

Minutes of November 14, 2017

Present: Gregory Bouquot, Stuart Brown, Nithisha Chittajallu, Joseph Crivello, Robin Coulter, Hedley Freake, Gretchen Geer, Larry Gramling, Robin Grenier, Jennifer Lease Butts, Jill Livingston (recorder), Veronica Makowsky (Chair), Ellen Tripp

Absent: Brian Aneskievich (fall semester scheduling conflict), Robert Bosco, Karen Bresciano, David Clokey, Susanna Cowan, Peter Diplock, Holly Fitch, Katrina Higgins, Jean Main, David Wagner

- I. The Minutes of October 31, 2017 were approved.
- II. Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) information update and sharing with Donna Korbel, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of the Center for Students with Disabilities, and Kimberly McKeown, Assistant Director of the Center for Students with Disabilities

Donna and Kim explained the authority, legal mandates, and functions of the CSD. They provided a 26-page document outlining: federal mandates; mission and philosophy; and operations, including statistics.

Under law, the University must identify an agency to ensure compliance. UConn has given the CSD this authority. In addition to providing services at the main campus, the Provost asked CSD to extend services to the regional campuses, Law, and Health (including the dental and medical schools). CSD already supported Social Work.

The CSD reviews each individual on a case-by-case basis. The number of students receiving accommodations has increased. There have been 1,000 referrals (student self-refer for services) thus far in Fall semester 2017. This is in addition to 3,600 students already served. UConn enjoys a reputation of having one of the top CSD programs in the country.

Disabilities are substantial functional limitations of a major life function, such as: breathing, thinking, concentrating, having relationships, sleeping, etc. Under the ADA Amendments Act, the definition must be interpreted broadly and the investigation cannot be extensive. Chronic health conditions are currently the most common disability type supported by the CSD. These are physical conditions (e.g. active treatment for cancer, individuals with asthma, allergies, Crohn's Disease, etc.).

Students self-refer, usually electronically. Within one business day, students are paired with a disability service provider who reaches out to them to set up a meeting. Students usually come in for face-to-face meetings. Students explain their condition and how it impacts their studies. They will provide documentation:

1. Self-report
2. Professional judgement (by CSD)
3. Medical documentation.

CSD exercises the right to see the necessity and appropriateness of the requested accommodation to the disability. Discussion pertains to appropriate accommodation(s) for a specific class. Some accommodations requested by students are not appropriate for a specific class. In this case, CSD talks to faculty about what might be appropriate for that class. This process happens each time that a student registers for a class. Accommodations are determined on an individualized, case-by-case basis each semester.

If accommodations are provided and students still don't perform, they get the grade earned. However, if CSD deems, based on a student's previously filed documentation, that the student was not in a position to make a cogent decision about their academic program, CSD will request a retroactive accommodation. Withdrawals without a W are possible. These decisions can be made during the semester or after the grade is on the transcript. The latter is uncommon and requires extenuating circumstances; also, the Provost's Office is usually involved. This is not considered a retroactive accommodation, rather an exacerbation.

The Department of Justice and the Provost say that CSD is responsible for making decisions on accommodations. Faculty have roles, but in terms of someone responding to the request, the decision is with CSD. CSD holds case conferences three times per week. About half of the time, they talk to faculty first.

Most complaints filed on college campuses are with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the investigation is done by the Office of Civil Rights. CSD talks to the Office of Civil Rights constantly. CSD also monitors and takes into account cases at other institutions. DOJ expects CSD to be responsible for policy. CSD often seeks legal advice, but legal cases still get filed against them, which is usual in today's landscape.

Regarding maintaining privacy of records, faculty are not privy to the diagnosis. When faculty discuss with CSD whether an accommodation is appropriate, they would not know what diagnosis is. CSD has an educational right to know. Faculty are protected from potential discrimination lawsuits by not being aware of the diagnosis. If students try to self-disclose to faculty, CSD suggests that faculty tell the students that they do not need to know, and refer the students to CSD. If students want accommodations, they need to be referred to CSD.

Campus departments can request CSD to act as an intermediary during appeals processes where students may try to introduce disability information.

Large classes may have a number of students with accommodations. This can impact a faculty's workload, which is an issue for the union and Provost.

CSD has heard the faculty's concern that CSD exam proctoring is at capacity. They are considering solutions. Many large classes have exams in week 5. They are considering ProctorU, which is used by eCampus. They talked about allowing faculty or whole departments to use space in the evenings with CSD-trained proctors. CSD has 30 seats in exam rooms, and 5 individual offices with specialized technology. They would be amenable to a much larger testing center that would benefit everyone. CSD takes over the North Reading Room for finals from 7am to midnight, with fewer hours on Friday and Sunday. Campuses across the country are struggling with this.

If a faculty member disagrees with an accommodation, CSD would call an Academic Accommodations Review Board, comprised of a cross-section of academic and disability specialists. Boards are assembled based on the specific disability. These are not commonly needed since CSD is usually able to work things out with the faculty.

Every accommodation letter that a faculty member gets documents policy, per the Office of Civil Rights.

Letters include:

- student's name
- the class
- approved accommodations, with a brief explanation of the accommodations
- link to CSD's website
- process faculty should follow if the accommodations fundamentally alter the academic integrity of the class
- name of disability service provider

Kim will send the template accommodation letter to Veronica. [now on Husky CT]

Students are informed that they need to meet with faculty to discuss the accommodations; if students do not, they are not engaging with the interactive process and the faculty does not need to provide the accommodation. Faculty should wait for students to talk to them. If students do not, faculty do not have to do anything. CSD hopes, at that point, faculty will reach out to CSD.

Many accommodations do not require faculty involvement (e.g. peer note takers). Students can schedule exams with CSD, but need to get faculty approval prior. When students schedule, CSD reaches out to faculty.

All instructors of a course in PeopleSoft, including TA's see the accommodation letter. All student, including non-degree, who file with CSD follow the same process. Faculty should only respond to accommodation requests from CSD, even when a student says they don't need X accommodation, they need Y. If faculty do not receive a letter, the student is technically not a student with a disability and therefore not entitled to an accommodation.

To get information to faculty, GA's, TA's and other instructors, Scholastic Standards suggests that it is best to go through Department heads, but to utilize multiple communication pathways on a consistent basis. John Volin meets every Monday with all department heads.

ADA accommodations are part of the compliance training all university employees go through yearly. CSD offers to go to department meetings to discuss this information.