**Additional information to Help Prepare for College**

Here’s information from a dated but still relevant research study concerning college students who are visually impaired.

In the research study conducted by McBroom, Sikka, and Jones (1994), college students with visual impairments were presented a list of 25 problems and asked if they had experienced any of them while in college. You may review a more detailed summary of the study at <http://blind.msstate.edu/transition/tac/docs/14b%20The%20Transition%20to%20College%20for%20Students%20with%20Visual%20Impairments.docx>.The most serious problems encountered by students were:

* + managing their time;
  + accessing diagrams, charts, books, and other written materials;
  + having enough money;
  + handling difficult classes or assignments; and
  + arranging transportation.

Consider these carefully so you can try to plan to be ready for these possible problems.

Other problem areas were experienced by less than half of the students and they included:

* + finding their way around campus,
  + participating in recreational or athletic activities,
  + taking exams with time limits,
  + accessing computers,
  + obtaining disability support services, and
  + communicating with professors.

Other problem areas included:

* + social pressures,
  + receiving financial aid,
  + loneliness,
  + finding and scheduling readers,
  + making good grades,
  + writing papers,
  + making friends,
  + being accepted,
  + getting along with a roommate,
  + registering for classes,
  + locating suitable housing,
  + living independently, and
  + managing money.

In the same study, college students with visual impairments were also asked how important a series of items were in their college preparation. The most important areas identified by students were:

* + preregistering for classes,
  + communicating with professors,
  + applying for financial aid,
  + learning how to manage money,
  + locating transportation,
  + deciding on a college to attend,
  + receiving campus O&M instruction,
  + ordering textbooks early,
  + making housing arrangements, and
  + communicating with student support services.

Remember the self-advocacy skills you learned early on. If you can speak confidently about exactly what you need, people in charge of various aspects of college life and especially your professors will be in the best position to help you.

If you do the preplanning listed on the activity calendar, you are likely to experience less of these problem areas and be better able to trouble shoot any areas that you encounter.

Less problematic areas identified in this study included:

* visiting college during orientation,
* working with vocational rehabilitation services,
* finding and scheduling readers,
* deciding on a major area of study,
* meeting or talking with a roommate, and
* attending a college preparatory program.

**Considerations for On-Line Classes in College**

**For Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

At first glance, it may seem that taking an online class would be a good option to the student with a visual impairment. You can do it from your home or dorm room so you don’t have to wander across campus. You may think it will minimize some of the anxieties of classroom learning. However, consider it carefully. Speak to the professor of the course; be sure you know how the class will function, and identify any potential barriers for you before registering for such as class.

Some of the platforms for online classes are not easily accessible such as Blackboard (<http://www.blackboard.com/>), My Courses (<https://mycourses.msstate.edu/webct/>), or Moodle (<http://moodle.org/>). If the class is synchronous where everyone is on Blackboard together, students who are blind report that it is hard to keep up with the discussion and follow the discussion threads. The same is true for asynchronous courses, but the student has more time to both read and make contributions