



CHESTNUT
HILL
COLLEGE

Navigating Eligibility in Higher Education

March 16, 2023

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Hi! I'm Laura

- Have worked with students with learning differences for the past 10 + years
- Certified SLP, RDI Educator & Certified Admin I: Educational Leadership / Supervision
- Co-Authored 2 workbooks with PESI Publishing:
 - Trauma-Informed Social-Emotional Toolbox
 - Parenting Toolbox
- 2022 ASHA Convention Topic Committee Member
- Pennsylvania Speech-Language Hearing Association– DEI Committee ; Convention Committee
- Member of College Autism Network and Neurodiversity Employment Network
- Fun Fact: Unified Coaching Partner with Special Olympics for Bocce and Track and Field
- Current Position: Associate Director of Center for Accessibility and Learning Services at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia





Agenda

- Differentiation ADAAA and IDEA
- Common Procedures for Accommodations in College
- Accommodation Plans
- Educational Privacy
- Programming vs Accommodations
- Types of Specialty Programs



Ready, Set, COLLEGE

Transition to Higher Education and/or Employment is a HUGE change for individuals and families with learning differences

- ❖ Academics, Living Environment, and Social Environment change
- ❖ Consider:
 - ❖ Legal Differences
 - ❖ Personal Responsibility
 - ❖ Role of Family
 - ❖ Self-Awareness
 - ❖ What's out there?

Eligibility vs Entitlement



- Services under IDEA can be obligatory since they are mandated by the federal government in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education, rather than voluntary under the ADA.
- IDEA is an Educational Act – You are entitled to services from ages 3-21 while in public school under specific disability guidelines and diagnoses.
- ADAAA is a Civil Rights Law -- You cannot be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. Therefore, you can be eligible for reasonable accommodations
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act also provides eligibility for supports / accommodations



IDEA vs ADAAA

In HS, students are captured under IDEA/ Section 504 of RA:

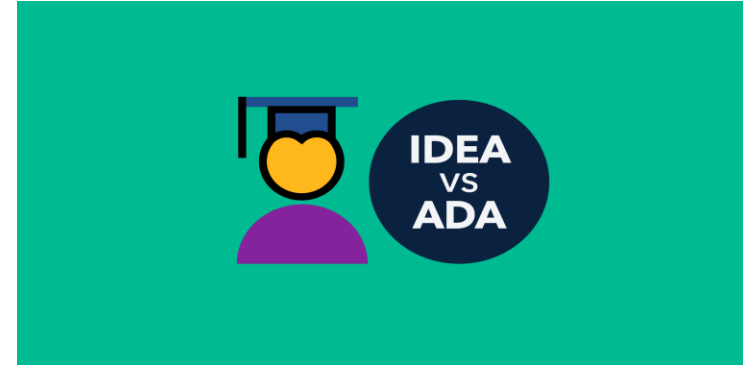
- School system takes lead in identification, assessment, and provision of services
- Student receives services, they do not have to ask for them
- Parents have the right to be involved

In College, students are captured under ADAAA/Section 504 of RA

- Students must disclose a need for services
- School provides reasonable accommodations: usually not as extensive as K-12 school setting
- FERPA: Applies to all educational settings however parent must be given explicit permission by student to have access to records.
- Permitted disclosure



IDEA vs ADA



IDEA

- Free Appropriate Public Education
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Individualized Education Plan
- Least Restrictive Environment
- **Parent Participation**
- Procedural Safeguards.

ADAAA

- Update to ADA, occurred in 2008
- Forbidden to discriminate against someone on the basis of a disability
- Must provide reasonable accommodation for equal access
- ADAAA broaden definition of “disability”

Common Paperwork & Procedures for Disclosure

- ❖ Statement of Disability: Completed by a Medical Professional
- ❖ Release of Records/Confidential Information– medical, educational, therapy logs, etc
- ❖ Disability Disclosure- Description of impact, indications of what is needed to be successful
- ❖ Supporting documentation
- ❖ Interview



What is an Accommodation Plan?

- ❖ An Accommodation Plan is a legal document approximately 1-2 pages in length that outlines what a student requires in order to have an equitable educational environment.
- ❖ An AP can include supports for academics, housing, dietary needs, etc.
- ❖ An AP will include the supports necessary for student success as indicated by the supporting documentation
- ❖ An AP does NOT include an individual's disability, as this is protected information.
- ❖ The AP is signed by the student and faculty members, and can be reauthorized every semester.
- ❖ An AP documents what is **reasonably** able to be provided by the institution
- ❖ The AP does not have parental input. Student only



Basic Accommodation Plan



Important Notice: The information in this letter is strictly confidential.

Below is an accommodation plan for a student in your class. If you have any questions, please contact the student's Access Specialist:
Haley Zahner, hzahner@calpoly.edu, (805) 756 - 5116.

Summer 2018 - BIO 161.01 - INTRO:CELL & MOLECULAR BIOLOGY (CRN: BIO16101)

Jane Doe is registered with the Disability Resource Center and has been approved for the following accommodations.

Approved Accommodations:

1. Alternative Testing

- **Testing Ext Time 1.5**
50% more time than allowed for the class for all exams and quizzes.



FERPA

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974
- ❖ **FERPA protects the privacy of student records.** The Act provides for
 - ❖ the right to inspect and review educational records
 - ❖ the right to seek to amend those records
 - ❖ to limit disclosure of information from the records.
- ❖ FERPA applies to all levels of education, including higher education
- ❖ A college student, age 18+, has control of their educational records. A parent or other family member does not have the right to review records without a FERPA waiver.
- ❖ If the college does have a FERPA waiver, it does not obligate them to communicate information to a parent or family member.
- ❖ Educational Records include admissions documents, grades/exams, Accommodation Plans, etc.





FERPA Quick Reference Guide

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

Students' Primary Rights under FERPA

- Inspect and review education records
- Request an amendment to their record for inaccurate or misleading information
- Consent to the disclosure of information contained in their record
- File a complaint with the US Department of Education for alleged violations



What is an education record?

Any record that is directly related to a student and maintained by Baylor, or someone acting on behalf of the institution. This includes all forms of record keeping, regardless of medium.

Who can access student education records?



Generally, schools must have signed consent from the student in order to release information from a student's education record. However, an exception is that **school officials** with **legitimate educational interest** can access student education records.

What is legitimate educational interest?

Legitimate educational interest is when a school official requires a student's education record in the course of performing his or her duties for the University. A way to evaluate for legitimate educational interest is to ask if the school official has a legitimate **need to know** the requested information.

Neurodiversity on Campus



College Autism Network
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

- ❖ More colleges and universities are exploring specific supports for neurodivergent individuals
- ❖ College Autism Network unites professionals supporting neurodiversity in higher education
- ❖ Inclusive Education Consortiums focus on inclusion beyond degree seeking to include IDD
- ❖ Framework specifically focused on A.I.S.E supports
- ❖ Reliant on self-disclosure and self-awareness of resources / strategies that are successful
- ❖ Lens on creating diverse and affirming campus



Did You Know...

Students report:

- ❖ Supportive environment needs beyond academics, also in **social interactions, emotional wellness, and independent living skills**
- ❖ High anxiety with transition and changes in expectations
- ❖ A desire for affirming spaces, faculty/staff understanding of neurodivergence, opportunities to be their authentic selves
 - ❖ **Students report a desire for:**
 - ❖ Increasing awareness of learning differences on campus
 - ❖ Sensory friendly spaces and practices
 - ❖ Universal Design for Learning
 - ❖ Acceptance of self-stimulatory behavior



Specialized Programming and Accommodations

- ❖ Programs and Accommodations Plans are different things
- ❖ Specialized programs typically have specific parameters or elements that students have access to, an accommodation plan is a legal document identifying required supports within an environment
- ❖ For example, a specialized program may coordinate 2 x weekly academic coaching sessions, however, this would not be an element of an accommodation plan.



The Medical Model—Deficit Based

- Medical Model vs. Social Movement: Intersection
- Determining Accommodations: Tools/Evaluations
 - What is wrong? How do we fix it?
- Having a Diagnosis
- Limitations
 - Access
 - Equity Practices
 - Assessment itself
 - Model driving programming : You are looking for a deficit, so you program based on deficits.
 - Lack of recognition of unique strengths or holistic viewpoint





Affirming Practices

When a flower doesn't bloom
you fix the environment
in which it grows,
not the flower.

Alexander Den Heijer

@THEFAMILYALCHEMISTS

- Holistic perspective of the individual
- Different view of barriers—societal vs individual
- Improving the overall experience on campus
- Learning about passions and interests
- Individualized reflection on campus life

Why CHC?

Focus on building an affirming campus for all students

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: College Resources for Success provider
- Member of College Autism Network (CAN)
- Member of Neurodiversity Employment Network (NEN)
- Ongoing ND workshops for campus community
- Committed community connections
- **Not focused on a specific diagnosis or evaluation to "qualify"**
- Small student:teacher ratio makes it ideal to provide individualized support



College Program Elements

The Neurodiversity College Program (NDCP) is designed to be an affirming approach to neurodivergent student growth; utilizing evidence-based strategies to individualize supports.

- Strengths Based Data Collection Tool
 - Review of student interests and goals
 - Multi informant
 - Checklist that identifies areas to be targeted for goal setting
 - Supplements documentation for Center for Accessibility and Learning Services
- Summer Bridge Program
 - Opportunity to acclimate to campus prior to Freshman year
 - Can earn credits, lighten load for future semester



NDCP SBM Example Items

Please place an X in the box that best represents your skills for the given statement. Feel free to give more information in the box to explain your abilities further. Place an X in the green box if you would like additional support in this area.

Social Interaction	I can do this by myself	I need some support to do this	I need a lot of support to do this	I want to have some help in this area
I am able to engage socially with peers when and how I want to. I can initiate communication and am able to interact with individuals successfully.				
I am able to interpret nonverbal clues during conversation to help understand what someone is saying or implying.				
I know how to express my empathy effectively to others.				
I feel confident and comfortable with my communication style in any situation.				



NDCP SBM Example Items

Emotional Wellness	I can do this by myself	I need some support to do this	I need a lot of support to do this	I want to have some help in this area
I can identify when my body or mind is dysregulated (e.g. anxious, feels tight/uncomfortable, overwhelmed)				
I know what to do to support my regulation and to feel calm and in control.				
I feel comfortable sharing my strategies with other adults or peers.				
I understand the concept of “disability masking”, and I don’t try to hide my learning differences from other people.				



College Program Elements

- Credit bearing opportunities for AISE* support
 - WCHC 3-4 credit course as a first year seminar
 - ENCompass Course—1 credit course all 4 years
 - BASICS curriculum
 - HEARTS curriculum
 - Guest Speakers from community with specific knowledge on internships/job placements etc
 - Experiential Learning
 - Facilitated problem solving and analysis of campus activities
- Individual meetings with Associate Director & Graduate Assistants; determined by needs of the student

• *AISE: Academics, Independent Living, Social Interaction, Emotional Wellness



Transition to Employment

- Career Development collaboration with A.D. of CALS throughout all 4 years.
 - Development of student specific transition plan during Freshman year
 - Scheduled time with students as part of ND Program & credit bearing support

Career Development:

- [4 Year Career Map](#)
- Fr: Focus Program
- So: Internships and Resumes
- Jr: Grow Your Resume and Networking
- Sr: Interviews





"The CHC Neurodiversity Program has given me the right set of actions, a good plan and an organized schedule for my path in CHC to go flawlessly."

Student in ND Program, Class of 2026

Current President of the Neurodiversity Club





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Questions?
Thank You