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NAME: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

PURPOSE-PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the college's role in providing fair and equitable access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities according to their individual needs and in a manner that is consistent with academic principles. The policy aims to foster equity, diversity, inclusiveness and student success by providing students with disabilities opportunities for academic success and personal development at Great Plains College.

The policy also outlines the responsibilities of students with disabilities in accessing academic accommodations and support services at the college.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, disabilities are those defined as such in Section 2(1) (d.1) of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (hereafter called the "Code").

Disability

(i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

- (A) epilepsy;
- (B) any degree of paralysis;
- (C) amputation;
- (D) lack of physical coordination;
- (E) blindness or visual impediment;
- (F) deafness or hearing impediment;
- (G) muteness or speech impediment; or
- (H) physical reliance on a service animal, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

(ii) any of:

- (A) an intellectual disability or impairment;
- (B) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language; or
- (C) a mental disorder;



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Student

For the purpose of this policy, a student is defined as a person who is registered in one or more credit or non-credit courses offered by the college, or who is a prospective student who has submitted an application for admission to the college.

POLICY

Great Plains College will take all measures to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the college and the opportunity to succeed in their programs of study. The intervention or accommodation will be provided as per available resources. Appropriate academic accommodations are fundamental to support students with disabilities, but when provided, those accommodations shall not compromise the college's academic requirements and standards.

1. Academic Accommodation

In accordance with the Code, reasonable academic accommodations must be provided to students with disabilities. Reasonable academic accommodations are fundamental in supporting students with disabilities.

1.1 Reasonable Academic Accommodations

A reasonable and appropriate accommodation is a modification, adjustment and/or supplementary aid that minimizes or eliminates the impact of a disability, allowing a student to gain equal access and opportunity to participate in the college's courses, programs, services, activities and facilities.

A reasonable and appropriate accommodation is one that does not require substantial change or alteration in the entrance requirements, the curriculum or the nature of the essential requirements of the course/program.

The essential requirements of a course/program are the knowledge and skills which must be acquired or demonstrated in order for a student to successfully meet the learning objectives of the course/program.

Similarly, a reasonable accommodation is one that does not require alteration, revision or modification of facilities, services or other college activities with undue or unreasonable cost to college operations.

In some circumstances, the nature and degree of a disability may mean that no reasonable accommodation would enable an individual to perform the essential requirements of a course/program. This is to safeguard both the functions and operations of the college for all students and the self-esteem and well-being of the students with disabilities, as well as the quality and scope of their learning experience. Where no reasonable accommodation can be provided, the college reserves the right to refuse admission or accommodations in order to preserve the academic integrity of a course/program for all students and to protect the facilities, services and other operations of the college.

Accommodations will be provided up to the point of unreasonable cost to the college. A number of factors are weighed when assessing whether or not the cost associated with an accommodation is unreasonable, including:

- a) The nature of the requested or required accommodation;

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- b) The financial cost of the accommodation;
- c) The ability of the student receiving the accommodation to meet admission or program requirements;
- d) The degree to which the accommodation might impact other students or faculty;
- e) Whether health or safety concerns would arise as a result of the accommodation; and
- f) The reasonableness or cooperativeness of the student seeking accommodation. These factors are not listed in order of priority. The weight that will be given to these factors or any other relevant considerations will depend on the circumstances.

2. Confidentiality of Students' Personal Information

Confidentiality of all students' personal information will be respected at all times in accordance with the college's Staff-Student Privacy Policy and The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIP).

While accommodations may be discussed in general with colleagues who are not involved in teaching specific classes, care must be taken to not identify any student as having a disability without that student's consent.

3. Responsibilities in the Provision of Accommodations

3.1 Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students who seek reasonable accommodations due to a disability have the following responsibilities:

3.1.1 Students are their own best advocates, and must understand that a reasonable measure of self-advocacy is necessary for academic success. Sometimes, the nature of a disability makes it difficult for a student to be aware of the need for accommodation and interferes with one's ability to participate in the design and implementation of the accommodation. Clinical documentation is preferred, but may not always be required in order to acquire academic accommodations. Students, staff, or instructional staff who are concerned that a student may have such a disability should contact a student adviser. The student adviser will evaluate what steps, if any, are necessary to address the student's need.

3.1.2 Students seeking academic accommodation for a disability will be required to self-disclose their disability and to provide appropriate supporting documentation to the student adviser where applicable. Where college staff observe indications of a disability, trial accommodations may be recommended for one semester while documentation is being obtained.

3.1.3 Depending on circumstances around self-disclosure and the nature and severity of the disability, the college reserves the right to request an assessment and supporting, professional documentation of the disability. Costs associated with this assessment and documentation may be covered by the college.

3.1.4 A student with a disability who self discloses and requires accommodation(s) should supply supporting documentation (no older than five years) of their disability to the student adviser from a certified health care professional or educational psychologist who has expertise and experience in the diagnosis of the condition(s) for which the academic accommodations(s) and-or service(s) are being requested. The documentation must provide detailed information about the nature of the disability as well as the functional impact of the disability.

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3.1.5 A student who chooses not to disclose a disability, and who is unsuccessful as a consequence, is likely to jeopardize the success of any appeal based on the college's failure to accommodate the disability. Similarly, a student who discloses a disability but who chooses not to follow through with the planning process for accommodations or to utilize appropriate supports that have been recommended by the student adviser or a health care professional, undermines his/her chances for success.

3.1.6 Reasonable efforts will be made to remove barriers and to provide access to college facilities for students with disabilities.

3.1.7 The college will ensure that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about relevant college policies and procedures related to accommodating students with disabilities and will provide opportunities for instructors and staff to become familiar with issues regarding persons with disabilities.

3.1.8 In order to receive academic accommodations, a student will provide at least two months of notice, when possible, prior to the program start date, to the student adviser.

3.2 Responsibilities of Instructional Staff

To support students with disabilities and facilitate their academic success while maintaining the college's academic requirements and standards, instructional staff will:

3.2.1 Foster a positive atmosphere for all students, including those with disabilities. Instructional staff will ensure that issues related to disabilities and people with disabilities are addressed and discussed in a fair, sensitive and nondiscriminatory manner.

3.2.2 Make every reasonable accommodation to facilitate the learning of all students. This may require adjustments in course assignments and other methods of assessment, physical environment, instructional atmosphere, supplementary instruction, instructional tools, or other resources.

3.2.3 Contact a student adviser if they are concerned that a student may have such a disability. The student adviser will evaluate what steps, if any, are necessary to address the student's need.

APPEALS

If a student with a disability is not satisfied with an accommodation decision made by the college, the student should first discuss their concerns with the student adviser. If a resolution is not reached, the student can pursue an appeal of the decision.