**Teaching Students with Attention Disorders**

Students with documented Attention Disorders will experience inattention more frequently and severely than other students. Inattentiveness may or may not be apparent by observation. Diagnosis occurs by an appropriately licensed professional; treatment may involve medication and on-going professional counseling support. Even with pharmaceutical or cognitive-behavioral intervention, the need for accommodation may remain. Students with Attention Disorders may struggle with task persistence at times, may need to re-read passages to gain full understanding, may have difficulty with executive functions, or other difficulties unique to their experience of their attentional disorder.

Attention may be affected by environmental stimuli that other persons may or may not be conscious of, e.g. consistent background noise from any source in and/or outside of the classroom. “Street noise”, concurrent conversations overheard in and out of the classroom, radiator pipes “banging”, an air vent fluctuating with subsequent noise and the sound emitted from fluorescent lights are examples of possible environmental distractions to a student with an attention disorder, for some students with attention disorders their own thoughts may be distracting as well.

The degree to which each student is distracted or inattentive and finds successful supports is variable. Students with attention disorders are expected to meet essential course requirements in the same manner as other students in the class. Regular, on-time attendance is not excused and accountability is expected. Instructors can provide necessary supports for their students with Attention Disorders in the following ways:

* Present the course syllabus in writing with clear deadline dates for assignments. Review the syllabus aloud at the start of the course and remind students of upcoming deadlines with a week’s notice.
* Invite the student to submit drafts of written assignments with a specific deadline. When reviewing, make notes but do not correct sentence structure, spelling and syntax. Discuss the draft in person with the student.
* Present course materials and instruction in a variety of modalities – verbal, visual and hands-on when possible. This is usually helpful to all students.
* Adhere to the schedule for course deadlines.
* If teaching a course that is over 1 hour and 15 minutes, offer breaks every 45 minutes.
* Plan for a separate testing room for examinations.