

Academic Policy Committee meeting of 27 October

Members present:

Kimberly Ange-vanHeugten, Sarah Ash, Alton Banks, Thomas Byrnes,
Paul Huffman, Doug Pearce, Sheila Smith McKoy

Members absent:

David Auerbach, Mike Devetsikiotis, Helmut Hergeth, Steven Porter,
Rich Spontak

Guest: Mark Newmiller, DSO

Sarah Ash introduced Mark Newmiller and the major reason for the meeting.

Major points of discussion:

Notification of faculty re need for accommodations:

- DSO asks students to register for accommodations ASAP. Difficulties arise when students don't register ASAP.
- Accommodations can be requested up to the date of the final exam
- DSO encourages students to have a private conversation with their professors to establish specific needs within each course.
- DSO will sometimes alert instructors re needs of specific students

Awareness and training are two aspects of the issue:

- DSO is working with Office of Faculty Development to develop training programs
- DSO has provided information at New Faculty Orientation sessions, held in August.
- Serena Reavis ? works with DSO for possible presentations in Summer drop-ins conducted by DELTA
- No formal training program exists; short videos exist on the DSO site at present
- Rebecca Sitton (with DSO) is available to help faculty convert inaccessible materials
 - MS Word has option to provide accessible materials (in Tools menu—accessibility tools)

Student qualifications for accommodations:

- Question: How do students qualify for extended time or limited distraction
 - Answer: DSO interviews students; Records indicate conditions that need to be addressed via accommodation.
 - DSO does have discussions with medical professionals to determine the necessity of an accommodation versus a student preference

- Once registered, students are registered for their career at NCSU, but have to request accommodations each semester.

Closed captioning of video materials:

- All video materials must be close-captioned (Federal Law)
- Technically, failure to use captioned materials is a violation of that law
- Responsibility of provision of video captions belongs to individual instructor.
- Faculty can request assistance
 - Most recent movies are captioned.
 - Older movies are not captioned; the library can assist faculty with locating captioned materials.
 - Captioning grants are available for faculty to pay for captioning materials. Captioning services are performed by external companies. Time for captioning depends on complexity of materials, but can be 1-3 days.
 - Mediasite movies (typically produced by individuals) are not automatically captioned. DSO is working with DELTA to assist with captioning.
 - Techniques exist to enable closed captioning for many programs (e.g. some YouTube videos)

Extent of Accommodations Program at NCSU:

- Numbers have doubled in past 5 years (this semester 1300+ students); this trend is seen nationally.
- NCSU has about 4.5% students with some accommodations, with our peers typically between 3-5%
- DSO staff to accomplish this is currently two persons; hoping to hire another
- Concern is that the percentage of students needing intensive care (chronic health) is increasing
- Mention was made that some staff (e.g. Thomas Martin) work very hard to accomplish needed tasks. Passage of a recent law regarding compensation of overtime hours may impact his ability to continue to work extra hours..
- Space for quizzes is critical.
 - DSO has 15 seats to administer quizzes;
 - Park Shops has another 8 seats
- If departments have suitable space, that can be used. Student cannot insist that a test/quiz is given at DSO unless some specific accommodations (e.g. screen reader or other assistive technology) are needed.
- Administered over 5000 quizzes in the 2014 academic year
- Question: Is there a way to provide faculty with letters that are more focused on specific accommodations instead of a lengthy “cafeteria” list?
 - Current system (automated) is designed to be as easy as possible for students to complete—with check boxes to indicate specific accommodations needed

- Goal is to modify system so that the letters fit the classes better, with students being more thoughtful about the needed accommodations—versus preferences.
One problem is that the letters attempt to fit all a students classes.
- Some members reported that some of the paragraphs in letters are critical, as opposed to major bullet points
- Students are expected to tell DSO of the lack of accommodations by faculty

Other questions and concerns:

- Question: Has the number of returning veterans affected the DSO program?
Not much—veterans are more independent and don't typically seek accommodations.
- Concern was expressed over the transition of students into the “real world” and possible reduction/loss of all accommodations.
Is there a program at NCSU to teach them? No.
- Difficulties were discussed about having specific tasks, e.g. group projects, and limitations of faculty to tell other group members about specific student accommodations
- Situations involving anonymity vs confidentiality were discussed.
- Discussions involving excessive absences as a result of a disability accommodation
 - Ways to verify absences were discussed.
No good plan exists to defeat students who abuse the system. But the accommodation still has to be reasonable. If a student misses half the semester that may not be reasonable.

Any other things for faculty to know?

- Have faculty know that DSO is ready to help.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm