5 Quick Tips for Working with Students with Disabilities

- Emphasize strengths rather than weaknesses
- Always speak confidentially with the student; never comment or initiate a discussion regarding a disability in front of others.
- Do not assume a student is having difficulty with a task. Ask if and how you may help.
- Students with disabilities have the same range of likes and dislikes as anyone else.
- **Consult with ODS** if you are concerned with personal issues or appropriate instructional techniques.

All college syllabi should include a statement informing students of ODS:

If you have a disability, and believe you need accommodations in my classroom, please see Walter Donofrio (A202A) wdonofrio@pccc.edu, or Gina Carson (PAC218/WAC116) gcarson@pccc.edu, or call 973-684-6395, to make an appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of classes for Fall/Spring semesters and by the 2nd class day for Summer sessions. If you require testing accommodations, you must remind me one week in advance of the test.

It is the responsibility of the student to self-identify or disclose his/her disability to ODS. However, the student may do this with a faculty member by presenting an ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT or ACCOMMODATIONS FORM/LETTER. If a student discloses he/she has a disability but does not present a form, he/she should be directed to the ODS office (A202A/WAC116/PAC218).

Once the form is received, it is then the faculty’s responsibility to meet with the student to discuss and reach suitable arrangements for appropriate accommodations noted on the form. Assistance in the implementation of the recommended academic adjustments or additional information regarding requirements, procedures, etc. can be obtained by contacting the ODS office at Ext. 6395. See also ODS FACT SHEET.
ODS FACULTY RESOURCE LINKS

- Accommodating Students with Disabilities
- Tip for Interacting with People with Disabilities
- Faculty Toolkit
- Tips to Reach All Students with a Universally Designed Syllabus
- Higher Education and Disability: Education Needs a Coordinated Approach to Improve Its Assistance to Schools in Supporting Students
- Tip Sheets for Applying UD
- Engaging Students with Disabilities through Universal Design for Learning
- Teaching All Students, Reaching All Learners, including Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners
- Making the Grade: What Advisors and Administrators Need to Know to Better Assist Students with Disabilities Webinar Handout
- Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction, A Checklist for Inclusive Teaching
- Faculty Fast Facts UDL
  - Teaching All Students, Reaching All Learners, including Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners

- TIP SHEET 1: KNOWING THE POSTSECONDARY ENVIRONMENT
- TIP SHEET 2: SELECTING TYPE FOR PRINT AND WEB PUBLISHING
- White House Summit on Community Colleges
Many teaching strategies that assist students with disabilities are known to also benefit nondisabled students. *Instruction provided in an array of approaches will reach more students than instruction using only one method*. The following are some dos and don'ts to assist students in an academic setting:

**DO...**
- write key terms or an outline on the board, or prepare a lecture handout
- create study guides
- assign advance readings before the topic is due in the class session
- briefly review the previous lecture
- use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, and/or graphs
- allow the use of tape recorders
- emphasize important points, main ideas, and key concepts
- explain technical language and terminology
- speak distinctly and at a relaxed rate, pausing to allow students time for note-taking
- leave time for questions
- administer frequent quizzes to provide feedback for students
- give assignments in writing as well as orally
- treat an individual with a disability the same way you would treat anyone—with dignity and respect

**DON'T...**
- turn your back to the class when speaking
- embarrass a student with a disability by drawing attention to the disability in front of the class
- assume that certain professions or majors are more suited to persons with disabilities
- assume a student with a disability does not belong in a certain major or program
- assume a student with a disability cannot perform well in your class
- make medical judgements
- feel apprehensive about discussing the student’s needs as they relate to the course