Back to School: Opportunities and Challenges for Disabled DS Professionals as Students in the Classroom

Presenter
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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects... 

Access and Inclusion 

and 

Civility and Respect 

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.
Agenda

- Introductions
- Tuition Remission Benefits
- Multiple Roles and Conflicts of Interest
- Disclosure
- Interactive Process
- Issues Unique to One-Person Offices
- Case Studies
- Takeaways
A Bit About Me

• Partial B.M. in Voice in a conservatory setting
  • Required language courses and diction in 4-5 languages
  • Trimester system – more opportunity to take classes!!
  • “Intensive Arts” program – 2 weeks after Thanksgiving devoted to workshops and performance – mini-classes!!

• B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies
  • Individualized Integrative Studies in Dramaturgy
  • "Build your own degree"
  • Minor in Criminal Justice
  • 199/120 required credits!
  • Almost 30 additional “unnecessary” classes!
A little more about me

• M.A. in Applied Linguistics
• Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (T.E.S.O.L.)
• Linguistic Society of America Summer Institute
• Ph.D. in Higher Education
And more!! (through tuition remission)

• Additional courses in the History of Photography, Disability Studies, and Autism and Inclusion
• M.P.A. in Non-Profit Administration (in progress)
It’s safe to say, I like being a student!
Tuition Remission Benefits

• “Virtually all institutions offer tuition benefits to employees. About 95 percent offer them for dependent children. Approximately 88 percent offer tuition benefits for dependent spouses.” (23).

• “On average, after health and retirement, tuition benefits are the third largest benefit value” (23)

• 29% of institutions require coursework to be job-related for faculty tuition reimbursement. Up from 22% in 2015 (24)

• 50% of institutions require a minimum GPA for employees, 27% for spouses and 33% for children. (24)

Sibson Consulting’s College and University Benefits Study (CUBS) 2018
Multiple Roles = Opportunity for COI

- Student
- Parent
- Spouse
- Self-Advocate
- Classmate
- Employee
- 504 Coordinator
What is interest?

• Private interests may be direct or indirect, and financial or non-financial:

• **Direct interests:** Includes individual’s own personal, family, professional or business interests.

• **Indirect interests:** Includes the personal, family, professional or business interests of individuals or groups with whom the individual is, or was recently, closely associated.
Financial/Non-Financial Interests

• **Financial interests**: Involves an actual, potential or perceived financial gain or loss. Money does not need to change hands for an interest to be financial.
  - People have a financial interest if they own property, hold shares, have a position in a company bidding for government work, receive benefits or can benefit financially from a decision significantly influenced or made by the organisation.

• **Non-financial interests**: Arise from personal or family relationships, or involvement in sporting, social or cultural activities.
  - They include any tendency toward favouritism or prejudice resulting from friendship, animosity, or other personal involvement with another person or group. If personal values are likely to impact on the proper performance of public duty, then these can also lead to a conflict of interest.
What is Conflict of Interest?

- **Actual conflict of interest:** There is a real conflict between an employee or director’s public duties and private interests.

- **Potential conflict of interest:** A party has private interests that could conflict with their duties. It is foreseeable that a conflict may arise in future and steps should be taken now to mitigate that future risk.

- **Perceived conflict of interest:** The public could form the view that an individual’s private interests could improperly influence their decisions or actions, now or in the future.

- **Conflict of duty:** When a person is required to fulfill two or more roles that may actually, potentially, or be perceived to be in conflict with each other.

- **Public duties and private interests:** Public duties are the official tasks that you perform in your role as an employee or director. A private interest means anything that can influence an employee or director.
Key Questions regarding Disclosure

• Who else is qualified to engage in the interactive process on behalf of the Institution?
• How to retain information, especially documentation, regarding disclosure? To sequester or not?
How do I disclose?

• In every case, disclosure of a disability in pursuit of reasonable accommodations as a student is to a co-worker.

• Depending on your position, your only choices may be your supervisor, someone who reports directly to you, or one of your colleagues.
Other options?

• Who else on campus is qualified to evaluate disability and determine reasonable accommodations needs in a higher education setting?

• Who else is qualified to engage in the interactive process on behalf of the institution?
Human Resources?

• Generally, no experience or expertise in evaluating disability or providing reasonable accommodations in educational settings.

• Often, disability accommodations are only part of their job and seldom is disability accommodations their area of specialization.
What can the Interactive Process Look Like?

• Identify an individual who is qualified to evaluate disability in a higher education setting.
  • 504 Coordinator
  • DEI Office
  • University Counsel
Issues Unique to One-Person Offices

• Who is responsible for ensuring your accommodations needs are being met?
• Who is responsible for accommodation
• Who to disclose to? Who else is qualified to engage in the interactive process on behalf of the Institution?
Issues Regarding Documentation

• How do you retain information, especially documentation, regarding disclosure? To sequester or not?

• Should data for disabled employees availing themselves of their tuition benefits for their own benefit be kept segregated within the institution or DS and more private than the files of other students?
Case #1: “Hey, you know, you look an awful lot like a guy in my class”
Case #2: “My accommodations were denied by the program director.”
Takeaways

• Multiple roles inevitably lead to a variety of opportunities for a conflict of interest.

• Establish clearly delineated processes for handling disclosure and accommodations which may be unique to DS staff and their immediate families.

• Conflicts of Interest should be clearly identified and managed early on in the process before issues come up.
Session Evaluation

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Thank you for attending!