

## **What Are the Differences between Colleges with Structured/Proactive Programs and Those with Self-Directed/Decentralized Programs?**

Schools are classified as either Structured/Proactive or Self-Directed/Decentralized. Structured/Proactive Programs are more likely to have separate admissions processes and charge fees. These programs' services go well beyond those that are legally mandated and the student is provided with a more structured environment that includes low staff/student ratios. Self-Directed/Decentralized Programs usually have no separate admissions processes and eligibility for services must be established by the provision of disability documentation that meets institutional standards. Self-Directed/Decentralized Programs' services may be coordinated through the Disability Services Office and are based on need as specified by the student's documentation. Services may also be provided by other offices throughout the campus, and some services offered are not mandated by laws. Additionally, student progress is usually not monitored.

While all programs offer students with appropriate documentation academic adjustments and auxiliary aids, utilizing these support mechanisms will vary, falling within these two distinct categories. Structured/Proactive Programs are intrinsically school-centered decision making organizations, as compared to Self Directed/Decentralized Programs where support service decisions remain within the students' domain. Students with a tendency to cocoon themselves or wait until the eleventh hour to seek assistance when faced with academically induced stress will find a comfort zone associated with Structured/Proactive

Programs. Extra program fees, separate applications and a limit to the number of students accepted into the program allow Structured/Proactive Programs to maintain a student to staff ratio indicative of a structured format. Students in a Self-Directed/Decentralized Program line the continuum of support services from once a semester visits for academic adjustments to daily visits in order to receive a more comprehensive level of support.