

# The Elms College Student Guide to Student Accommodations & Support Services (S.A.S.S.)

Formerly Office of Disability Services



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Revised: July 2016

Student Accommodations & Support Services (S. A.S. S) Handbook

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## **Welcome to Elms College:**

Welcome to Elms College! We are excited that you have chosen to be a part of the Elms College community.

We are fully committed to supporting all of its students in their academic careers. Part of that commitment includes the provision of academic accommodations for students who have a documented diagnosis of a disability: learning, attention, health/systemic, sensory, physical, psychiatric, and neurologic.

We're glad you chose Elms College and we look forward to working with you!

## **Program Introduction:**

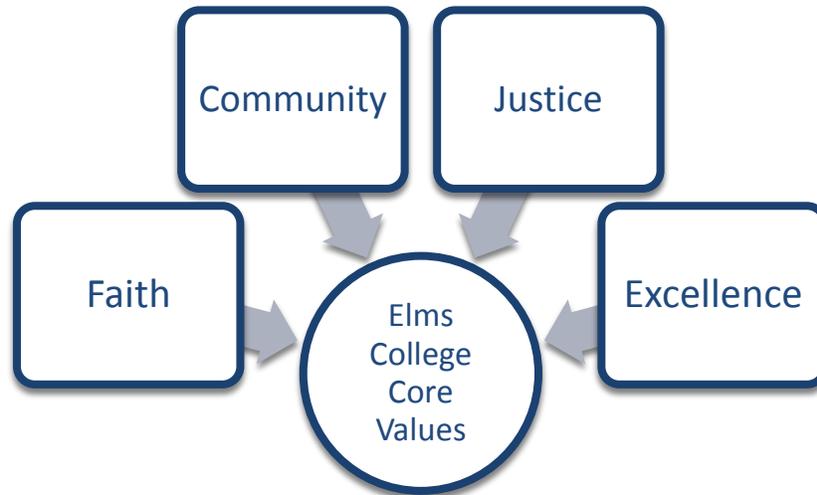
The Student Accommodations and Support Services Office (S.A.S.S.) is a department in the division of Student Affairs. The purpose of this office is to coordinate the needs of students with documented disabilities with faculty, staff and administration to ensure equal access. This manual is to serve as a guide and is subject to periodic revisions.

## **Elms College Mission and Core Values:**

### **Our Mission**

The College of Our Lady of the Elms, a Catholic college, educates a diverse group of women and men in a supportive, vibrant learning community. Combining a liberal arts education with professional studies, Elms College empowers students to effect positive changes in the community and in the world.

Affirming the founding tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Elms College challenges students to embrace change without compromising principle, to respond creatively to the demands of their chosen careers, and to advocate for people in need. Elms College is a community rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, and responsive to civic and social obligations.

**Elms College Core Values:**

Elms College Community affirms our Catholic identity and our relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph. We, as trustees, faculty, staff and students, aspire to live and work as an academic community according to these core values:

*Faith: Elms College, empowered by love and faith, welcomes all, while seeking to promote the traditions of our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph, through programs that challenge all members of the college community, spiritually, ethically and intellectually.*

*Community: Elms College commits to compassion and relationship building, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, creating a sense of belonging for the entire campus community. This encourages us to respond to the needs of others, in a spirit of hospitality, within and beyond the college.*

*Justice: Elms College aspires to the highest standards of social responsibility as an institution and is committed to instilling values of equal opportunity and justice in our college community. Individually and collectively, we are dedicated to pursuing the common good and to improving the lives of all people.*

*Excellence: Elms College fosters excellence in our students and in our community by educating the whole individual, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. We challenge each other to realize our full potential to impact the world through our knowledge and enhanced skills.*

## **Student Accommodations and Support Services**

### **Program Contact Information and Hours of Operation:**

**Mailing Address:**

Elms College  
291 Springfield Street  
Alumnae Library, Room 303  
Chicopee, MA 01013

**Telephone:** (413) 265-2333

**Fax:** (413)594-3951

**Email:** [sass@elms.edu](mailto:sass@elms.edu)

[hendersont@elms.edu](mailto:hendersont@elms.edu)

The S.A.S.S. fax line is not private, nor confidential, information shared via fax may be seen by others. The S.A.S.S. telephone lines are switched to an answering service at closing. When leaving a message, please state your name, telephone number and a brief message. Staff can also be reached via email at one of the addresses listed above.

### **Student Accommodations & Support Services Hours of Operation Autumn & Spring Semester**

Monday - Friday | 8:30am - 4:00 pm

✚ Evening hours may be available upon request and staffing availability.

### **Summer Semester**

Monday - Friday | 9am - 3pm

- ✚ Important Notices about exams and hours of operation:
- Exams/quizzes taken at the S.A.S.S. testing center must be completed during the hours listed above and must be completed by the time the office closes.
  - Hours of operation are subject to change at discretion of college or department officials.
  - The office is closed on all college holidays.
  - Special testing arrangements can be made in advance.

### **Student Accommodations and Support Services Program Purpose:**

The purpose of the Student Accommodations and Support Services Office is to provide services that ensure equal access to education for qualified students. Student Accommodations and Support Services Office (S.A.S.S.) also provides guidance for campus faculty and staff to ensure federal obligations are followed.

- \* The Purpose of S.A.S.S. is to provide each student with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the college's programs and activities.
- \* This purpose is accomplished by:
  1. Creating a physically accessible, programmatically accessible and attitudinally accessible community where people are judged on their abilities, not their disabilities.
  2. Promoting the development of a climate for everyone at the college that is conducive to learning, personal growth, acceptance, and appreciation of everyone without regard to disability.

### **Student Accommodations & Support Services Mission:**

Our **mission** is to provide services that ensure equal access to education for qualified students in accordance with state and federal laws. The Office of Student Accommodations & Support Services (S.A.S.S.) will, in partnership with students, families, faculty, staff, and administration, provide reasonable accommodations designed to ensure no qualified student with a disability is denied equal access to, participation in, or benefit of the programs and activities of Elms College. It is also our goal to maximize student success, self-advocacy, and independence in an accessible academic environment.

### **Student Accommodations & Support Services Values:**

- Empower students to self-advocate
- Focus on students' personal strengths
- Advocate for universal design
- Educate the Elms College community about disability compliance, issues, and responsibilities
- As a part of a team prepare college students with disabilities for careers

### **S.A.S. S. Governing Laws:**

Elms College is committed to providing equal education opportunities for persons with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA) of 2008. The aforementioned laws protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination, allow access to all programs and services and ensure equal access to education.

A disability is defined as a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Substantially limiting is defined as being unable to perform a major life activity, or significantly restricted as to the condition, manner, or duration under which a major life activity can be performed, in comparison to the average person or to most people. A major life activity is defined as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. (American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

### **Transition from High School to College:**

While governing laws apply to both high school and colleges/postsecondary school, responsibility of the postsecondary institution significantly changes as compared to high school. In high school, school personnel were responsible for identifying and implementing accommodations for students with disabilities. In postsecondary education, **the student with the disability must self-identify with the disability service provider.**

**It is the responsibility of the student to know and follow the postsecondary school's procedures for requesting accommodations.**

The areas of disability law guiding high schools require that students with disabilities receive IEP/504 plans designed by parents, teachers, specialists and other administrators to assure student success. Postsecondary education is guided by different areas of disability law and these laws empower students to choose whether or not to seek assistance for their disabilities. This means that students are now responsible for deciding when to initiate the accommodations process and communicating their specific needs for each class to the appropriate college personnel.

### **Program Registration Process:**

The student must first self-identify by completing the initial registration form. Once completed and the appropriate supporting documentation has been provided initial interview with the program director is required. At this appointment, the student should bring any additional documentation and be prepared to speak candidly about their diagnosis and supports they may need. If documentation is sufficient, the necessary paperwork will be completed and accommodations identified. Within a reasonable amount of time accommodation letters will then be provided to the student to give to their instructors. Students will have instructors sign the form and return this form to S.A.S.S. for completion of the registration process. Accommodations will not be provided until the Instructor Signature Form is received, reviewed, and signed by the S.A.S.S. Director.

### Satellite Program and Graduate Students:

Satellite Program and Graduate Students follow the same registration process as campus residents or commuter students. Necessary forms can be emailed to students for completion. Completed forms can be faxed to S.A.S.S. to begin the registration process but original forms must still be mailed. Once completed forms are received, S.A.S.S. will provide the student with accommodation letters for their instructors. For the student's convenience, the accommodation letter and Instructor Signature Form can be scanned and emailed to the student. Students can email the accommodation letter and Instructor Signature Form to their instructor. The Instructor Signature Form can be faxed, emailed or mailed to S.A.S.S. to complete the registration process.

### Elms Email:

All official correspondence requires use of the Elms sponsored email account.

### Program Eligibility:

At the college level, it is the individual student's responsibility to initiate the registration process with S.A.S.S. In order to determine your eligibility and provide accommodations, S.A.S.S. will need documentation. The type of documentation required may depend upon the type of disability and the specific accommodations a student would like to request.

To be eligible for S.A.S.S., a student must:

- ✓ Complete the S.A.S.S. registration form
- ✓ Submit all required disability documentation (as described below)
- ✓ Receive notification from an S.A.S.S. Director that you are eligible
- ✓ Schedule and attend an intake appointment with the Director of S.A.S.S.

The S.A.S.S. Director will review documentation and determine eligibility according to the framework of the American's with Disabilities Act Amendment and in accordance with the professional standards of the Association of Higher Education and Disability. There is no "exact formula" of how to document or determine a disability; however here are the things we look for in documentation:

- ✓ there is a chronic physical or mental condition that has been diagnosed
- ✓ Evidence that the condition significantly impacts one or more Major Life Activity (such as vision, learning, standing, etc.)

- ✓ provided by a medical, mental health, or educational professional qualified to diagnose, evaluate, and treat the condition
- ✓ demonstrates a history of accommodation OR impact on current functioning
- ✓ supports the accommodations being requested

### **Documentation Guiding Principles:**

Documentation should be on letterhead, typed, dated and signed by a licensed professional.

Federal guidelines identify seven elements of documentation:

1. Credentials of the evaluator(s).
2. Diagnostic statement identifying the disability.
3. Description of the diagnostic methodology/tool.
4. Description of current functional limitations.
5. Description of expected progression or stability.
6. Description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications.
7. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.

While Section 504 plans or IEPs are useful in identifying a student's needs, generally they do not provide enough detail and may not be considered sufficient documentation for accommodations in postsecondary education.

Standard timeline for documentation is within three years; however, there are exceptions. If an individual has a permanent diagnosis, meaning the condition will never cease, the documentation can be more than three years old. (Examples include medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, Spinal Bifida, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and vision/hearing impairments.) For acute diagnosis, the documentation may have to be within the past year. (Examples include emotional and psychological disorders.)

Each student seeking accommodations based on a disability must submit current documentation prepared by a qualified professional verifying the student's disability and any limitations. Students submitting incomplete information may be asked to provide additional verifying documentation. Students may be required to participate in additional evaluations needed to determine eligibility for an accommodation or what constitutes an appropriate accommodation. In the event of a dispute about whether a student is eligible for an academic accommodation or about the provision of an accommodation by the college, the student should follow the Student Grievance Procedure.

**Confidentiality:**

S.A.S.S. is committed to ensuring that all information and communication pertaining to a student's disability remains confidential as required by law. The program uses the following guidelines to maintain confidentiality:

1. No one will have immediate access to student files in S.A.S.S. except office personnel. Any information regarding a disability is considered confidential and will be shared only with others within the college who have a legitimate educational interest. This information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Sensitive information in student files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state laws.
3. A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
4. There may be occasions when the Director will share information regarding a student's disability as deemed necessary and appropriate. Information will only be shared if it has been determined that there is an appropriate legitimate educational interest involved.
5. If a student requests a copy of an evaluation in their records, the student will have to contact the original evaluator for documentation.
6. A student has the right to review his/her own file with reasonable notification.
7. Parents, Guardians etc. do not have access to student level information or files without written prior consent from the student.

**Program Roles and Responsibilities:**

S.A.S.S. staff, campus faculty/staff and the student with a disability each have roles and responsibilities that are pertinent to ensuring equal access to education.

**S.A.S.S. Program Responsibilities:**

S.A.S.S. is devoted to providing academic support, accommodations, advocacy and referrals for students with disabilities. Responsibilities include:

- Reviewing student's documentation, evaluating eligibility, and identifying reasonable accommodations.
- Requesting additional documentation, if needed.
- Providing accommodation letters to students.
- Consulting with instructors as needed to ensure understanding and implementation of accommodations.

- Assisting in resolving student conflicts and coaching students on self-advocacy.
- Advocating for equal access.
- Educating the college community on disability awareness.
- Referring students to on and off campus resources.
- Obtaining and maintaining assistive technology.
- Reviewing and updating department website, procedures, and policy as needed.

### Faculty/Staff Responsibilities:

Responsibilities include:

- Maintain **confidentiality** of the student registered with S.A.S.S. and discuss disability related issues **privately**.
- Respect the privacy of the student's diagnosis. They are not required under law to disclose their actual diagnosis.
- Discuss the implementation of accommodations with the student.
- Hold students with disabilities to the same academic and behavioral standards as all students.
- Ensure that the proposed accommodations do not substantially alter curricula standards.
- Ensure accommodations listed on the accommodation letter are implemented.
- Consult with S.A.S.S. with any questions about the appropriateness of required accommodations.
- Do not provide accommodations for students not registered with a disability service provider (S.A.S.S.)
- Refer students who may possibly have a disability to S.A.S.S. for assistance.
- Include a disability statement on syllabi informing students of S.A.S.S.

### Student Responsibilities:

Qualified students with disabilities have the right to an equal access to education.

Responsibilities include:

- Self-identify and register with S.A.S.S.
- Provide ample time between initial request and implementation of accommodations.
- Provide S.A.S.S. with medical documentation that meets federal guidelines.
- For the initial semester, meet with the Director to review documentation, identify accommodations and begin the registration process.
- Complete the registration process each semester requesting accommodations.
- Discuss with instructors the implementation of accommodations.

- Return the Instructor Signature Form before accommodations are implemented.
- Follow procedures according to S.A.S.S. Student Contract.
- Have the same obligation as any student to meet and maintain the institution's academic standards.
- Schedule a meeting with the S.A.S.S. Director to review or change accommodations as needed.

### **Temporary Disabilities:**

S.A.S.S. has the responsibility of providing services and accommodations for persons with permanent disabilities. In some cases, services may also be coordinated for students with temporary conditions with faculty approval. Services may include things such as scribing tests for a student with a broken arm. Since a student with a temporary injury is NOT a student with a disability, S.A.S.S. cannot require instructors to provide accommodations; however we will work to make informed recommendations and connect students to resources. Temporary disabilities include sports related injuries. An appointment should be made with an S.A.S.S. Director to discuss appropriate recommendations.

### **Provisional Accommodations:**

Provisional accommodations can be authorized when a student has a prior record of a disability but needs additional time to provide our office with updated disability documentation. Any such accommodations are courtesy arrangements, evaluated on a case-by-case basis for no more than one semester. The college is under no obligation to continue these accommodations if documentation standards are not met. Furthermore, the college is not obligated to continue any informal accommodations arranged/permitted by faculty without the approval of our office.

### **General Description of Accommodations:**

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments to a course, program, service, internship, or activity that do not fundamentally alter the course or program. Appropriate accommodations are determined through the individual intake appointment by reviewing documentation, discussion with the student, and evaluating the essential requirements of a course or program. After the intake appointment, a student will have approved accommodations available for use at their discretion.

***Please Note: S.A.S.S. does not provide services of a personal nature such as attendant care, homework assistance, or typing services.***

- ✚ While accommodations are determined on an individual basis, below are some examples of commonly requested and approved accommodations:

**Assistance with Note Taking:** for a student whose disability impacts his/her ability to attend to a lecture and take notes simultaneously, assistance with note taking can be accommodated in a variety of ways. This may apply to students with visual or hearing impairments, learning disabilities that affect auditory processing or writing, or attention deficit disorder. Depending upon the impact of the disability and the preference of the student, assistance may be provided by obtaining a copy of instructor notes, copies of the Power Points (if not already provided), using a personal laptop to type notes, requesting a peer note taker through S.A.S.S., or recording lectures..

**Extended Time for Test Taking:** students with visual impairments, deficits in information processing, distractibility, anxiety, or inattention may experience problems demonstrating their understanding of exam material when a time limit exists. Therefore, it may be appropriate for a student to request a time extension beyond the regularly scheduled time limit for an exam. Depending on the impact of the disability, a reasonable time extension may be time and one half or double time. In rare instances, triple time has been recommended. This has typically been recommended for students with severe visual impairments that affect eye tracking, reading speed and accuracy, and/or field of vision (i.e., reduced peripheral vision). Extended time for assignment submission may be available, please note the S.A.S.S. Director acts as a liaison between the student and the instructor when this type of accommodation is approved.

**Flexibility with Spelling or Grammar Errors:** on in-class assignments, a student that has a learning disability for which written expression is impacted may make spelling or grammatical errors. If spelling or grammar is counted toward the grade for the assignment, when possible, leniency is requested for the student's errors. If the course learning objective is such that spelling or grammar is a component, as might be the case with a pharmacology class that includes medical terminology and pharmaceutical terms or a journalism class covering aspects of grammar, then an instructor might sit down individually with the student to check if they can spell the terms or use the correct grammar orally. If

the student is still not able to do so, then the accommodation may not be appropriate for the course. Flexibility with spelling or grammatical errors is limited to in-class assignments. Items considered take-home assignments or homework assignments, such as essays, projects, papers will not be expected to contain spelling or grammatical errors, since the student has time and resources (i.e. spell-check or grammar-check) with which to proof final products.

- ✓ **Effective July 1, 2016 accommodation requests for flexibility with spelling or grammar errors for exams, quizzes, and tests will only be approved on an individual case-by- case basis with supporting documentation and may require Department Chair approval for each course in advance.**

**Materials in Alternate Format:** Books may be provided in a variety of formats including audio, electronic (for use with text-to-speech software), or Braille for students who have a physical disability that may create difficulty in sustained reading activity or for students who have a learning related or psychological condition impacting the accuracy of processing visual information. The student is responsible for requesting items in an alternate format; this process may be time consuming and may take up to six weeks. Early notification is best.

**Reduced Distraction Testing:** students that experience anxiety, distractibility, or use assistive technology for exams may need a separate space from the classroom to be able to focus on completing an exam. Another room in the department, the instructor's office, or S.A.S.S. may serve as separate locations.

**Text-to-Speech Options /Reader for Exams:** students with visual impairment, mobility impairments, or learning disabilities in the area of reading or written expression may require the use of technology to complete exams. With the support of software exam readers are available.

**Use of a Non-Graphing Calculator:** students with learning disabilities in the area of mathematical calculations may, when appropriate, request the use of a basic four-function calculator to compensate for the impact of a disability in the area of calculations. This accommodation is not appropriate when a course objective exists for which a student must be able to perform calculations manually (e.g., developmental mathematics course).

**Use of a Word Processor for Essay Exams:** students with visual or mobility impairments or learning disabilities in the area of written expression may require the use of a word processor to complete essay exams. Handwriting may be difficult or impossible, or handwriting/spelling may be poor enough to impede the instructor's ability to read/understand the student's ideas.

S.A.S.S. may also provide support with registration, parking, housing and library services on a case-by-case basis and dependent upon the nature of the disability. Students who feel they may benefit from supports in the areas listed must follow the same registration and documentation guidelines.

\*Please note students seeking housing accommodations and/or emotional support animal approval a small committee is engaged to support the S.A.S.S. decision making process. The committee will consist of the Health Center Director and the Counseling Center Director and when appropriate the Residence Life Director.

### **General Description of Assistive Technology (AT):**

Students who may benefit from the use of Assistive Technology (AT) are encouraged to speak with the S.A.S.S. Director about options that may be best for them. In many instances, different programs may offer similar assistance; however each student will have different preferences. We encourage students to preview different technologies in advance to determine which one may be best.

Students may elect to purchase Assistive Technology at their own cost, or may use the options available through S.A.S.S. and Elms College at no additional cost. If required for the purposes of test taking, S.A.S.S. will provide the required AT for proctored exams. The following describes different AT solutions offered at Elms College. *Unless specifically noted to be available for Mac, all programs are Windows based.*

 **Technology currently available, additional resources may be available with advance notice:**

**Kurzweil 3000:** A comprehensive reading, writing, and learning software primarily used by individuals with reading or writing related learning disabilities. Kurzweil is available for use on the public computers in the S.A.S.S. Testing Center located in the Alumnae Library; however users must be approved for use through S.A.S.S. in order to login to the software. Students approved for use through, may access the S.A.S.S. area computers.

**Dragon Naturally Speaking:** Dictation software for individuals with mobility limitations or specific learning disabilities and psychological conditions that may impact written expression or typing. Dragon is available on designated computers in the S.A.S.S. Computer Learning Lab (Alumnae Library, Room 303).

**Bookshare:** Is available for students unable to read traditional print books because of a visual impairment, physical disability or severe learning disability. Bookshare offers a variety of reading options, Listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices, Hear and see highlighted words on screen, Read with digital braille or enlarged fonts, Create physical braille or large print, Read directly from your Internet browser. Students must have internet access for this program. Students must provide proof of purchase.

### **General Program Policies:**

\*Accommodations for students are identified on a case-by-case basis and shall neither affect the academic curricula, nor compromise educational standards. The policies listed below support the decision making process.

#### ***Absences***

Due to some chronic medical conditions, a student may qualify for the accommodation, “consideration if absent or hospitalized due to medical condition.” Faculty identifies their attendance policy in their syllabi; this accommodation requests flexibility. The course requirements and the nature of the course must be taken into consideration. This accommodation does not allow the student to miss an unlimited number of classes.

#### ***Personal Care Attendants (PCA)***

“The main role of a personal care attendant is to ensure that the student’s needs are being met.” Such duties include personal care/hygiene, assistance to/from

destinations and any task that allows the individual to participate in daily activities/education. S.A.S.S. does not provide PCA attendants. If a student with a disability is in need of a PCA, the attendant must be from an authorized agency. Attendants do not participate in class or complete the student's work.

### *Service Animals*

The Americans with Disabilities Act recognizes the use of "service dogs" which are specially trained to assist persons with visual disabilities, hearing impairments, or mobility impairments by performing specific tasks. Elms College follows the provisions of the ADA with regard to service dogs as an accommodation.

The owner/partner/handler of a service animal is responsible for the safety and care of the animal. A service animal may be excluded from the campus when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. The owner/partner/handler of a service animal must maintain the animal on a leash at all times and must be in full control of the animal at all times. The animal should wear an identification symbol which is commonly recognized as indicating a service animal.

Disputes regarding the use of service animals on campus will be resolved through the Dean of Students.

### *Assistance Animals/Emotional Support/Companion Animals*

The Fair Housing Act and Section 504 recognizes the use of "assistance animals" as reasonable accommodations in college housing. Individuals seeking to live with an assistance animal in Elms College campus residence must:

Register with S.A.S.S. using the Accommodation Request Form.

Individuals and their assistance animals must participate in a collaborative process to explore the needs of the individual and the animal in a residential setting.

Individuals may be asked to provide documentation of the disability that substantially limits one or more major life activity. Documentation must be from a qualified individual and describe how the assistance animal serves a function directly related to the individual's disability.

The owner/partner/handler of an assistance animal is responsible for the safety and care of the animal. An assistance animal may be excluded from the campus when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. The owner/partner/handler of an assistance animal must maintain the

animal on a leash while in shared or open spaces and must be in full control of the animal at all times.

Disputes regarding the use of assistance animals on campus will be resolved through the Dean of Students office.

Individuals with Assistance animals must comply with the following:

The individual must comply with all state or county regulations pertaining to the licensing, vaccination, and registration of their animal. Proof of this information may be required.

The owner/handler assumes all responsibility for the actions, damages, or injuries, either caused or incurred by the assistance animal.

Elms College reserves the right to designate the location and building most suitable for individuals with service or assistance animals. Every effort will be made to consider the request of the individual.

A request to have an assistance animal or any other housing accommodation will take priority over roommate requests.

Animals must remain on a leash in all open areas.

Animals may not be tethered or left unattended.

Assistance animals are not allowed in classrooms or other College areas with animal restrictions.

Individuals with assistance or service animals are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of their animal at all times.

Animals may not be left unattended for extensive periods of time in the residential college rooms or apartments. It is the owner's sole responsibility to arrange for care during class days.

Animals may not be left unattended or with other tenants on weekends or evenings.

The care of the animal cannot be transferred to other individuals in the absence of the owner.

Animals observed to exhibit dangerous, disruptive, or unsafe behavior may be excluded from residential areas. A determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

***Course Substitutions and waiver guidelines:*** (The guidelines generally apply to foreign language and math courses. Additional courses may be reviewed upon written request.):

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the college must provide eligible students with reasonable accommodations for disabilities. However, Elms College is not required to provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the degree requirements of a particular program.

Course substitutions and waiver request for students are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and shall not affect the academic curricula, compromise educational standards, or fundamentally alter the degree requirements of a particular program. Individuals are expected to complete all academic/degree requirements necessary for graduation at Elms College.

The guidelines listed below support the decision making process for S.A.S.S. staff and serve as a reference resource for students and faculty. All requests are reviewed individually and, when appropriate, the vice president of academic affairs, academic dean, chair or program director, is consulted.

Core courses and those that are deemed essential for a degree requirement cannot be substituted; however, if the diagnosis interferes with one's ability to participate in a course that does not alter the core curriculum, a substitution may be granted. The student may be required to meet with, and receive approval from, the vice president of academic affairs for liberal arts core courses, or the academic dean or chair for the area of study for which the waiver is requested.

### Procedure

Students must register for services and submit a written request for a course substitution or waiver to the S.A.S.S. office. The request must explain the reasons for the request and include current documentation of a disability. The documentation must meet the guidelines for documentation standards established by the Elms College S.A.S.S. Office.

Upon receipt of a request for a course substitution/waiver, S.A.S.S. will make preliminary eligibility determination based on supporting documentation of a substantially limiting disability. If a student is determined to be eligible for reasonable accommodations, an advisory committee will be established and will consist of the director of S.A.S.S., the academic dean, chair or program director of the course/degree requirement, or the vice president of academic affairs, dean of student success for liberal arts core courses, a full-time faculty member from the appropriate discipline, and any other professional deemed appropriate by the advisory committee.

### ***Grade Appeals***

When appealing a grade, students must follow the rules and procedures outlined in the Elms College Student Handbook. If a student requests a letter from S.A.S.S. for the appeals board, they must provide a reasonable amount of time for a response. The letter will state the student's initial registration and participation in the S.A.S.S. Program. S.A.S.S. will not provide statements of character for the student in the appeals letter.

### ***Seizures and Other Medical Emergencies***

If a student has a diagnosis that may require medical attention, the student is strongly encouraged to discuss their diagnosis with instructors, Housing, Residential Director/Assistants (RA), etc. to ensure proper response if the situation should arise. Students should also identify themselves with Elms College Health Services so they are aware of the student's condition.

Students registered with S.A.S.S. who have a condition that may require immediate attention may have a set protocol on the reverse side of their Letters of Accommodation for instructors.

### ***Emergency Procedures***

All students should familiarize themselves with the emergency procedures and exits posted in each classroom. If students with disabilities have concerns or questions about emergency procedures, they can contact the Elms College Public Safety Department and/or S.A.S.S. personnel. Wheelchair users should avoid the elevator during emergencies, remain on the stairway balcony and ask someone to notify emergency personnel. The stairway balconies are protected with fire safe doors. Emergency personnel are trained to check these areas.

### ***Medical Withdrawals***

In cases where absences will affect the ability of the student to demonstrate skills required to successfully pass a course, the Director of S.A.S.S. and/or the student will consult with the instructor, the student's advisor, the registrar, and all necessary campus officials in regard to the advisability of a medical withdrawal (the Elms College Handbook, outlines the medical withdrawal process). In the event of a medical withdrawal, the student must provide a physician's note to the registrar's office. Upon student request, the Director of S.A.S.S. will help the student apply for a medical withdrawal.

### ***Handicapped Parking***

In order to receive handicapped parking on campus, the student must have an Elms College parking decal along with a state issued handicapped tag/decal. If a

student should have any issues with parking, he/she should contact Elms College Public Safety Department and/or S.A.S.S. personnel.

### *Physical Accessibility*

S.A.S.S. seeks to ensure that students with disabilities are provided equal access and reasonable accommodations appropriate to their disability in all programs offered through Elms College. If a student is confronted with any barriers, please contact S.A.S.S.

Students who are utilizing mobility aids such as electric scooters, wheelchairs, canes, crutches etc. are advised to research the most accessible route for their needs to get to and from class. Support and assistance is available if preferred or necessary.

## *S.A.S.S. Appeal Process and Grievance Policy*

### **I. Appeal Process and Grievance Policy Introduction:**

It is the policy of Student Accommodations & Support Services (S.A.S.S.) to treat all clients, potential clients, and all other individuals who have contact with S.A.S.S. with professionalism and respect. S.A.S.S. has the responsibility to operate in compliance with the federal and state laws regarding protection and advocacy programs for individuals with disabilities.

S.A.S.S.'s legal obligations include, but are not limited to:

1. Protecting and advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities, in keeping with S.A.S.S.'s goals and priorities;
2. Having access to academic records for the purpose of supporting clients and investigating allegations made by individuals with disabilities;
3. Maintaining confidentiality of client and investigation records;
4. Not discriminating on the basis of any protected characteristic including, but not limited to, race, color, national origin, religion, gender, and disability.
5. Abiding by all Elms College rules, regulations, and policies.

## **II. Appeal Process and Grievance Policy Rights:**

Clients, potential clients and all other persons having contact with S.A.S.S. have the right to file an appeal of a S.A.S.S. decision or grievance, as specified in Parts III and IV, below, if they are not satisfied with how S.A.S.S. has provided services, consistent with its legal responsibilities. For example, these individuals or their legal representatives may file a grievance under the following circumstances:

1. When there is disagreement about the decision of S.A.S.S. not to provide technical assistance or advocacy services;
2. There is dissatisfaction regarding the quality or extent of the services actually provided by S.A.S.S.;
3. There is a belief that S.A.S.S. has failed to fulfill one or more of its legal obligations;
4. It is believed that S.A.S.S. has discriminated in the provision of its services on the basis of a prohibited characteristic.

## **III. Appeal Process and Grievance Policy Required Information**

An individual (or his/her legal representative) who is dissatisfied with how S.A.S.S. has provided services may file an appeal or grievance as specified in Part IV below.

The grievant shall provide all relevant information, on S.A.S.S.'s in writing and must include the following information:

1. The name of the individual who is dissatisfied with agency services and his or her address and telephone number;
2. The type of services requested and the approximate date of the request;
3. the response of S.A.S.S.;
4. Whether the individual for whom the request was made has a disability and the nature of the disability; and
5. The legal obligation, if any, the individual believes S.A.S.S. has violated.

6. If there are deadlines related to the case (such as an appeal time or statute of limitations, if known) that information should be included in the appeal or grievance.
7. Copies of any documentation relating to the grievance, which the grievant believes is not already available to S.A.S.S., should be included with the appeal or grievance.

#### **IV. Appeal Process and Grievance Policy Process**

##### **A. Step One**

1. An appeal or grievance related to an alleged failure of S.A.S.S. to provide appropriate services must be filed by a grievant or his or her legal representative within 30 calendar days after the date on which the disputed event became known to the aggrieved person (for instance, the date on which notice was received in writing, or orally, that the agency would not provide requested services). S.A.S.S. has the discretion to waive the 30-day deadline for reasonable cause but grievant should recognize that, the longer they wait, the more difficult it may become to re-establish the facts of a case.
2. A grievance may be filed in writing and delivered to the S.A.S.S. Director via email, postal mail, fax, or in hand. All appeals and or grievances at Step One are reviewed directly by the S.A.S.S. Director.
3. Although S.A.S.S. will do its utmost to facilitate an individual in filing a grievance, a grievant may obtain assistance from a personal advocate unrelated to S.A.S.S. to help him or her in the grievance process.
4. Within three business days of the filing of an appeal or grievance, S.A.S.S. staff will send the grievant a letter or email of acknowledgement and receipt of the appeal or grievance with a brief summary of the issue and an explanation of the expected time frame for S.A.S.S.'s investigation.
5. An investigation should last no longer than 30 days. During the investigation process, the grievant has the right to be directly interviewed and can have the assistance of a support person (advocate, friend, family member).
6. The confidentiality of the grievant shall be strictly protected. Access to the appeal or grievance and related materials will be permitted only for S.A.S.S. staff with a need to review the grievance.

7. At the end of the investigation process, the grievant shall receive a determination letter, via email or postal mail, in writing from the S.A.S.S. Director that will include information about how to appeal the determination if the grievant desires to do so.

## **B. Step Two**

1. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the results of the initial investigation of the Program Director, the grievant may appeal the decision to the S.A.S.S. Advisory Group within 10 business days of receiving notice of the results of the investigation. The appeal must specify the reasons for disagreement with the Step One investigation.
2. A Step Two grievance may be filed in writing and delivered to the S.A.S.S. Director via email, postal mail, fax, or in hand. All appeals and or grievances at Step Two level are reviewed directly by the S.A.S.S. Director and distributed in entirety to the S.A.S.S. Advisory Group and the Dean of Students.
3. Once an appeal is filed, the appeals process should last no longer than 30 days. The Program Director will provide the grievant the opportunity to submit additional written or supporting materials.
4. At the end of the investigation and Advisory Group review process, the grievant shall receive a determination letter, via email or postal mail, in writing from the S.A.S.S. Director that will include information about how to appeal the determination if the grievant desires to do so.

## **C. Step Three**

1. If the grievant is dissatisfied with determination of the Step One determination of the S.A.S.S. Program Director and the Step Two determination of the S.A.S.S. Advisory Group then the grievant may appeal the decision to the Dean of Students within 10 business days of receiving the Step Two determination.
2. The appeal must be in writing and specify the reasons for disagreement with the Step One and Step Two determination.
3. A Step Three grievance may be filed in writing and delivered to the S.A.S.S. Director via email, postal mail, fax, or in hand. All appeals and or grievances at Step Three level are reviewed directly by the S.A.S.S.

Director and distributed in entirety to the S.A.S.S. Advisory Group and the Dean of Students.

4. Once an appeal is filed, the appeals process should last no longer than 30 days. The Program Director will provide the grievant the opportunity to submit additional written or supporting materials.
5. At the end of the investigation and Dean of Students review process, the grievant shall receive a final determination letter, via email or postal mail.

### ***S.A.S.S. Appeal Campus Advisory Committee***

Purpose:

The Disability Services S.A.S.S. Advisory Group at Elms College Committee meets once each academic semester to regularly to assess broader accessibility needs on campus and to advocate for structural, equipment and programming changes to meet those needs. The Disability Services S.A.S.S. Advisory Group includes members from the Student Affairs Office, Residential Life, Counseling Center, Student Health Services and Faculty; the campus-wide advisory group represents the voice of students with disabilities at Elms College and designed to ensure the integrity of the Student Accommodations & Support Services at Elms College. The advisory group will serve to create community around common areas of interests and concern among faculty, staff, and students; to promote awareness of disabilities impacting learning and create an inclusive environment; to provide resources that would be most helpful to our colleagues. This group also works to promote disability awareness as well.

- (a) Provide recommendations to the administration of current S.A.S.S. policies and procedures
- (b) Facilitate campus-wide input in the area of disability services and supports within our campus community;
- (c) Raise campus awareness of disabilities;

- (d) Coordinate and promote student, faculty, and staff awareness of disability issues and responsibilities on campus;
- (e) Provide leadership and guidance with student grievances in terms of S.A.S.S. services;
- (f) Provide leadership in helping to build an inclusive Elms College community.

Advisory Subcommittee:

When deemed appropriate the S.A.S.S. Program Director will convene a subcommittee of the advisory group members to review accommodation requests for:

- Housing
- Medical Leaves of Absence
- Academic Waivers

The determination for an advisory group subcommittee is determined on a case-by-case basis based on the accommodation request and at the discretions of the S.A.S.S. Program Director.

**2014-2018 Advisory Group Members (listed in alphabetical order by last name):**

- Director of the Counseling Center- John Coan
- Director of the Health Center-Jill Gagne
- S.A.S.S. Program Director-Tynisha Henderson
- Chair, Professor, and Director of the Communication Sciences & Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorders Programs-Kathryn James, Ph.D.
- Division of Education Chair-Mary Claffey Janeczek, Ed.D.
- School of Nursing Dean-Kathleen Scoble, Ed.D., R.N.
- A Residence Life Representative

### **Procedures for using academic accommodations:**

After meeting with the Director of S.A.S.S. a student must request to use the specific accommodations each semester. **Since it may take time to coordinate the request, requests must be made with advance notice.** The following is the procedure for requesting accommodations from faculty:

Once a student has registered and been approved for accommodations. As stated above the student **MUST** request accommodations each semester.

Within the first two weeks of the semester or after registration, send an email to the Director of S.A.S.S. Requesting accommodations complete **the semester notification form.**

Within 2 weeks of notification you will need to meet with you S.A.S.S. Director to review the faculty notification letters.

Arrange to meet with your instructors during office hours to deliver the faculty notification letter and discuss specific arrangements for accommodations.

Speak with your S.A.S.S. Director or refer your instructor to speak to your S.A.S.S. Director with any questions or concerns regarding the accommodations.

### **Procedures for requesting assistance with note taking:**

To request a peer note taker, a student would meet with their Professor or S.A.S.S. Director to complete a **"Request for Note Taking Assistance"** form.

The Professor and S.A.S.S. Director will work with the students to identify a volunteer peer note taker.

Once a peer has been identified, the S.A.S.S. Director will work with the Professor to facilitate the note-taking process.

If the instructor has a thorough set of notes that a student could use to compare to their own notes, then the student may request copies of instructor's notes.

### **Procedures for scheduling exams**

Exams may be scheduled through S.A.S.S. if faculty is unable to provide the requested accommodations. Once your professor has told you they are unable to make the arrangements, it is your responsibility to complete the Test Accommodation Request Exam Form and return it to S.A.S.S. At least ten days before the date of the exam in order to guarantee accommodations can be made.

The Director of S.A.S.S. schedules and administers exams in a responsible and secure manner according to the instructions of the faculty member.

Students who take exams through S.A.S.S. are responsible for following these instructions at all times:

Only items necessary to complete the exam are allowed. Items not allowed include cell phones, music devices, purses, backpacks, and coats. Items not allowed may be left in the S.A.S.S. office space area and cell phones should be turned off or on silent. S.A.S.S. is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Students are responsible for bringing all items necessary to complete the exam (e.g., calculator, pen/pencil, blue book, etc.).

S.A.S.S. Director of Work Study staff will not answer any questions by students regarding exam content, including definitions of words.

Students suspected of cheating will be reported immediately to the instructor.

Students who refuse to turn in an exam when their time limit is reached will be reported to the instructor.

Students who arrive more than 15 minutes past the scheduled start time of their exam forfeit the opportunity to take the exam through S.A.S.S. The exam will be returned to the instructor and the student will need to reschedule the exam with the instructor. The exam can be rescheduled through S.A.S.S. with instructor's permission and as space permits.

Once an exam has begun, students may NOT leave the testing site. Bathroom breaks are not permitted unless this is an approved accommodation.

Students who fail to show or arrive late for an exam will have their exams sent back to the instructor and a NO Show email is sent to the instructor and student. If a student fails to show or arrives late for an exam twice during a semester, they will receive an alert e-mail from S.A.S.S. If twice, a student will need to meet with the S.A.S.S. Director. On a third occurrence, the student may lose testing privileges through S.A.S.S.

Students having difficulty arranging exam accommodations with their instructors should immediately contact the S.A.S.S. Director.

### **Procedures for obtaining print materials in alternate format:**

Print materials such as textbooks and handouts from instructors are provided in a variety of alternate formats depending upon the needs and preferences of the student and available technology.

Students are responsible for purchasing or obtaining their own course materials and supplying S.A.S.S. with the materials. Materials should be turned in to

S.A.S.S. during normal business hours along with a **completed Request for Alternate Format form** indicating your contact information, pages most urgently needed, and the preferred format.

Requests for material in an alternate format will be filled as soon as possible based upon the current demand for alternate formats. Requests will be prioritized according to the following factors:

Requests made first will be addressed first.

During times of high demand, S.A.S.S. will produce the portion of the material needed first and complete the remainder of the material as the number of requests decrease.

Materials may be provided in a number of formats and will be provided in the preferred format selected by the student for use with technology purchased by the student or provided by S.A.S.S. Available formats may include:

- ✓ PDF's
- ✓ Word Documents
- ✓ Kurzweil
- ✓ Audiobooks
- ✓ Braille

The conversion process may take up to six weeks; students are required to provide early notification and proof of purchase.

### **Policy for Requesting Interpreters/Captioners**

A student requiring the services of an interpreter and/or captioner must request from their S.A.S.S. Director as soon as class schedule is available. The S.A.S.S. Director will make arrangements for these services to be available to the student during the upcoming semester.

The following are expectations for use of Interpreters/Captioners: arrive for class on time. Email or phone the interpreter/captioner and S.A.S.S. as soon as possible when the student is unable to attend class due to illness or an emergency or if you receive notice that class has been cancelled notify S.A.S.S. and the interpreter/captioner as soon as possible if you decide to drop a course or no longer require the service of an interpreter/captioner for a class requests for extracurricular activities (group project meetings, mandatory events, programs, etc.) should be made to your S.A.S.S. Director at least seven (7) days in advance to guarantee services will be available; also notify the interpreter/captioner as soon as possible failure to contact the interpreter/captioner and/or S.A.S.S. prior to being absent from a class more than twice may result in loss of services for

the remainder of the semester for that class. promptly notify your S.A.S.S. Director of any concerns regarding interpreting/captioning services so that S.A.S.S. may remedy the concerns

### Policy for Audio Recording Lectures

S.A.S.S. may recommend audio recording lectures as an academic accommodation for a student. This accommodation is subject to the following requirements:

Students must discuss recording with the instructor so that the instructor may disclose to the class that it is being recording.

Audio recordings of class lectures are to be used solely by the student provided with this accommodation for use in study for the class.

The sources are governed by rules of academic conduct.

Upon the request of the instructor, the student will sign an agreement form for use and disposal of recordings.

### Important information for Elms College nursing students registered with S.A.S.S.

1. Before *each* semester in which you would like to use the approved accommodations, you must complete the S.A.S.S. Accommodation Letter Request Form and return the completed form directly to S.A.S.S. Once the request is received the S.A.S.S. Director will send the completed Accommodation Letters to you via your Elms College email account as a PDF attachment.
2. When you receive the PDF versions of the letters discuss with each faculty/instructor the letter and the approved recommended accommodations for each course. It is recommended that you do so in advance of the start of the semester.
  - *For note taking and alternate format media accommodations, follow procedures outlined by S.A.S.S. in advance of each semester. Remember that this process often takes 4-6 weeks.*
3. In general, the clinical accommodations follow the in-class accommodations listed on the Accommodation Letter. In the event additional accommodations are required for the student in the clinical setting (other *than the accommodations listed in the in-class section of the accommodation letter*) the additional clinical setting accommodations will be determined separately and in consultation with and approval by the School of Nursing Dean, Faculty, or Designee and upon direct request from the student.

- *If you believe you may need additional accommodations in the clinical setting, discuss your concerns with the S.A.S.S. Director immediately and request additional clinical accommodations as early as possible.*
4. Many courses will include ATI (Assessment Technologies Institute) exams; faculty will take responsibility of ensuring extended time is granted before the start of the exam-
- *It is recommended that each student registered with S.A.S.S. speak with each professor in advance of the ATI exam minimally, two weeks in advance of an exam, to ensure the appropriate testing accommodations are in place.*
  - *Should you opt to complete the ATI exam in the S.A.S.S. testing center you must adhere to the S.A.S.S. test request policies.*
5. Graduating School of Nursing Seniors please speak with the S.A.S.S. Director directly to determine required forms for the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) exam, if you plan to request accommodations for the exam.

Early communication and adherence to the School of Nursing guidelines are key components to successfully implementing your approved accommodations.