RESOLUTION 31-3

Resolution Regarding Policy for Academic Accommodations and Course Substitutions for Students with Disabilities

Section I. Overview:

This bill revises current policy with respect to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. It expands upon current policy by providing a process whereby students, in addition to seeking accommodations that might enable the student to complete a course, may petition for a course substitution where warranted.

Section II. Requests for accommodation:

The student is responsible for disclosing a disability and requesting accommodations through the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Specific procedures with respect to required documentation, etc are at the discretion of the Director of ODS. Attachment A, Section II reflects current procedures with respect to requesting accommodations within a course.

Section III. Requests for course substitution:

A. The student is responsible for working with the Director of ODS to establish that an effective accommodation and/or auxiliary aids/services cannot be identified which would allow a student with a disability to master the subject content of a particular course. The student will work in cooperation with the Director of ODS to prepare a petition requesting a course substitution. Specific procedures with respect to required documentation, etc. are at the discretion of the Director of ODS. Attachment A, Section III B reflects planned requirements for documenting a course substitution request.

B. The judgment as to what course may be substituted to meet the essential elements of a required course is a matter reserved to the faculty:
1. If a Capital Scholars student is seeking a course substitution for a general education requirement that is part of the Capital Scholars curriculum, the Capital Scholars Steering Committee will be the reviewing body;

2. If a transfer student is seeking a course substitution for UIS’ lower division general education requirements, the Student Affairs Admissions Review Committee will be the reviewing body;

3. If a student is seeking a course substitution for a program requirement, the program or department faculty will be the reviewing body. This will include substitutions for prerequisites to the program and for program-specified upper-division general education requirements (i.e. public affairs colloquia, liberal studies colloquia, applied study terms);

4. If a student is seeking a course substitution for a UIS upper-division general education requirement (i.e. public affairs colloquia, liberal studies colloquia, applied study terms) other than those covered in 3, the General Education Committee of the Campus Senate will be the reviewing body.

C. Each reviewing body should be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To establish criteria for determining course substitutions to satisfy required courses.

2. To maintain records regarding permitted course substitutions and where practical, to establish a list of standing permitted course substitutions.¹

3. To rule on Petitions for Course Substitutions which are permitted under the Policy for Academic Accommodations and Course Substitutions for Students with Disabilities.

¹ For example, if it is determined that a specific logic course would satisfy the essential elements of a specific math course or that a specific composition course would satisfy the specific elements of a specific rhetoric course, then a master list of such permitted substitutions could be created. Then they might be used subsequently in individual cases of students with disabilities.
**Rationale: Section I.**

Under ADA, a student with a documented and qualifying disability, who has substantial difficulty performing the requirements of a course due to a disability-related circumstance, may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation. An accommodation is not reasonable if it substantially alters an essential element of a course or a degree program. Faculty do not need to modify or waive the essential elements of the curricula.

For convenience as well as for consistency of terminology, we may think of reasonable accommodations as falling into two categories: Academic Accommodations and Course Substitutions. Academic Accommodations are the first tier of accommodations considered that might enable the student to complete a course. Examples of such accommodations and auxiliary aids or services would include, a tutor, extra time for test taking, a note taker, a sign language interpreter, alternate format course material (such as Braille or electronic formats), etc. The nature of the accommodation is necessitated by the specific documented disability and is determined on an individualized case-by-case basis.

Where such Academic Accommodations do not enable a student with a disability to master the subject content of a particular course due to disability-related circumstances, it might be a reasonable accommodation to allow a course substitution. This does not necessarily mean that the student must have attempted the required course before requesting the substitution. Prior history and documentation might provide sufficient justification for such a substitution.

**Rationale: Section III. B.**

This policy is designed to involve the faculty who are best qualified to review requests under each of the circumstances described above.

**Rationale: Section III. C.**

These charges are provided to ensure fair and equitable treatment for students who request course substitutions under the *Policy for Academic Accommodations and Course Substitutions for Students with Disabilities.*