility that ensures an equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity. Aids, benefits, or services need not produce equal results, but must afford an equal opportunity to achieve equal results. When necessary, a disability service provider will consult with faculty regarding whether an accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity or whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction being pursued or to any directly related licensing requirement. In doing so, disability service provider will examine the following:

- Barriers between individuals with disabilities and the campus environment in accessing courses, programs, services, jobs, activities or facilities without accommodations;
- Requested modifications, accommodations, and auxiliary aids;
- Whether the proposed accommodations would fundamentally alter the nature of the course, program, service, job, activity, or facility;

Whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction or to any directly related licensing requirement;

- Whether effective alternatives exist that would allow the individual with a disability to participate without lowering essential requirements or fundamentally altering the nature of the program.

When the College determines that a modification related to facilities or communication would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden, a disability service provider shall acquire the written opinion of the proper authority, i.e. department chair of impacted discipline, providing the reasoning supporting the decision.

Accessing Services at TRCC

New Students. There are no questions regarding disabilities on the application for admission to TRCC. Self-disclosure of a disability is voluntary. This process must be initiated by the applicant (not by an advocate, parent, school, or community organization). A form for self-disclosure of a disability is sent with the application for admission. The self disclosure form must be completed, signed and delivered or mailed (not faxed or e-mailed) to the college Advising and Counseling Office (Room A113). When the form is received, the college will send a letter inviting the student to set up an appointment to meet with a college disability service provider. The student will be provided with a copy of these services. This document is available in various formats and on the college's web site (<http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/>).

Continuing Students. If a student with a disability did not self-disclose upon application but wishes to do so subsequently, the student (not an advocate, parent, school, or community organization) must initiate the self-disclosure process that leads to the college's recognition of the student's disability. It is the student's responsibility to disclose his/her disability to the college. The student must obtain a form for self-disclosure of disability. The form is available in the Advising and Counseling Office (A113). The completed and signed form must be delivered or mailed (not faxed or e-mailed) to the Advising and Counseling Office. When the form is received, the college will send a letter inviting the student to make an appointment to meet with a college disability service provider. The student will be provided with a copy of these services. This document is available in various formats and on the college's web site (<http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/>).

New and Continuing Students. If the student is seeking academic adjustment, it is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate and adequate documentation of disability that includes a current, comprehensive medical, psychological, psychoeducational, neuropsychological or other diagnostic evaluation of the disability and an evaluation of the impact of the disability on the individual in a college setting. Guidelines for documentation of a disability are provided in detail below.

While no qualified student will be denied appropriate auxiliary aids or service, such support need not be immediately available at all times. In order to ensure sufficient time to make provision for

aids or service, it is the student's responsibility to request academic adjustment/modifications in a timely manner, following appropriate procedures. Generally, three weeks advance notice is the minimum, with some types of academic adjustments requiring more advance notice. If a request is submitted with less than the minimum time needed to arrange the request, college personnel will make a reasonable attempt to provide modifications, but cannot guarantee that the request will be met without delay or substitution.

Guidelines for Documentation of a Disability

Documentation of any disability should include:

A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis. The diagnostic systems used by the Department of Education, the State Department of Rehabilitative Services, and/or the current editions of either the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM) or the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems of the World Health Organization (ICD) are the recommended diagnostic taxonomies.

A description of the diagnostic criteria and or diagnostic test(s) used. This description should include the specific results of diagnostic procedures, diagnostic tests used, and when administered. When available, both summary and specific test scores should be reported as standard scores and the norming population identified. When standard scores are not available, the mean, standard deviation, and the standard error of measurement are requested as appropriate to the construction of the test. Diagnostic methods used should be congruent with the disability and current professional practices within the field. Informal or non-standard evaluations should be described in enough detail to enable an understanding of their role and significance in the diagnostic process.

A current description of the functional impact of the disability. The current functional impact on physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities should be described either explicitly or through the provision of specific results from the diagnostic procedures. Currency is critical to the applicability of disability information to the context of the request for academic adjustments.

Medications, treatments, assistive devices/services currently in use or prescribed. A description of all steps taken to ameliorate the impact of the disability and their estimated effectiveness should be noted. Included also should be significant side effects that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive performance.

A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time. This description should provide an estimate of the change in functional limitations of the disability over time and/or recommendations concerning the predictable need for re-evaluation.

The credentials of the diagnosing professional(s). Provide the name, title, and credentials (e.g. licensure or certification) of the individual(s) conducting the evaluation.

Suggestions for academic adjustments from professionals with a history of working with the individual. It is valuable to have the suggestions of practitioners regarding academic adjustments, and such information will be given consideration. Recommendations for specific accommodations, adaptive devices, and/or assistive services that may ameliorate the functional impact of the disability and provide fuller access would be helpful in the review process. However, Learning Services professionals working with students with disabilities will determine appropriate academic adjustments on a case-by-case basis, based on the specific needs of the individual student.

Whenever possible, documentation of disability should be received directly from the diagnosing professional(s). Disability documentation will be held for seven years after the student's last date of enrollment.

Responsibilities of Students

Students must complete and submit the form for self-disclosure of a disability to the college Advising and Counseling Center (Room A113). Students should also contact and meet with a college disability service provider and provide adequate documentation of disability to their disability service provider as soon as possible after admission.

Because course requirements and learning environments vary from one semester to the next, students with disabilities are also responsible for meeting with their college disability service provider to request academic adjustments/modifications and to discuss any other educational needs or concerns prior to, or, at the beginning of each semester. It is also recommended that students meet with their instructors early in each semester to discuss any special learning needs, as well.

Students are to notify their college disability service providers of any problems associated with the academic adjustments/modifications, or any other educational problem as soon as possible. College staff persons can be contacted with e-mail and voice-mail, as well as by appointment or office visit.

In their classes, students with disabilities are responsible for utilizing their academic adjustments, aids, and services as effectively as possible. Student abuse of these may result in loss of access to the academic adjustment, aid, or service being abused. For example, in-class support services are not a substitute for class attendance. Therefore, generally, students must attend classes on a regular basis or risk having such services curtailed or altered.

All TRCC students are held to standards of behavior outlined in the college Student Handbook and in the handbooks for the specific curricula or programs of study in which they are enrolled. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in the student being referred to the appropriate college official for disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

Three Rivers Community College recognizes the highly confidential nature of disability-related information and shares this information with college personnel only on a “need-to-know” basis, except where disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student. Disability-related information is kept in secure files that are separate from academic files. Access to student disability files is limited.

The College’s Providers of Disability Services

A college disability service provider shall make appropriate determination of academic adjustments/modifications for students based upon documentation provided by the student. (Course substitution modifications are to be approved by the Dean of Academics after the student and the student’s disability service provider have submitted a written request to the Dean of Academics.) The authority to make such decisions on behalf of the institution has been assigned by the college President. The college’s two disability service providers are:

Elizabeth Willcox, Advisor

Advising and Counseling Center, Room A113
Three Rivers Community College
574 New London Tpke.
Norwich, CT 06360
E-mail address: ewillcox@trcc.commnet.edu
Telephone: (860) 215-9289
FAX: (860) 215-9906

Matt Liscum, Counselor

Advising and Counseling Center, Room A113
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574 New London Tpke.
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Responsibilities of Three Rivers Community College

TRCC will provide academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services that modify the processes by which a student gains equal access to educational opportunity and demonstrates ability and knowledge. The college will not provide adjustments that alter the essential elements of a course or program or that compromise educational standards.

As needed, the college disability service provider will interact with faculty to help ensure reasonable and appropriate adjustments for a student with a documented disability. The college disability service provider will complete a memo to faculty and a form detailing appropriate adjustments for the student. Generally, the student will carry this information to instructors and discuss it with them. Whenever possible, the student and faculty member will collaborate on the implementation of the student's adjustments.

If a student has followed appropriate procedures but feels that agreed-upon adjustments are not being provided appropriately, the student should contact his/her disability service provider as soon as possible. If he/she is not satisfied with the results of this meeting, they should follow grievance procedures outlined in the Student Rights section of the Student Handbook.

Also, if a student feels that adjustments assigned to them by the college disability service providers are not adequate or are inappropriate to expressed needs, he/she should follow grievance procedures outlined in the Student Rights section of the Student Handbook.

Course Substitutions

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1992) addresses the substitution of courses required for a degree. In certain situations, provided the college has adequate documentation of the student's disability, a substitution of a course requirement for another appropriate course is possible. Students are encouraged to contact a disabilities advisor for the specific policy and procedures to follow.