Course Loads and Scheduling

Students with disabilities have real concerns when it comes to the amount of work and study necessary for success at the university level. Scheduling classes and understanding course loads can be daunting. While all students want to obtain their degrees as quickly as possible, when a disability is factored in, speed may not be the best way to finish a program of study.

‘Scheduling’ is determining which classes to take. It involves determining the days and times the classes meet AND how each class will be impacted by the disability. You will work with college or program advisors for the first semester during orientation. Disability Services for Students (DSS) can assist with scheduling and registration starting with the 2nd semester, although academic advisors will help you know which required and elective courses should be taken.

‘Course loads’ is looking at each course and determining what will be expected of the student to be successful in that course. Some courses are project-based and will require students to participate in groups or teams; some courses are Internet-based, meaning all work and communication is on-line (computer skills are a must); still others are more traditional, with two or three exams as the only assessments. You need to know how well you can function in these circumstances so that you can put together an effective schedule.

It is important for you to understand your particular disability. In other words, will the disability present too many obstacles? For example, a learning disability may present in slow reading rates, short –term memory difficulties, and information processing difficulties. Therefore, when scheduling classes and considering course loads, it would not be wise to register for four heavy reading classes for the same semester. Students with Attention Deficit Disorder may want to avoid the one-day-a-week block courses, as they are three hours of sitting, often without a break. Those classes also mean that there are six days in which to forget information. Knowing your disability can help you function more successfully at the university.