Hints for Incoming Students

Communicating your needs effectively involves a number of factors. Students with disabilities who succeed in postsecondary education generally possess the following characteristics:

• Ability to articulate one's talents and abilities clearly.

• Knowledge of the nature of one's disability, and of the kinds of teaching strategies, tools, and services which best help one compensate.

• Ability to explain both talents and needed compensatory strategies, clearly and frankly, to others.

• Maturity and initiative to assume the greater share of one's own advocacy.

• Adherence to effective, routine study habits, to whatever degree is necessary for success.

• Acceptance of and initiative to seek assistance for academic and other problems, as appropriate.

• Acceptance of the idea that it may take longer to graduate than one's friends, and that he/she may have to study harder than friends.

• Recognition of the concept that postsecondary education is meant to be a challenge and that temporary frustrations are a part of the normal growth process.

• Regular, frequent communication with parents, friends, classroom professors, academic advisors and support services personnel.

It has also been observed that the college-level student with a disability must be self-reliant and able to cope with the ever-changing challenges of daily living. Students with disabilities who have learned to rely heavily on both parents and teachers to direct them and manage their lives may have difficulty adjusting to the demands of college life. Thus, as a student, the task is to find a college/university that will stretch and develop talents, interests, and abilities while at the same time be respectful and supportive of needs.