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**ISSUES TO CONSIDER BY LECTURERS FOR REMOTE TEACHING AND EXAMINATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

By Senator Floyd Morris, PhD

The Coronavirus has placed the entire world in a precarious position. It has caused individuals and institutions to change how they operate. Educational institutions have been forced to implement new strategies to honour their obligations to their quintessential client: the students.

At The University of the West Indies, we have been called to action and this requires us to accelerate our efforts with remote pedagogy. In this context, lecturers will be required to consider the needs of all students and these include students with disabilities.

Based on data from the Office of Special Students Services, there are over 50 students with disabilities who are currently registered at UWI Mona. These cover diverse types of disabilities. They are to be found in most of the faculties on the Campus. There are some issues that lecturers must take into consideration where students with disabilities and asynchronous teaching and examinations are concerned. There are ten foundational issues and these are:

1. Lecturers must know if there are students with disabilities in their class. (See attached list).
2. Lecturers must know the type of disability that each student has.
3. Lecturers should discuss with each student with disability the best pedagogical approach that will work with his or her disability. Each student with a disability will have a particular learning style and so lecturers should work out the best approach with the student.
4. Lecturers should be aware that students who are blind are auditory learners, in that they learn best from hearing and listening to voices and so they will have to be very descriptive in their presentations if they have a blind or visually impaired student in their class.
5. Conversely, deaf students are visual learners and so lecturers will have to display texts on the “blackboard” feature in OurVLE so that they can see what is taking place.

1. Lecturers must be aware that OurVLE has capacity for **Closed Captioning** and so the feature should be utilized if there is a deaf or hard-of-hearing student in the class.
2. As much as possible, lecturers should try to use Microsoft Word or PDF documents in an original text format rather than scanned documents so that the blind students can interact and access information easily.
3. Lecturers should ascertain whether or not a student with disability has access to modern technology that will allow him or her to access OurVLE from home.
4. Lecturers should contact Miss Sharmalee Cardoza at the Office of Special Students Services (OSSS) at 876 977 1551 or Senator Dr. Floyd Morris at the UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) at 876 977 9423 to determine what support can be given.
5. In shaping new modes of assessment for a course, the lecturer must take into consideration the peculiarities of the student with disability and therefore contact should be made with the student and the OSSS. Simultaneously, lecturers should be reminded that students with a disability receive an extra hour to complete their exams and this is still required in this asynchronous environment.

These issues are mere guides for lecturers to improve their pedagogical skills and to enhance the learning experience of students with disabilities at UWI Mona. The list is not exhaustive and so lecturers can add or subtract where necessary. When there is doubt or concerns please contact and consult the OSSS or the UWICDS at the numbers cited above.

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