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Guest Column: Students with Disabilities Recording Classes—by Tina Vires, Office of Disability Services

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Teaching and Learning Center

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Winthrop University

Guest Column: Students with Disabilities Recording Classes—by Tina Vires, Office of Disability Services

Tina Vires, Program Director for the Office of Disabilities Services and Winthrop's ADA Compliance Officer, has written this week's column, important information and guidelines about students' recording of classes.

The recording of classes is a common accommodation for students with disabilities who are auditory learners. For example, consider an individual with severe dyslexia, who may find reading any material (such as another student's notes) quite a challenging endeavor. Students with visual impairments, slow processing speed disorders, and some other differing abilities may also need to record classes.

After the interactive process has been engaged and the Office of Disability Services (ODS) has determined that a recording device is a reasonable accommodation for a student with a diagnosed disability, the accommodation letter sent

to the student's professors may include a designation similar to the following:

"Smartpen, or another audio recording device, as needed (ODS may provide a device once the student has signed a statement agreeing NOT to share any info; for personal use ONLY)."

For Recording Devices:

I understand that any recordings of class content are for my *personal academic use only*. Recorded class content may not be shared with anyone. Recorded lectures are protected by copyright laws and all intellectual property belongs to my instructor. I understand that these recordings may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. I will not release these recordings, profit financially from these recordings, or allow others to benefit personally from my recordings. I agree to delete this recorded material in all formats after

the completion of each course. I understand that some information shared in class may be of a sensitive nature and that I remain responsible for protecting the confidentiality of others."

With the explosion of extensive advances in technology, it is important to be aware that anyone could be recording any conversation or audio at any time; therefore, ODS is working with Student Life to ensure that strong language about recording lectures will be included in the Student Code of Conduct. Laptops, iPads, electronic notebooks, cell phones, smartpens, smart-watches, and other tech-savvy jewelry and gadgetry have the ability to record unobtrusively. Students who violate confidentiality via recorded material may be brought before the Judicial Board.

Recording devices such as smartpens and other small apparatuses are recommended for students, when such an

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accommodation is necessary, because they are unobtrusive, help students to be more independent, and are more reliable than a voluntary note taker, as well as being more cost-effective for many of those instances wherein ODS may need to pay a note taker. For a brief demo, succinctly illustrating the benefit of a smartpen, please investigate the following YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2q8_fr0ITl.

Smartpens work by combining a pen, a tiny camera, and an audio-recorder, and aligning the location of notes on special micro-dot paper. For example, utilizing this process, a student in an HMXP course may be taking a few key word notes on Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” Later, the student reviews those notes and finds herself unable to recall the correlation with her note “Education.” She could then turn on her Smart Pen, touch it to where she had written the word “Education,” and the pen would *know*, relative to the word’s location on the micro-dots, where to begin playing what the instructor was saying at the moment the student wrote that particular note.

The pen syncs what was

heard with what was written. Students have assorted writing utensils and these pens fit right in, nearly unnoticeable. They charge similarly to a cell phone and software is available for downloading and highlighting notes for study purposes.

Many good students, who do not have a diagnosed disability, have openly stated that they regularly record class material, for their personal benefit; to ensure that their notes are thorough and accurate. A former student, who suffered from short-term memory failure, was able to maintain her part-time position as a waitress, while putting herself through college, by utilizing a smartpen on the job. She would record customer orders, as she took them on her note pad, and was able to replay to the chef any part about which she was unsure.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has advised that students for whom this accommodation is reasonable may not be denied the opportunity to record. Following is an excerpt from an OCR brochure regarding auxiliary aids and services (<http://www2.ed.gov/abo;ut/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>):

Q: What if an instructor objects to the use of an auxiliary or personal aid?

A: Sometimes postsecondary instructors may not be familiar with Section 504 of ADA requirements regarding the use of an auxiliary or personal aid in their classrooms. Most often, questions arise when a student uses a tape recorder. College teachers may believe recording lectures is an infringement upon their own or other students’ academic freedom, or constitutes copyright violation.

The instructor may not forbid a student’s use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student’s participation in the school program. The Section 504 regulation states:

“A recipient may not impose upon handicapped students other rules, such as the prohibition of tape recorders in classrooms or of dog guides in campus buildings, that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped students in the recipient’s education program or activity.”

For additional questions or concerns, please contact ODS at 803/323-3290, accessibility@winthrop.edu, or Tina Vires at vires@winthrop.edu.

Thanks For Helping Make the Teaching and Learning Center Work!

Winthrop's Teaching and Learning Center offers a wide variety of sessions each year for faculty and staff, on teaching, technology, professional development, and personal development. From leading class discussion to mastering the Smart podium to tenure and promotion to cooking soufflés, the TLC tries to make sure that all faculty and staff receive

the kinds of professional and personal development that will make them better teachers, administrators, and employees.

To offer this programming, the TLC depends on the talent, expertise, and generosity of our faculty and staff. We do not have a big budget to bring in outside speakers and experts. Even so, we are able to offer engaging,

timely, and valuable sessions every year on a variety of topics. We thank those who have offered their time and talent in past years.

If you have a request for a session you would like to see, please email me and I will try to arrange it. And if you have a session you would like to present, please email me. We will set something up as soon as we can!

A Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The TLC for several years has been offering a service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me (803) 323-3679 or birdj@winthrop.edu.

Go2Knowledge—Learning On Demand!

Go2Knowledge is a website that offers a variety of video presentations on faculty and staff professional development. You will find presentations by nationally-known experts in seven categories: At-Risk Populations, Campus Safety, Organizational Development, Student Success, Teaching and Learning, Technology,

and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

Register for a TLC Session
At
www.winthrop.edu/tlc

The 3rd Annual Winthrop Conference on Teaching and Learning

Many thanks to everyone who attended and presented at our conference on Saturday, February 6. We had 102 attendees, who heard excellent presentations and an inspiring keynote speech by Dr. Dan Mahony. Special thanks to Dana Bruneau for her work in organizing the conference.

Thought For the Week

"None of us can have as many virtues as the fountain-pen, or half its cussedness; but we can try."
--Mark Twain