

Department Chairs ADA Responsibilities

The department chair serves an important role in the administration of the ADA on our campus. The department chairs need to assume the following responsibilities.

- **To stay informed on ADA policies and procedures appropriate to the level of the academic department.** The academic department chair is in a position of "need to know," and claiming ignorance of policies or needs in the administration of the ADA is no longer professional or legally defensible;
- **To insure that the faculty members and support staff within the program are adequately informed and educated on the policies and procedures appropriate to the level of the academic department.** It is the responsibility of the department chair to see that the appropriate ADA policies and procedures are carried out by the personnel of the program, and to see that the training and education necessary for this to happen takes place, Failure to adequately inform personnel on these policies and procedures will place the responsibility for any breakdown in their administration on the chair;
- **To see that the entry level information necessary for students to be informed about college ADA policies and procedures and to participate in the ADA campus program is provided to ALL students in the department program.** This would include at least distributing a summary of how to enter the ADA evaluation/ accommodation process, together with other required course materials that are provided to all students at the beginning of every class at MSCD;
- **To serve as a triage officer at the department level to see that problems involving students are properly identified as academic, disciplinary, or ADA related.** Most student related problems arriving in the department office are not ADA related, but it is critical that all student related issues be handled with appropriate procedures, including all ADA related situations. Failure to recognize and act properly on ADA related student issues can cause major procedural and legal problems for the student, faculty member, department and college;
- **To serve as a coordinator/liaison officer between the student and faculty member and the Access Center, student services and EEO programs.** The department chair, or the representative of the department chair, must bring all requests for ADA accommodations to the attention of the appropriate personnel in these offices, and work with them, the student and faculty member to teach an appropriate accommodation. The department chair can grant permission for this to take place through a trained representative of the department other than her/himself, or, in through the faculty member involved, but retains the final responsibility for any and all outcomes;

- **To see that the ADA student receives fair and legal treatment.** This includes fair and proper academic treatment and training, and accommodation according to the Conditions of the ADA;
- **To perform the departmental role in ADA policies and procedures in such a manner as to minimize the probability of the college being taken into civil rights or civil court proceedings.**
This does not mean lowering academic standards or bowing to unreasonable accommodations, but requires fair, and reasonable, action to be fair to the student, maintain academic and professional standards, and accommodate to the law;
- **To serve as a role model who complies with and supports the provisions of the ADA to the other persons in the program.** The example set by the chief administrative officer at any level sets the tone for the entire unit, including the department program, The chair who complies with the ADA, and supports it, sets the tone for the entire program; if the chair resists the provisions of the ADA, even behind the scenes, it will be many times harder to create an atmosphere and a program that will successfully deal with the spirit and the policies of the ADA;