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# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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## SELF-DETERMINATION: A KEY TO SUCCESS

One of the purposes of a college education is to help prepare students for the transition from college to the work place. This requires planning and the acquisition of self-determination skills, such as self awareness, self advocacy, decision making and independent performance, along with appropriate strategies and supports. DRC Specialists are ready to assist students with acquiring these skills.

## STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

***To Have a Successful Postsecondary Experience — Consider the Following:***

- Attend all classes, especially the first class of the semester, since that is when course requirements are often discussed.
- Exchange telephone numbers and e-mail addresses with at least two classmates who are willing to be contacted should clarification on an assignment be needed.
- Keep a list of your instructors' names, office locations, office hours, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Contact instructors to explain absences. Be aware of both the university's and the instructor's policy regarding absences. (Having a minor cold and being tired are not good reasons to miss class).
- Read each course syllabus in its entirety and keep it handy. Talk to your instructor or ask questions if any course requirements are unclear.
- Use a planner and employ time management skills.
- Find a mentor on campus. DRC staff can help you to identify clubs, departments, or other places to find mentors.
- Use campus resources, such as the Writing Center, Tutorial Center, Center for Adaptive Technology, Career Services, etc.
- Request appropriate accommodations and utilize strategies that can help you to compensate for the impact of your disability.
- Learn how to become an active learner and critical thinker.

## COMMUNICATING WITH FACULTY

The DRC urges students to discuss their accommodation and other disability-related needs with their instructors as early in the semester as possible. Students who will need accommodations in place by the first day of classes, such as students using assistive technology in the classroom, alternate formats for

materials, note-takers, interpreters, etc., should contact each of their instructors and the DRC prior to the start of the semester.

Once students have their accommodation letters from the DRC, they should consider the following recommendations:

- Make an appointment during your instructor's office hours. Explain to the instructor your affiliation with the DRC.
- Make it clear to your instructor that you are a serious and motivated student. When appropriate, discuss what accommodations have worked for you in the past.
- Become comfortable with articulating your specific need for accommodations and relate them to the course requirements and expectations.
- Initiate discussions on any other disability-related concerns that may not be accommodations per se, but need to be brought to the attention of an instructor early in the semester, such as elevator break downs, responding to emergencies or attendance issues.
- Be assertive—not aggressive and always remain calm and courteous. If there is a disagreement, or the instructor has indicated an unwillingness to provide DRC approved accommodations, immediately notify the DRC.

## **ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Living away from home is an adjustment process for everyone. Consider the following.

- From the start, students are urged to keep communication open with roommates. Before conflicts develop, discuss and agree on basic issues, such as quiet hours, cleaning, overnight guests, food, personal property and any disability-related concerns.
- Some students may feel lonely or isolated and in need of support. Those who live in the residence halls may speak to the RA or hall director. All students living on or off campus can seek support through the University's Counseling Center.

## **STUDENTS USING WHEELCHAIRS AND/OR SCOOTERS**

Experience is the best teacher! The following list of ideas has been gleaned over the years from the accumulated knowledge of students with mobility impairments.

- Plan in advance for how to handle problems that may arise from weather, transportation difficulties or other factors that may impact your class attendance.

- Have a cell phone handy to make emergency phone calls. Keep a list or store in the memory of your cell phone important telephone numbers, including those of friends, PAs, or a wheelchair repair service in the area.
- Keep a tire pump available if your wheelchair is equipped with inner tubes.
- Become familiar with the accessible routes, entrances and exits in all campus buildings.
- Become familiar with the evacuation procedures for each campus building you will be in, including residence halls. (Request brochure from DRC)
- Know where the larger accessible single-user bathrooms are located throughout campus. (Ask DRC for list)
- Notify the DRC immediately if you encounter any accessibility issues when getting around campus.