Laws Associated with Disabilities

It is imperative that educators, parents and students be aware of the rights of an individual with a disability in the academic setting. Federal laws protect and support such individuals. At Disability Support Services we work hard to adhere to these guidelines and laws. Your understanding of these laws will help ensure that The Catholic University of America offers both students and faculty equal opportunities.

**Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA)**

IDEA covers individuals from birth to the age of 21 or until graduation from high school and requires institutions to provide a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. It does not apply to college students.

**The Rehabilitation Act, Section 504**

This law applies to any institution, school or agency that receives federal funding and requires that it provide, to the best of its ability, services and accommodations needed to incorporate the people with disabilities into the academic world around them.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

This law is considered an extension of Section 504. Like Section 504, ADA requires schools, universities, businesses, agencies, etc., to supply “reasonable accommodations” to individuals with disabilities. ADA, unlike Section 504, covers those entities that do not receive federal monies as well as those that do receive federal aid.

The following Web sites explain these laws in more depth:

http://counsel.cua.edu/fedlaw/adas.cfm
http://counsel.cua.edu/fedlaw/rehabs.cfm

The Catholic University of America admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age or disability.
Working With a Classroom Transcriber
Transcription services help ensure access to communication within the classroom to students who qualify for this service. Currently, Deaf and hard-of-hearing students who do not use sign language utilize this system.

Transcription Services
The transcriber electronically delivers a real-time transcription of the classroom communication that captures the meaning of what is being said using student vernacular and vocabulary. As the transcriber types, the typed information appears on a laptop computer that the student has at his or her desk, allowing them immediate access to the classroom communication. In addition, transcription services provide students with a set of notes for after-class use that have been edited by the transcriber to ensure accuracy, fix mistakes and delete peripheral information (e.g., social interactions, jokes, etc.). The professor may also request a copy of the notes.

To help fight mental fatigue and keep mentally fresh, transcribers often work in teams of two. At the university level, class material and content are often very dense, and the transcriber has to process all of the information he or she hears. Working as a team also helps prevent repetitive motion injuries and discomfort.

How Professors Help the Transcribing Process
- If possible, please give the transcriber(s) a copy of textbooks, class syllabus, handouts and lecture notes. All are extremely important materials that can aid the transcriber. These materials help the transcriber to become familiar with the topics that will be discussed and with the spelling of key vocabulary.

- Please inform the transcriber of any films to be shown in your class. If possible, choose films that have closed captioning. Films and videos are extremely hard to transcribe and if they are too verbally complex or fast-paced, the transcriber will not be able to transcribe them. It may be helpful to obtain a copy of the script when ordering or requesting the film/video.

- Field trips are impossible to transcribe; the professor will have to make alternative arrangements to provide the student with materials used or discussed on the field trip.

- Be aware that the transcriber strives to accurately transcribe the lecture. If the speed of the lecture or conversation becomes too rapid, the transcriber may ask for clarification.

- If the student is using remote transcribing, be sure to speak clearly facing the microphone. It may also be helpful to repeat questions from other students when possible, particularly if using a wireless microphone.

Most important, if you have questions, please ask.

Different Types of Transcribing
There are two types of transcripts produced by speech-to-text systems: verbatim and meaning-for-meaning. A verbatim transcript shows word-for-word what the speaker(s) said. It may also include mention of noises such as laughter, an airplane overhead, etc.

A meaning-for-meaning transcript condenses the language used while maintaining the full meaning intended by the speaker. Because meaning-for-meaning transcripts express the speaker’s intended message, but do so in fewer words, it is similar to what many sign language interpreters do. Thus, meaning-for-meaning services are also known as text-interpreting systems. They use an abbreviation system that is based on phonetics, or how words sound.

REMOTE TRANSCRIPTIONING: Through the use of wireless Internet, it is now possible for the student and transcriber to be in two different locations. In order for the transcriber to hear the lecture and class discussion, the student uses a microphone that is connected to his/her laptop. There are generally two types of microphones that the student will use: a wired microphone that faces the professor or a wireless microphone worn on the professor’s lapel that transmits the sound to a base connected to the laptop. The student decides which type of laptop to use based on personal preference, class room set-up, and class format (lecture vs. discussion based). The student follows along with the discussion through a Web page with a live stream of text entered by the transcriber with less than a two-second delay. The student then receives an edited version of the class transcription within 24 hours.

Here at CUA, the providers that we contract with one of these systems:

CART: Communication Access Realtime Translation (also known as stenotype) is the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software. The text appears on a computer monitor or other display. This technology is primarily used by people who are hearing impaired or who are learning English as a second language. It produces the highest quality output where verbatim transcripts are desired.

C-PRINT AND TYPEWELL: C-Print and TypeWell are both systems for transcribing speech-to-text for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The C-Print captionist or TypeWell transcriber includes as much information as possible through the use of a specialized abbreviation software (C-Print Pro or TypeWell), generally providing a meaning-for-meaning (not verbatim) translation of the spoken English content. With C-Print, the text can be displayed simultaneously to one or more students in different ways, including additional computers (laptops) or display monitors. With TypeWell, the Deaf person reads the transcript in real time from a second computer. He or she can also type questions and comments to the transcriber to be voiced, and can take notes right in the TypeWell program on the second computer.