



## **Office of Accessibility Resources Overview for Faculty**

### **Mohawk Valley Community College**

#### **Contact Information:**

**Utica Campus** – FRANCIS A. WILCOX HALL (FORMALLY IT BUILDING)

**Main office number: 315-792-5644**

Fax number: 315-731-5868

email: [oar@mvcc.edu](mailto:oar@mvcc.edu) Utica, [romedisability@mvcc.edu](mailto:romedisability@mvcc.edu) Rome

Web page: <https://www.mvcc.edu/accessibility-resources/>

Coordinator of the Office of Accessibility Resources:

(Works with all students with disabilities other than ADHD and LD)

**Tamara Mariotti**, Phone: 315-731-5702, Email: [tmariotti@mvcc.edu](mailto:tmariotti@mvcc.edu)

Transitional Support Specialist:

(Works with students with learning disabilities, ADHD & Autism)

**Katelyn DiCastro** Phone: 315-792-5413, Email: [kdicastro@mvcc.edu](mailto:kdicastro@mvcc.edu)

Starting the Fall 2020 Semester, the Testing Center will be administering and monitoring accommodative testing for Utica and Rome.

**David Yahnke and Nicole Benton**, Phone: 315-731-5802, Email: [testing@mvcc.edu](mailto:testing@mvcc.edu)

**Rome Campus** - Plumley Complex, Room 102G

(Works with students with all disabilities)

Office of Accessibility Resources Specialist:

**Michelle Luvisi**, College Services Associate –Disability Support

Phone: 315-334-7744, Email: [mluvisi@mvcc.edu](mailto:mluvisi@mvcc.edu)

#### **Why is there a special office to assist students with disabilities?**

Federal law mandates these services and accommodations. Common sense tells us that it makes more sense for a person with a disability to get through college and get a job rather than need societal support for the rest of his or her life. And common decency tells us that each human being deserves the opportunity to live a full, meaningful life.

#### **Will OAR notify me if I am going to have a student with a disability in my class?**

OAR does not (cannot) notify you that one of your students has a disability. It is up to the student to self-identify.

### **What is my responsibility in the identification process?**

Incorporate a statement about the availability of disability-related accommodations in the syllabus. Do not ask about the presence of a disability or assume someone has a disability if they have not disclosed. If they have not disclosed, you do not have to accommodate, and students who have chosen not to do so should be treated like any other student.

### **When are students supposed to notify me about their disabilities?**

It is best for students with disabilities to notify you at the start of the semester, but it is not essential. They can choose not to do so and still schedule their final exam with OAR or request other services. However, there are no retroactive accommodations.

### **How do I know for sure that a student has a disability?**

When a student self-identifies, you may ask that student for a form from OAR that verifies that the disability exists and lists the services the student needs.

### **What is the student's disability?**

OAR and/the student may tell you what accommodations and services have been deemed appropriate without divulging the actual nature of the student's disability.

### **What should I do if I think one of my students might have a disability?**

If you suspect a student has a disability, you can try to find out if you're right. The best way is to say: "I've noticed that you \_\_\_\_ (appear to know the material but have a hard time on tests; seem to have difficulty paying attention; seem sleepy" -- whatever it is that you've noticed.). Then, "Has this always been a problem? Did you receive any special services to help you with this while you were in school?"

### **May I ask OAR if someone in my class has a disability?**

You should not call us to ask if someone who has not self-identified has a disability; we can't tell you that without the student's permission.

### **Must I change my teaching style/methods because I have a student with a disability?**

No. But it is important to recognize that when you do anything different for a student with a disability, it almost always helps everyone in the class. Probably the two best things you could do are: first, share copies of power point presentations/transparencies/ lecture notes, and second, use more than one method to present information.

### **What services will you provide to my students who have disabilities?**

Accommodative testing is one of the main services OAR provides. Some key points about that service:

1. Students schedule tests, not faculty.
2. Students must give us at least three days' notice (one week for finals); if they don't, they must take their tests in class.
3. We always schedule tests at the same time, or as close as possible to the same time, the class is taking the test.

4. You will be notified that a test has been scheduled via your MVCC e-mail address. Please deliver it to our office or email the test as soon as you can after that notification.
5. If a student doesn't show up for a test, or calls us to say he or she can't make it, we will not reschedule that test without your permission, and we urge you to only allow the student with a disability to do so if that is what you would do with a student without a disability.

#### **What if an instructor objects to the use of an auxiliary or personal aid?**

You may not impose upon students with disabilities other rules, such as the prohibition of recorders or laptops in classrooms or of dog guides in campus buildings that have the effect of limiting the participation of students with disabilities. In order to allow a student with a disability the use of an effective aid and, at the same time, protect the instructor, the institution may require the student to sign an agreement so as not to infringe on a potential copyright or to limit freedom of speech.

#### **Why do students need to take their tests with OAR?**

There can be many reasons. Students may need a reader or large print due to vision impairments. They may need someone to enter their answers on a computer scantron sheet because of problems with fine motor skills. They might need to be able to stand and stretch during a long final because of back problems. They may need extended time because of difficulty with attention or memory. Please be assured of two things: 1. that we have documentation that shows that the student needs the service being provided, and 2. that we are only providing access – no matter what we do, if the information is not in the student's head, it will not end up on the test paper.

#### **Why do students need note takers, and what are my responsibilities?**

Students may have difficulty taking notes for a variety of reasons, including attention deficit disorder, hearing loss, auditory processing difficulties, or carpal tunnel syndrome, to name a few. If the student gives you a note taker request form, please help him/her find a volunteer. Better yet and if at all possible, share *your* notes.

#### **Why do some students who receive these "special services" still fail?**

If a student doesn't practice good student behaviors, or if a student has minimal academic ability (in addition to his or her disability), all of the accommodations in the world aren't going to make a difference. We're required to level the playing field – not to carry the student to home plate, or make the basket for him or her.

## **FACULTY CAN**

- Encourage students to self-disclose their disability or disabilities in an appropriate and confidential time and place.
- Check on the legitimacy of a student's claim of a disability by contacting the Office of Accessibility Resources.
- Make suggestions for appropriate academic accommodations.
- Help students whom you suspect have a learning disability by suggesting that the student seek support from the appropriate campus service providers.
- Hold students with disabilities to the same standards as students without disabilities.

## **FACULTY CANNOT**

- See a student's documentation of a disability or request information on the student's disability from the campus service providers unless given written consent by the student.
- Set a limit for the number or amount of accommodations provided during a semester – or the number of students with disabilities in his/her classes.
- Allow the right to academic freedom to impact the types of accommodations permitted in the classroom.
- Refuse a request for an academic accommodation. If an issue comes up, such as a safety issue, the faculty member should contact the Office for Services to Students with Disabilities to discuss the request for accommodation.
- Ask a student if they have a learning disability if the student is experiencing difficulty in class. The faculty member can suggest the student seek out support services.
- Ask a student to arrange his or her own accommodations such as finding a note-taker. It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide notes or to ask other students in the class to make a copy of their notes.
- Discuss information about a student's disability with or in front of others.