

## Andrew College

### The Focus Program

#### “Q and A” for Students and Parents

**Question One:**        **What are the major legal differences between high school and college?**

**Short Answer:**        **Entitlement vs. Eligibility**

It is important to remember that disability laws for high school students focus on “success” while applicable laws for postsecondary disability services focus on “equal access.” IDEA does not apply to college students!

Let’s look at two specific laws and students with disabilities in college.

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that,

No otherwise “qualified” individuals with disabilities in the United States . . . shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (29 U.S.C.794)

**A person with a disability** is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. An individual is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she (1) has a disability, (2) has a history of a disability, or (3) is perceived by others as having a disability.

**Individuals must also be viewed as “otherwise qualified” despite the disability.** In other words, unlike elementary and secondary students, postsecondary students must be qualified for acceptance to the college by meeting the admissions criteria, and fulfilling the requirements for staying in college. In addition, the student must also meet essential technical requirements of the program or course.

**Reasonable accommodations** are also referred to as “academic adjustments” and “auxiliary aids.” These accommodations are designed to level the playing field for students with documented disabilities. The law requires postsecondary institutions to provide equal access to courses and course materials so that the student with documented disabilities is allowed equal participation in his or her educational experience. Some examples of reasonable accommodations include extended time on tests, testing in a minimally distracting environment, and use of assistive technology. It’s important to note that academic adjustments are determined based on individual disabilities and individual needs. In providing these adjustments, colleges are not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, it may be a reasonable accommodation to allow a student extended time for a test, but it is not a requirement to change the substantive content of the tests. Also, a

college does not have to make any modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity. Postsecondary institutions do not have to offer services that would result in undue financial or administrative burdens and colleges do not have to provide services of a “personal” nature.

**Question Two: What are some general differences between high school and college?**

**Short Answer: High school students tend to take a passive role and depend on their parents and the “system” to meet their needs. College students take an active role and must “step to the plate” and accept responsibility for ensuring that their needs are met.**

<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
Mandatory and usually free	Voluntary and expensive
Time is structured	Structure your own time
Need permission for activity participation	Activities are up to you
Parents /Teachers guide you	Responsible for yourself
Classes/Times are decided for you	You and your advisor decide classes and times
Most work is done in class	More studying is done out of class (2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class)
Textbooks are free	Textbook costs
Reading/writing is minimal or balanced	Substantial amounts of reading and writing
Teachers review assignments	Professors give you syllabi
Teachers provide you with missed information	You are expected to get missed information from other students
Teachers are trained in teaching methods	Professors are trained in areas they teach-not how to teach
Teachers give you information to help understand texts	Professors may not discuss texts
Frequent testing and reviews	Infrequent testing over large amounts of material/little review
Make up tests are okay	Make up tests often not allowed
Opportunities for extra credit	Little extra credit
You may pass with a D or higher	You may be required to make a C to pass or have a certain grade point average to graduate
I.E.P. or 504 plans	Each college has documentation guidelines for a disability
School provides evaluation	Must get your own evaluation
School identifies students with disabilities	You must self-identify to the college disability services
Course modifications	Reasonable accommodations
Grading modifications	No grading and few test format changes
Parents provide structure at home (bedtimes, curfews, money)	You provide your own structure

Parents may monitor grades and progress

Grades and progress are  
confidential

**Question Three: What do I need to bring with me to college?**

**Short Answer: An understanding of who you are and how you learn!**

### **Recommended Academic Supplies**

Highlighters

College dictionary and thesaurus

White out

Erasers

Black pens/pencils

Notebook paper/legal pads

Three ring binder and subject dividers

Notebooks

Index Cards

Computer discs

Computer (However, there are computer labs on campus and Focus has a computer lab).

Calculator

### **Recommended Personal Supplies**

Pre-paid phone cards

Insurance Information

Family/friends telephone contact list including emergency numbers

Social Security number (memorized)

Watch (Some students use “watchminders.” Check out [www.watchminder.com](http://www.watchminder.com).)

Alarm clock (Bring two if you tend to turn them off in your sleep!)

Change for laundry machines

Laundry detergent (It helps if you know how to do your laundry, too!)

Prescribed medications and pillbox to sort them

Small safe box to lock prescribed medications and cash in (just to be safe)

Bulletin board and wall calendar for organization

Comforter or bedspread, sheets, blankets, towels

Personal hygiene items and supplies

Personal items to give your room a personal look

“Bugspray” and cleaning supplies

### **Before you arrive....**

1. Check to make sure that all of your paperwork is “in order” with financial aid, housing, business office, and Focus.
2. Order your textbooks.
3. Contact your roommate and discuss who’s bringing what.

### **Other important things to think about and know when you arrive...**

1. What are my specific disabilities and how do they affect how I learn, work, and play?

2. What are my medications, how do I take them, why do I take them, and how do I refill them?
3. What do I do in bad weather?
4. How do I handle my budget? Do I know how to write checks and use a bankcard?
5. How do I do laundry?
6. Where do I go and what do I do if I am sick?
7. Who is my advisor? (DR. TAYLOR!)
8. Where are my classes?
9. Where is Focus?
10. Where are the important offices and campus and who do I go to for different issues?

**Question Four:        How can parents help students?**

**Short Answer:        Give them lots of “PR.” In other words, keep things in “perspective” and provide lots of “reassurance.”**

### **Focus Recommendations for Parents**

**Assist your student with self-advocacy skills before he/she leaves the nest.**

Ask yourself the following:

- Does my son/daughter know his/her rights under ADA and Section 504 and understand them?
- Does my son/daughter know how to ask for help?

**Assist your student with disability awareness and ask the following:**

- Does my son/daughter know and understand his/her disabilities?
- Does my son/daughter understand his/her documentation and is it current?
- Does my son/daughter know/understand his/her strengths and weaknesses?

**Assist your student with specific accommodation needs and ask yourself:**

- Does my son/daughter know which accommodations have worked in the past and which were not helpful?
- Does my son/daughter aware of and use assistive technology? Can he/she use a word processing program?
- Is my son/daughter registered with Vocational Rehabilitative Services?

**Assist your student with becoming more independent....**

- Ensure that they have independent “living” skills
- Allow them to develop their own problem solving and decision making skills
- Correspond on a regular basis
- Send care packages and letters
- Enjoy the rewards of an “empty” or almost “empty” nest and value the “adult” relationship you can foster with your student!

*“It is true love that allows us to let go and let our children have their own lives.”  
Pauline Tague*

***“It may be true love that allows us to let go... but it’s sheer determination and prayer that helps us survive it!”  
Sherri Taylor***

**Question Five:        How does the Focus Program help students?**

**Short Answer:        Focus bridges the gap between I.D.E.A. and A.D.A. and empowers students to meet the challenge at Andrew College!**

The Focus Program provides a safe, nurturing environment where students experience a sense of belongingness and learn to develop self-advocacy skills while mastering their academic goals.

In addition to the coordination of reasonable accommodations required by law, the Focus Program provides:

- A study/mentoring lab that is open 50-60 hours per week
- Minimally distracting testing center
- Private computer lab for Focus students
- Assistive technology
- Auxiliary aids
- Resource materials, study guides, lab supplies
- Priority Registration
- Focus Director serves as academic advisor
- Interim grade reports from professors
- Parent/Director limited communication
- Assistance in transfer to Senior institution
- Logistical support and coordination of special needs
- Disability support group
- Individual guidance in time management and organization
- Individual assistance with study skills and test taking techniques
- Academic/career/major consultation
- Assistance with specific course assignments and writing assignments

### **What Focus Can and Cannot Do...**

#### **We can**

- Provide a supportive learning community
- Provide encouragement
- Assist students in becoming more autonomous
- Assist students in reaching their academic, social, and personal goals

#### **We cannot**

- Guarantee grades
- Force students to learn
- Force students to participate
- Do the “work” for students
- Lower academic standards for students
- Violate or “bend” any legal requirements for students

### **More helpful information...**

- The determination of reasonable accommodations is very important in “leveling the playing field” for students with disabilities. It is imperative that the student’s documentation meets the documentation guidelines for Andrew College so that it can be established that the student has an official diagnosis of a disability and to demonstrate that the disability substantially limits a major life activity. The documentation is critical in determining the appropriate accommodations for the students in order to minimize the impact of the disability and personalize the student’s rights to equal access. In addition, the documentation assists the Focus Director in determining specific study strategies to assist the student in being successful in reaching academic goals.
- The Focus Director works directly with the student to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations consistent with the student’s documentation. Accommodations are individualized and made specific to the student and the curriculum while adhering to all legal requirements. Students are given a reasonable accommodation form for each class, and it is the student’s responsibility to self-disclose his/her disability to his/her instructors and give the forms to the instructors at the beginning of each semester.
- The Focus Program does not mandate attendance although it is strongly encouraged and highly recommended. A student’s participation in Focus is voluntary so it is helpful when the parent and the student have an understanding about the importance of the student’s participation and cooperation with the Focus Program. Basically, students get out of Focus what they are willing to be put into Focus. We have found a significant positive correlation between the amount of time students spend in Focus and their academic success rate. In addition, the Focus Director is the academic advisor for all Focus students, and it is important that students initiate regular visits with the director in addition to the time that they spend working with the mentors in the Focus Lab.
- Students will be asked to participate in a Focus Program orientation upon their arrival at Andrew College in the fall. The program guidelines and requirements will be carefully explained and reviewed with the students.
- Focus students receive grade progress reports at least three times per semester. It is the student’s responsibility to pick up the reports in the Focus Lab and take them to their instructors to complete them. This reports are one of the “perks” of Focus so it is very important that students complete this process, which allows us to monitor their progress in their classes throughout the semester.
- All new students at Andrew are required to take the COMPASS assessment. Many Focus students test into the “strategic studies” program when they take this assessment. There are two levels of strategic courses (081 and 091) for math, reading, and English. In order to pass these classes, students must make a “C” in the class AND pass the COMPASS assessment at the end of the semester. There is also a writing component that students must pass in English 081 and English 091 to pass these classes. Students may not take a specific strategic studies class more than two times. For example, should a student fail Math 081 twice, the student will not be allowed to re-enroll in Andrew College until he/she passes Math 081 at another institution.

- Students who take Eng 081 and Edu 081 are also required to take Edu 101, College Success. This course teaches strategies that will help students in their college studies. Students who test into strategic studies in English or reading are also required to take CLT 091 Core Knowledge. This course is comprised of a series of interdisciplinary seminars that will enhance students' understanding of the interrelation of the arts, science, mathematics, literature, philosophy and religion within specific cultures and broadens students' perspective of contemporary issues.

### **Putting it into perspective...**

Dr. Marshall H. Raskind is well known for his research with adults with learning disabilities. He identified six specific attributes for successful individuals with learning disabilities in his research.

- Self-awareness
- Proactivity
- Perverserance
- Goal Setting
- Support systems
- Emotional coping strategies

Students must take control of their learning situation, and make an internal decision to succeed!

### **Our Philosophy**

The mission of Andrew College is to provide an academically challenging liberal arts curriculum within a nurturing community. The mission of The Focus Program is to empower our students to meet the challenge at Andrew College through the development of personal control and independence coupled with academic learning. The Focus Program facilitates the learning process for students with learning disabilities by promoting self-determination, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, and self-directed learning. We believe in "teaching students how to learn."