**Tips from SASS-** Dealing with the effects of COVID-19**:**

As we deal with the effects of COVID-19 on our lives, each of us will approach this time in our own way; we are managing a variety of responsibilities including, but not limited to, work, family, friends, community and our own fears. Your leadership as an educator, is more important than ever and I simply ask that we enter this time of uncertainty with compassion.

As Elms College takes the necessary steps to ensure the safety and well-being of its students by switching courses to online formats students with diagnosed disabilities may be the most at-risk population. As we move from traditional model of learning to an online learning only model, this sudden disruption in routine may impact various student populations registered with SASS in a challenging manner, as an example students with specific diagnosis such as ADD/ADHD, students on the Autism Spectrum, and students with severe anxiety may have significant challenges during this time of flux and transition.

As courses shift from the traditional model of learning to the online learning only model, remember that our obligation to provide accommodations continues. In some cases, in person accommodations are well suited for the online format, in other cases adjustments will need to be made with the new online format and communication is key to supporting the student.

We are providing supportive information, ideas, recommendations, and suggestions for best practices. The information shared in this document, has been compiled with the support of Disability Service providers across the nation, this is not considered an exhaustive list of supports, but a few important points to consider in the delivery of support services in the midst of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to troubleshoot areas of concern, discuss questions, student needs, or concerns.

* **SASS Registration and Intake:**
  + We will still require students to complete the Intake form and we have a writable PDF posted on the SASS website, but we may rely on student self-report as an indicator of need and focus on receiving supporting documentation when the campus returns to full capacity. This will be managed and monitored on an individual student basis.
* **Student Accommodations:**
  + **Campus:** College campuses are designed to support community, if the campus is closed or students have limited access, online courses become the community. And forced interaction may still be challenging for some, consider allowing students to connect in different ways, responding to student postings as a measure of engagement rather than introductions during a live Zoom , as an example of meeting the community goal and allowing participation in a comfortable manner.
  + **Housing:** Like college campuses college residence halls are designed to support community and communal living. SASS will continue to work in partnership with ResLife in an effort to support students’ needs for this term and next. SASS will also relax deadlines associated with providing documentation to receive a housing accommodation for next term.
  + **Courses:** Developing accessible online course can be challenging for the most skilled professional. Please visit the [GOING ONLINE](https://sites.google.com/elms.edu/elms-college-elearning/going-online) page created by Elms IT to support your efforts. The site also includes links to tips provided by SASS to create accessible online learning environments.
    - The SASS document is also attached.
    - Ensure all videos posted include captions.
    - Set clear expectations, but also remain flexible.
    - Note taker services should continue if you are lecturing for the live ZOOM courses.
    - Ensure supplemental course materials are accessible.
  + **Testing:**
    - If the student has been using testing accommodations, such as extended time, a distraction-reduced environment, paper based exams, and/or the use of certain assistive technology, these can be arranged in advance with SASS.
    - If you requiring students to come to campus for exams, inform SASS so we can create a contingency plan to support students based on guidance from the College.
    - Communicate with SASS so we may support both you and the student to the best of our ability.
  + **Assignment deadlines-**
    - Students impacted by changes to routine may respond negatively to this sudden shift consider being flexible and inform students of additional campus resources that may be available virtually, such as [tutoring](https://www.elms.edu/admissions/center-for-student-success/tutoring-services-for-students/) and [counseling](https://www.elms.edu/student-life/health-center/counseling-center/).
* **Communication:**
  + Over communicate changes to the syllabus and assignment structure.
  + Consider hosting online office hours and provide details about the platform you plan to use, such as Google Hangouts, Zoom, or Facebook live.
  + The health and safety of our community is paramount, if we can support student engagement by over communicating simple details this will help students process information. We are all learning during this time.
* **Problem Solving with SASS:** 
  + We are obligated to provide accommodations even online; you do not have to do this alone. SASS will support and facilitate, to the best of our ability, access, process, materials, and communication.
  + Students diagnosed with disabilities that may impact the amount of time the student can successfully participate in computer based work may benefit from reviewing printed PowerPoints at a later time, listening to the recorded lecture at a later time, listening to the lecture without the screen on. This is an opportunity to remain creative with potential solutions in an effort to support community health.
  + The SASS office will remain available to consult with you to discuss questions, concerns, emergencies, or access concerns.
  + Consider implementing [trauma-informed strategies](https://blog.sharetolearn.com/leaders-link/what-trauma-looks-like-in-college-aged-students-and-adult-learners/).

I hope the Information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Tynisha

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