DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Federal law, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as well as state and local laws prohibit institutions of higher education from discriminating against students with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act defines an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment.

Students with, among others, visual, hearing and mobility impairments, psychological disorders (including, but not limited to, specific learning disabilities, organic brain syndrome, attention deficient disorder, emotional or mental illness), and chronic health disorders such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV infection (whether asymptomatic or symptomatic) may be disabled and therefore eligible for a reasonable accommodation. Each student diagnosed with a particular disability will have a different level of functioning even within the same disability category. Further, compensation skills will also vary from one student to another and in the same student over time. Therefore, accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis according to a student's documented needs, guidelines suggested by federal and state law, and criteria developed by the University.

Identifying and implementing a reasonable accommodation for a student with a disability is an interactive process that includes shared responsibility between the University and the student. Accommodations include adjustments to make the campus, residential housing, transportation and parking accessible, academic adjustments or modifications, and auxiliary aids and services. Examples of academic adjustments that may be made available to eligible students include priority registration, substitution of one course for another, a leave of absence, and extended time to complete an assignment or test. Auxiliary aids and services that may be provided to eligible students include, for example, note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, and computers equipped with voice recognition or other adaptive software.

The University is required to provide a reasonable accommodation; it is not required to provide the specific accommodation requested by the student. In providing accommodations, the University is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements or to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity. Thus, for example, although the University may be required to provide extended time within which to complete a test, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. Personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, wheelchairs, hearing aids, and other devices or services of a personal nature are the responsibility of the student, not the University. Finally, the University is not required to make modifications or provide auxiliary aids or services that would result in an undue burden on the University.

Funding for auxiliary aids and services may be available from certain state agencies such as, for example, the New York State Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disability. For those auxiliary aids and services that are likely to be funded by a state agency, the University may require the student to apply to the agency for funding. The University may provide assistance with the application for funding.