

# Handbook for Parents of Students with Disabilities at UVSC

The Accessibility Services Department(ASD) welcomes your son/daughter to UVSC. We are well aware that, as parents, you want to be involved with your child's education. You want your son/daughter to have a better life and understand that education is the key to an independent and productive life. However, as they become involved in a transition process from high school to college, you will need to understand that your son or daughter is moving from an environment where they look to their parents, teachers, counselors and administrators for guidance and assistance with life choices to an environment of independence where they are both in control of and responsible for the choices they make. We understand it may be a difficult transition for you, as parents, to "***let go***"; this is only natural. We, at ASD, hope this handbook will address some of your concerns and provide you with information for advanced planning and preparation.

## **Parental Involvement in the New Environment**

Parents come to postsecondary education with coping strategies and skills that have been developed in an environment where educational agencies have absolute responsibility and are ultimately accountable (i.e., the school district must locate students with disabilities, evaluate them and design an educational placement that provides them a free and appropriate education regardless of the nature or severity of their needs. In that environment, parents function as ***active participants*** and ***advocates*** for their children's needs.) Unfortunately, the parents' experience in that environment does not prepare them for moving into a ***college environment***. There is ***shared responsibility*** between your children and the institution which requires them ***to initiate the process*** for provision of auxiliary aids and/or accommodations. They must also provide documentation to establish the existence of a disability and the need for the accommodations sought. **In this new environment, the role of parents is both subordinate and secondary.**

Our goal at the Accessibility Services Department (ASD) is to help your son/daughter achieve their academic goals. We understand that, as parents, you may be used to intervening on their behalf. However, you can better serve them by allowing them to work with their advisor/counselor and ASD on their issues.

Now that your son/daughter is attending college, there are laws (***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA)***, ***Government Records and Management Act (GRAMA)***, and the ***Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)***) that prevent any

UVSC staff or faculty member from speaking to you directly about your son/daughter, their grades, or their student record unless you have **written permission** from them to do so. Even with permission, there are limits on what can be released. These laws are designed to protect student's privacy, not to make things difficult for parents.

In the event that you feel your son/daughter is not receiving needed services or accommodations, your best recourse is **to help them advocate for themselves**. If this is not possible, you can speak with either your son/daughter's Advisor/Counselor or the Director of Accessibility Services. Please refrain from calling or requesting services for your son/daughter or calling faculty members because we are legally bound as to the nature of the communication we can hold with you. We realize this is awkward and puts us **all** into an uncomfortable position, but one we "legally" must adhere to.

### ***ANSWERS TO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS***

- ***What services are offered through the Accessibility Services Department ?***

ASD serves "ADA eligible" individuals with physical, medical, learning, and emotional disabilities. ASD makes sure that appropriate accommodations are arranged based on an individual basis. *Some common accommodations are sign language interpreters, peer note takers, accommodative classroom testing center, and accommodative computer lab which includes the following resources: Dragon Natural Speaking, Jaws for Windows, Kurzweil, Read & Write, etc. Other accommodations include books on tape, extended time for testing, and referrals for learning disability testing and ADD/ADHD evaluations.*

- ***How do students access ASD services?***

*As soon as a student with a disability has been accepted to UVSC, he/she is encouraged to notify the Accessibility Services Office. Students should plan on making an appointment to visit with a counselor at ASD as soon as possible. He/she is required to provide the ASD Office with current documentation of his/her disability. Upon receipt of the documentation, ASD determines eligibility for services on an individual basis with the aid of disability documentation from medical, educational and/or psychological professionals, and the appropriate accommodations and adaptive equipment to be used by students in their classrooms or the college environment.*

- ***Are there grants and scholarships available for students with disabilities?***

*There are very few disability-specific grants or scholarships available for students with disability. The amounts awarded are relatively small as they come from the private sector. Information regarding them can be obtained from advisors/counselors at ASD. The Federal Financial Aid Program is the main source of assistance for students with or without disabilities who have financial*

*needs. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office at the college for information about any other campus-based assistance that may be available.*

*Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact the Utah Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to see whether they qualify for services under their agency. For students with disabilities who do qualify and whose individual rehabilitation plan includes college education, there can be assistance with tuition, fees, books and supplies. For more information, contact the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation directly.*

- *My son/daughter is a high school senior with a "learning disability" and has just been admitted to UVSC. Will the accommodations that were provided to him/her in high school under his/her IEP automatically be provided in college?*

*First of all, **No** accommodations will be provided for your son/daughter until he/she establishes himself/herself to be a student with a disability. Once the ASD Office has determined eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act, the college must provide, absent undue hardship, reasonable and appropriate accommodations and academic adjustments that specifically address your son/daughter's known disability, thus affording him/her an equal opportunity to participate in the college's programs, courses, and activities. However, the college is not required to provide accommodations just because they appear in your son/daughter's IEP, though that information can be helpful for ASD counselors as they devise your son/daughter's accommodations plan.*

- *Are there tutoring services on campus?*

*None through ASD, however, there are several options for obtaining tutoring services at UVSC. An excellent program is the Peer Tutoring Services. Tutors are UVSC students who have successfully completed the course(s) in tutoring and have been recommended by their instructors. These services are administered by the School of General Academics and specific information can be obtained by contacting their office directly or a referral from ASD Office. Students can also receive tutoring assistance through the TRIO Student Support Services located in BU-145. Should a student desire a personal tutor, he/she should contact the School, College, & University Partnership (SCUP), 1062 W 800 S, Orem (863-8565). The student receiving tutoring through SCUP, however, pays for the service.*

- *My child's disability is such that he/she has seizures, or blackouts, and has difficulty getting around. Are there student volunteers or personal care attendants who can accompany him/her to class or check on him/her while in school?*

*No. Under the disability law, such requirements are considered "personal", and students are responsible for their own personal well-being. If there is a serious concern that the student may have constant problems while attending classes, it is the responsibility of the student and/or family to provide the student with a personal care attendant.*

- *What is a reasonable class schedule for my son/daughter?*

*General academic advising is available through ASD, Career & Academic Counseling Center, and School of General Academics regarding general education courses requirements and possible courses for the student's first semester. Suggestions are often based on the academic history of the student and his/her ACT and/or Compass Test scores. Our biggest concern is for students who take too many difficult courses and find themselves overwhelmed and unable to cope. More often than not, we find that it is the combination of courses chosen or taking courses the student was not prepared for that causes problems. UVSC considers students registered for 12 credits or more per semester or term to be full-time students.*

- *What other resources are available for students?*

*\* **Career and Academic Counseling Center (CACC) (BU-145) (863-8425 or 863-8386).** CACC provides comprehensive services including academic advising and counseling, academic standards, career assessment, and college transfer information.*

*\* **Student Health Center (SC-221) (863-8876).** Student Health Center assists students with a variety of health related issues. Short term counseling is available to assist students through stressful and crisis situations effecting their performance in school as well as personal relationships. Other counseling services include ADHD assessment, stress management, alcohol and drug abuse, motivation, self-esteem, eating disorders, conflict management, eating disorders, depression/anxiety, and LD testing.*

*\* **TRIO Student Support Services (BU 146) (863-8541).** It fosters a climate supportive of the success of low-income and first generation college students and individuals with disabilities through a variety of services including needs assessment testing, individual educational planning, academic, career, and transfer counseling, tutoring, cultural events, study skills and personal development classes.*

#### **---- Other Off-Campus Services**

*Vocational Rehabilitation is a government agency under the Utah Department of Education that provides eligible clients with disabilities to obtain employment. To see if your son/daughter might be eligible for Rehabilitation Services, call 801-374-7724 v/tty.*

*If you still have any other unanswered questions or concerns, please feel free to call us at Accessibility Services Department (801-863-8747), or if you are in the area, come by the office (BU 146). We look forward to getting to know your son/daughter in the upcoming years.*