



## Stark State College of Technology

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### **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES** **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW** Myths and Facts

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**Mission:** To ensure that:

1. ALL students can freely and actively participate in all facets of the college
2. To provide and coordinate support services and programs that enable students to maximize their educational potential and to develop their independence to the fullest extent possible
3. To increase the level of awareness among all members of the college community so that students are able to perform at a level limited only by their abilities not their disabilities.

#### ***Some common misconceptions about Disability Support Services:***

**Myth:** We only service students with visible, physical disabilities

**Fact:** We service any student with a physical, mental, emotional or learning disability that has been documented by a qualifying physician.

**Myth:** We only see a “few” students a day so it’s not a big deal if I forget to send up a test/exam for a student. Someone from DSS can come and get it.

**Fact:** We currently have 401 active students, meaning they receive support from our department. We had 90 new students enroll with us in the fall of 2007 and an additional 51 new students for the spring 2008 semester.

- On any given day, we see well over 75 students! During peak times, this number exceeds 100!
- We see, on average, 20-25 students per day just for testing purposes. During exam week, this number triples. The majority of these students come between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

**Myth:** We only see students for testing purposes

**Facts:** We do see many students for testing, but we also see, on average, 30-35 students a day for academic advising and career planning. We see current students as well as prospective students.

- The intake process for new or current students at SSCT that wish to apply for DSS services is very time consuming. It can take upwards of 1-hour with each student.
- We provide many other services as well that require our staff to be in the office at all time, such as personal counseling, tutoring, crisis and community support referrals, photocopying notes taken for our students by their classmates, see students who stop in to pick up materials and supplies, answer numerous phone calls, etc.
- We need time to scan tests for visually impaired students onto the computer that reads the test to them, time to scan, edit, and burn CD's of text books for our students who qualify for this service. We only have 1 computer with this capability. If another student is using the computer for academic purposes, we either have to wait until they finish or interrupt them so we can use it to scan. There are currently only 2 full-time counselors, 1 part time Administrative Assistant and 1 student worker who are able to complete this process.
- We must hire and schedule interpreters for our hearing impaired and deaf students and coordinate their schedules.
- We schedule all equipment needs and repairs such as providing scooters, CCTV's and other assistive learning devices.
- We provide classroom assistants to qualified students
- We assist students in scheduling their practicum sites, observation sites and internships.
- We act as a mediator between students and their instructors

This is not a complete list of services we provide, but it helps give the general overview that we provide a wide array of services to students.

**Myth:** I forgot to send the test/exam up by mail ...I can just let the student hand carry the test up to DSS.

**Fact:** It is against DSS policy to allow a student to hand-carry their own test to (or from) our office for test purposes. Although we like to believe all of our students are honest, we cannot guarantee that they have not stopped off to look up the answers, photocopy the test, etc.

**Myth:** My student has test anxiety; I can send them to DSS for testing purposes

**Fact:** Although test anxiety is an issue for many students, it does not qualify as a medical, documentable disability unless it is so severe a physician has documented an anxiety disorder. The student can be referred to the Learning Center where they offer tips on studying, test anxiety and success in college.

**Myth:** I have a foreign student, who has poor or broken English skills; I can send them to DSS for services.

**Fact:** A foreign student has many challenges; however, this is not a disability. There are other resources available for these students.

**Myth:** It is unfair to other students to allow DSS students extra test time

**Fact:** No. In fact, research indicates that only students with specific, documented disabilities improve when given extra time on tests. Also, all of our students have a documented disability that puts them into the realm of coverage under the Americans with Disabilities Act and we are required, by law, to provide accommodations appropriate to their specific need.

**Myth:** The students sent to the DSS office for testing are given unlimited time to complete their exams.

**Fact:** On the cover sheets that are to accompany EVERY exam (the salmon colored sheet), we specifically ask for the normal amount of time given for the exam. We then calculate the amount of time the student would receive with their accommodation (time-and-a-half or double time, depending on their documentation and need). We log the time that a student begins and ends an exam. This log is available for any instructor to review by coming to the DSS office. If any instructor puts “no time limit” or leaves this area blank, we allow the student as much time as they need.

**Myth:** I have a student with a disability; I must do everything I can to make sure they succeed.

**Fact:** There are specific requirements that must be met when you have a student with a specific disability, however, it is the student’s responsibility to complete their coursework and ask for assistance when and if they are struggling. Providing encouragement and support to help the student is an excellent way to help the student succeed however, you should still retain boundaries and realize the student is responsible for their work and actions.

**Myth:** Students with disabilities are not held to the same standards as other students.

**Fact:** Students with disabilities are held to the same academic and behavioral standards as all other students. They must complete all their coursework on time and meet the same academic standards as all other students.