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Batman v Superman - How Faculty and Disability Services Work Together to Provide Testing Accommodations

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BATMAN v SUPERMAN

HOW FACULTY AND DISABILITY SERVICES WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

HEATHER J. BACKUS
HELLO!

Assistant Director, Office of Disability Services
Supervisor, Alternate Testing Program
Email me at backushj@appstate.edu
WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

Review faculty and disability service provider responsibilities
Talk about common faculty questions, areas of concern and pushback
Identify ways to educate faculty on accommodation practices, policies and procedures
Review our model of providing testing accommodations – Alternate Testing Program
ODS’ Alternate Testing Program by the numbers:

500 STUDENTS WITH TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS
3 GRADUATE ASSISTANTS
15-20 TESTS A DAY
225 UNIQUE INSTRUCTORS
1000 TESTS A SEMESTER
THEN VS. NOW

× 1-2 Graduate assistants
× No real dedicated supervisor
× Paper process/system
× Students made requests 2 days prior to the test
× 300 tests a semester

× 3 Graduate Assistants
× Specific position created to supervise testing (me!)
× Online module/database
× Students make requests 1 week in advance of the test
× 1000 tests a semester
THE BATTLE
TESTING
ACCOMMODATIONS
**BATMAN V. SUPERMAN**
*We all want the same thing, right?*

**Faculty**
- Receive Accommodation Plan/letter
- Understand accommodation components and how to implement
- Interactive conversation with student
- Implement accommodations

**Disability Service Providers**
- Determine eligibility for accommodations
- Create Accommodation Plan/letter
- Explain processes and procedures
- Engage with faculty and provide guidance

**Everyone’s Goal**
- Ensure equal access so the student can be successful
COMMON TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

- Extended test time
- Distraction reduced environment
- Private testing environment
- No scantrons/answer directly on test
- Use of computer for typing
- Enlarged print
- Alternate format of material

- Assistive technologies:
  - Speech-to-text
  - Text-to-speech
  - CCTV/magnification
  - Screen reader
- Test assistant
Faculty Support Accommodation Guidance
WHAT ARE FACULTY SAYING?

- Responses to emails
- Calls directly to us
- Communication around campus
- Workshop comments
- Survey results
- Focus groups
- Comparisons to other universities
IDENTIFY CHALLENGES
WHERE IS THE PUSHBACK AND WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

× I don’t understand why they need the accommodation
× I don’t understand what the accommodation is
× They shouldn’t need to use the accommodation on my test
× Do I have to do this?
× This is going to take more time that I don’t have
× I didn’t know ahead of time I was going to need to do this
× I don’t know how to make my test accessible
× I don’t have the ability to provide the accommodation
× Won’t this be unfair to other students?
EDUCATION ON ACCOMMODATION PURPOSE

I don't understand why they need the accommodation

× Provide guidance on the role of an accommodation
  × Mitigate, not remove
× Explain that all students are responsible for meeting course requirements, including technical and performance standards of degrees
× Disability service office has determined the accommodation reasonable based on disability documentation provided
× Research backs up many accommodations
EDUCATION ON ACCOMMODATIONS

I don’t understand what the accommodation is

- Explain accommodations
  - Review faculty options for providing
  - Review alternate testing options
- Sometimes what we think is crystal clear, may not be that way to faculty
  - Ex. No scantrons
- Ex. extended time on tests (what about take home?)
- Ex. distraction reduced environment (can this be in the hallway?)
**REVIEWING TEST EXPECTATIONS**

*They shouldn’t need to use accommodations on my test*

- Promote universal design
- Lots of different test formats (group, online, writing)
- Unlimited time – what do they really mean?
- Review true parameters of a test
- Success vs. access
**REVIEWING ADA/SECTION 504 COMPLIANCE**

Do I have to do this?

*I didn't know ahead of time I was going to have to do this*

- Explain the regulations
- Explain your university’s mission in complying with regulations
  - Providing reasonable academic adjustments and accommodations
- Students can be eligible for accommodations at any time of semester
REVIEWING ACCOMMODATION SUPPORTS

This is going to take me more time than I don’t have
I don’t know how to make my test accessible
I don’t have the ability to provide the accommodations
  × Providing accommodations is part of faculty responsibilities
  × Review supports already available
    × Disability services support
    × Technology support
    × Alternate testing site
**OTHER CONCERNS**

Won’t this be unfair to other students?

- Cheating/integrity issues
  - Extended time on online tests
- Unfair advantages
- Test security in alternate sites
DISABILITY SERVICES
STRATEGIES
STRATEGIES
SUGGESTIONS TO GET EVERYONE ON THE SAME SIDE

× Create consistent language to use in all correspondences
× Clear and concise website
× Pre-semester notifications
× Partnerships with other campus supports (IT, etc.)
× Increase accessibility efforts across campus
  × Google use, Google drive, OCR scanners
× Provide educational opportunities to increase visibility
  × Office open house
  × Accessibility workshops
  × Presentations to many different campus groups
STRATEGIES
SUGGESTIONS TO GET EVERYONE ON THE SAME SIDE

× Use a structured approach
× Be strategic about the timing of changes
× Try not to surprise faculty
  × Communicate major changes in advance
× Be available first few weeks of the semester for lots and LOTS of phone calls
× Strive for consistency
  × Email signatures, name badges
× Define your Graduate Assistantships (or test proctors)
  × Alternate Testing Program Coordinator
**DIVIDE AND CONQUER**

**ENCOURAGEMENT OF FACULTY TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS THEMSELVES**

- Help faculty understand options
  - Use our Alternate Testing Program (more on that soon!)
  - Provide accommodations themselves in classroom, online, alternate locations
- 30 minutes or less – Faculty provides
- Trainings for how to provide extended time in online formats
- Options for classroom (headphones, earplugs, etc)
- Options for alternate locations (office hours, etc)
ASU’S ALTERNATE TESTING PROGRAM
FEEDBACK BASED ALTERNATE TESTING SITE

× Housed within Office of Disability Services
  × 6 individual testing carrels
  × 3 group style testing rooms
  × Utilize additional classroom space/rooms in Student Union
× Student requests and faculty confirmations are done online through portal
  × Students initiate requests to test ONE week in advance
  × Email automatically generated to faculty outlining expectations
  × Tests delivery is required only 2 hours prior to the test
Alternatives to the Classroom

Explaining the Benefits of Alternate Testing

- Test instruction sheets
  - Professors provide explicit details on materials allowed
- Distraction reduced environment
  - Individual testing carrels
  - Privacy boards
  - Sound reducing headphones
  - Earplugs
  - Sound machines
- Central location on campus; same building as Test Scoring (scantrons)
Easing Worries
Creating a Secure Testing Environment

- Tests delivered electronically are deleted immediately
- Designated email address dedicated to all test correspondences
- Designated phone line dedicated to all test related phone calls
- Email trash and sent folders deleted every two weeks
- All tests sent through campus mail are scanned first
- Electronic versions of completed tests are deleted every two weeks
- Paper versions of tests sent via email are shredded every two weeks
- Test storage is moved throughout semester
- No cell phones allowed; reminders in several locations
- Final exam extra spaces routinely changed
- Mirrors installed on ceilings
- Stamped blank paper, labeled test materials (ie. calculator)
Flexibility is key
Providing faculty with options

- Several methods of test delivery
  - By hand, through module, email
- Several methods of test pick up
  - By hand, email, campus mail
- Confirmations only due two days prior to the test
- Relaxed request deadlines for extenuating circumstances
- Tests can be delivered up to two hours prior to start time
- Operating hours extended during final exams
WORKING TOGETHER
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

- Faculty
  - Confirm test details
  - Provide the test
- Alternate Testing Program
  - Process the test
  - Proctor the test
  - Provide the accommodations
  - Return the test
Encouraging joint effort in a common goal diminishes the need to take sides.
RESULTS

AND FINAL THOUGHTS
It’s not a battle
There aren’t two sides

- Discourage “me versus them” mentality
  - Discourage language of “what are you going to do for me?”
- Encourage common goal of access
- Encourage responsibility of all parties involved
  - Remind that a student has expectations to follow too!
- Encourage different applications
  - It’s not always a one size fits all approach to accommodating
  - Sometimes it makes more sense for faculty to provide, other times us
- Remember consistent image is crucial
  - Phone, email, in person, website
RESULTS

FEEDBACK FROM FACULTY

× Of 75% of faculty surveyed who use traditional assessments (tests/quizzes) 50% use our Alternate Testing Program (most others are able to provide themselves)
× 96% faculty surveyed find using the Alternate Testing Program to be easy
× Most faculty surveyed felt that we used more secure testing practices than they did themselves!
**NOW WHAT? WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?**

- Evaluate current practices
- Review language uses
- Identify questions and pushback areas
- Determine ways to educate and make your office more visible
- Survey faculty and students
THANKS!

Any questions?
Email me at backushj@appstate.edu