

Chabot College

For Immediate Release

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Chabot College's Disabled Student Programs and Services Department Helps Students Succeed

At any college, student success sets the bar. Colleges want their students to complete their educational goals, regardless of if those goals include finishing a continuing education program, trade, associate degree or transfer. But for some students, success hinges on their ability to receive reasonable accommodations to assist with learning and retaining classroom information. At Chabot College, the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) department/Disabled Student Resource Center (DSRC) facilitates student needs to help them achieve their dreams.

Many assume programs and services are available only to those with severe learning challenges, but any student with documented evidence of learning difficulties is eligible. For students with a variety of disabilities, arrangements can be made for extended test times or tests to be administered in a quiet room where distractions are at a minimum. Students in wheelchairs are provided with adjustable desks to fit their chair, and students with mobility challenges have access to transportation between classes and to and from their car or ride service. Additionally, students with visual impairments can arrange for recording devices to use in class, textbooks to be converted to audio books and equipment that will enlarge text to a size they can easily read. These are just some of the many accommodations DSPS provides.

"We focus on the whole spectrum - everything from physical disability, cognitive function, communicative, psychological and learning disability - both visible and invisible," said Chabot's DSPS Director Nathaniel Rice. "We want to increase perception, reception, utilization and completion. There's a stigma that we're constantly fighting of 'disabled students' and we're trying to improve how our students and programs are seen so more students will utilize our services and succeed in their classes."

According to Director Rice, last year Chabot's DSPS served 1,155 students with nearly 38 percent having a learning disability and 16 percent needing accommodations from a psychological disability. However, Chabot, and all colleges, only document a student's primary disability, whereas students with multiple challenges - like a recent graduate who was both visually and hearing impaired - would only be reported one way, which makes it difficult to provide an accurate number of services provided. Regardless of impairment, Chabot strives to meet the needs of any student who requires the department's assistance and employs three counselors trained to complete student assessments and student educational plans (SEP) that allow individuals to pursue their goals. Accommodations range from provisional, or short-term accommodations provided before a disability is documented; temporary, which are provided to students who may need assistance for a short period of time - for example, if they break their arm and need assistance taking a test - and permanent accommodations provided for the entire duration of a student's time at Chabot.

"ASL Interpreting," said Rice, "is the biggest part of our budget. Most of the programs have a cap on the number of DSPS students they will serve, but we have no cap. We could have 200 blind students through our doors next week. Providing accessibility services is an ADA mandate and the funding we get from the state is given to help cover that. If extra costs incur it would be up to the college to cover it."

Despite that, Director Rice encourages all students with need to take advantage of the programs and services available to them, because utilizing accommodations has proven to greatly increase student success. According to him, about 20 percent of the population has a disability of some kind, and although not all people need accommodations, those who want assistance should utilize the opportunities available to them to maximize their success in college.

For more information visit, <http://www.chabotcollege.edu/dsrc/>.

About Chabot College

Chabot College in Hayward is a comprehensive community college in the heart of a thriving, diverse community where students of all ages and backgrounds can get a high quality education at an affordable price. The college awards associate degrees and certificates, and specializes in university transfer, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities. During the 2018-2019 academic year, Chabot College granted over 1,300 Associate Degrees and 689 Certificates of Achievement, the highest in the college's history. <http://www.chabotcollege.edu/>