

Preparing for Collegefrom A-Z

Overview of Session:

- ☑ Practice self-advocacy skills
- ☑ Educate yourself about Support Services at the post-secondary level
- ☑ Understand your academic strengths, challenges, and effective supports
- ☑ Organize your College/University Search
- ☑ Review the Application Process & any requests for special consideration
- ☑ Get Documentation in Order
- ☑ Practice self-advocacy skills! AGAIN! ☺

Future Quest, George Mason University, November 16, 2013


You are your BEST Voice!

- ✓ At this point in your life it is likely that your parent, family member or guardian has been your voice when it comes to academic alterations.
- ✓ Now is the time to begin sharing the task.
- ✓ This requires some understanding of yourself, practice in communicating with others and a true commitment to your goals of higher education.
- ✓ You must put yourself first and must speak for yourself in this amazing, exciting, adventure.

Educate yourself about ADA vs IDEA

- ✓ There are differences in the overall approach to accommodations for disabilities at the post secondary level
- ✓ "Special Education" "IEPs" and "504 plans" do not exist at the college/university level
- ✓ Accommodations exist and students can be found eligible based on self disclosure, documentation, individual conversations and understanding that accommodations provide equal access to success.
- ✓ Resources easy to find with a simple Google search...
- ✓ National AHEAD (Association of Higher Education And Disability) is the national organization to which DSS/Access offices seek best practices <http://www.ahead.org/>

Services at High School vs. College...



➤ What do you think?

In a traditional post-secondary setting,

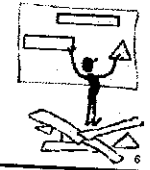
- ✓ No separate special classes based on disability
- ✓ Student initiated accommodations once found eligible
- ✓ Student initiated time with tutors
- ✓ Time limited, although extending time, testing (Not Un-timed)
- ✓ Special Cases, as documented with limitations

Understand YOU!

- ✓ This is the time to talk to people who know you best and really aim to understand how you learn, where there are obstacles, the "best" approach to mitigating or easing some of the issues that may impact your learning. (Make notes!)
- ✓ Who are these people?
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Guidance Counselors/Transition Counselors
 - Tutors
- ✓ Be aware of your capabilities and realistic in your approach
- ✓ You don't need the technical lingo and in fact it is best to articulate your situation in your own words.
- ✓ Be prepared to answer the question, "What does that look like for you?"

Organize your College Search

- ✓ Get physically Organized ~ a place for your college "stuff", a notebook or pad where you keep all college search notes, and a dedicated flash drive to keep college info on (in addition to the hard drive). Bookmark important websites and put them in appropriate folders.
- ✓ Consider your geographic concerns/limitations
- ✓ Consider your economic parameters
- ✓ Explore academic major options
- ✓ Decide upon a good institutional size for yourself



Determine if you would prefer an institution with Comprehensive special services

- ✓ Curry College - PAL program
<http://www.curry.edu/programs-and-courses/undergraduate-programs/apply.html>
 - ✓ Lynn University - Comprehensive Support Program
<http://www.lynn.edu/admissions/applying-to-lynn/day-undergraduate>
 - ✓ Beacon College - Institutional devotion
<http://www.beaconcollege.edu/>
- Petersons Guide (<http://www.petersons.com/>) has been for years the go to guide. Hard pressed not to find every school with Disability Support Services. Together determine the right fit

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Review the Application Process & any requests for special consideration

- ✓ Determine if there is a "special admissions process"
- ✓ Make sure you highlight, or construct a checklist for yourself relative to the application process
- ✓ Decide what you wish to reveal if anything
- ✓ Choose to submit personal essay/statement
- ✓ Inquiry about interviews as part of the application process, if this suits you

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Getting Documentation in Order

- ✓ Start Early (end Junior, early Senior year) ...often times the documentation needs to be located, is outdated, or lacks a clear diagnostic statement. The earlier you begin, the better chances of having things in order for the start of the college experience.
- ✓ Consult with the prospective colleges and universities about their criteria. Not all schools are the same, very similar but not identical. Check their websites, and speak with the Disability Support Services office/staff person.
Search: Disability Support, Eligibility, Documentation
<http://qvdred.gwu.edu/dss/>
<http://ods.gmu.edu/>
<http://www.marymount.edu/studentlife/services/disability/documentation>
- ✓ In the case of a medical or physical disability consult your treating professional for documentation which will meet the school's criteria.

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Getting Documentation in Order (cont.)

- ✓ For "Learning Disabilities" and "other health impairment", search your files for the most recent "Psychoeducational", "Psychological" or "Behavioral" Evaluation. This will (should) include information such as date of the current evaluation, tests administered (WAIS, Woodcock Johnson, Bender, Nelson Denny, Beck Anxiety Scale, Connor's etc...), scores, narrative about the testing, diagnostic statement with a clear diagnosis, and recommendations for accommodations.
- ✓ TYPICALLY, THIS IS NOT AN "IEP" or "Summary of Performance" (SOP) STATEMENT.

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Getting Documentation in Order (cont.)

- ✓ Consult your secondary school if you do not have these records. If they do not have these appropriate records speak with the school about options for testing or seek outside testing, begin with looking at insurance options.
- ✓ Secure an original of the current evaluation and make copies to give to schools, if you are meeting with the DSS provider prior to acceptance. DO NOT give original documents to the schools. DO NOT send the documentation in with admissions application unless that is specified on the application.


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Educate yourself about Support Services for students

- Look at the University websites.
- Contact the providers and offices that serve students.
- Visit the school and speak with the DSS Staff person about the reality of the supports. "Basic", "Collaborative", "Comprehensive".
- Get a feel for the staff and faculty at the institution.

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Educate yourself about Support Services for students


Learn of other University services that can assist you ~ Learning Resource Offices, Tutoring Centers, Success Centers (You may be able to assist them as well! ☺).

See if there are economic implications/costs to participate.

Learn the structure of the services ~ Level of self advocacy and student initiative to receive services. Ask specific questions....

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Practicing & Developing Self-Advocacy Skills



- ☑ CRITICAL! ☹, and not Unique to students with Disabilities!
- ☑ Know your concerns, abilities, strengths and challenges...In your own words.
- ☑ Speak for your self ~ it is fine to make notes and refer to these when speaking with a staff person.
- ☑ Get comfortable with the fact that we all need help with certain things.
- ☑ Reveal what you are comfortable with, and realize the limitations that may exist if you choose not to reveal.

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Once you have arrived!



- ✓ Know the resources available.
- ✓ USE THEM! ☺
- ✓ Get to know the DSS main contact, or the person with whom you can discuss concerns, practice role plays of speaking with professors, brainstorm coping strategies etc....
- ✓ Don't make drastic changes in strategies that have worked in the past, and be flexible enough to alter some strategies to see what might work differently.
- ✓ Don't discount accommodations, stop taking any meds you may be on, or drastically change your personal eating and sleeping habits.

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Websites/Resources



College Living Experience (CLE)
<http://www.cleinc.net/about>

National Center for Learning Disabilities
<http://www.nclld.org/>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
<http://ericec.org/>

Virginia Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
<http://www.vddhh.org/>

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
<http://www.chadd.org/>

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Websites/Resources


Department of Rehabilitative Services, unique to your geographic area.

Any and all transition services available through the high school

Reputable learning consultants if you have the resources for such.

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Questions & Comments



QUESTION

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