

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019

OPINIONS

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Too disabled for disability services

Shouldn't all people with disabilities receive services?

JIMMY FREELS
Staff Columnist

I'm in a power wheelchair, and because I cannot use my hands effectively, I drive with switches located in the headrest of my chair. I can't hold a pencil or a pen in either hand, I can't get my books out of my bookbag, I can't turn pages in a textbook, I can't open a door and I can't even press the big buttons with the handicapped symbol to open doors electronically. Clearly, I need help.

I'm a Panther through Georgia State's Inclusive Education program, known as IDEAL. Inclusive Education was created to allow students with different ability to receive a college experience without going through the traditional admissions process.

There are eight other IE programs in the state of Georgia

besides IDEAL, including the Excel program at Georgia Tech, the Academy of Inclusive Learning at Kennesaw State, GOALS at Columbus State, Eagle Academy at Georgia Southern, DestinationDawgs at UGA, CHOICE at East Georgia, LEAP at Albany Tech and Project Wolves at West Georgia.

The Georgia State's Center for Leadership in Disability – located in the 75 Piedmont Building – has oversight responsibilities for IDEAL and all of the other IE programs in Georgia.

IE programs provide their students with the support that they need to help them succeed. These programs teach students how to manage their study time, manage their assignments and manage their extra-curricular activities. IE programs also provide peer mentors who attend classes with IE students to assist them according to their needs.

But there are other needs disabled students that might require such as a note taker or someone to read their tests to them. Usually, the IE program itself can find a way to provide the assistance needed for each of their students. When they

cannot, most IE programs will ask the Office of Disability Services on their campus to step in to fill the gaps.

That is how it works at West Georgia, Georgia Tech, UGA and Kennesaw among others. But not at Georgia State.

The Office of Disability Services at Georgia State is not allowed to help IE students on our campus because the students are non-matriculating students who are auditing classes.

Ironically, IE students still pay for tuition and student services fees –just like matriculating students. Yet we are unable to access the services we pay for.

At the beginning of this semester, IDEAL was unable to find a peer mentor to assist me during one of my classes. After several attempts to get this resolved, I went to the Office of Disability Services. Although they wanted to help me, they were not allowed because I am not a matriculating student.

I am so disabled that the Disability Services office was not allowed to help me even though I have paid for my student services. This is far from equal access as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A cleaner, greener future for Georgia State

How students are taking greener initiatives around campus

MYA GRANT
Staff Columnist

environmentally conscious driven clubs and personal contributions, Georgia State is working on becoming a greener campus.

Although Georgia State is located in the middle of downtown Atlanta, this doesn't push away the idea of saving

resolution vote on April 18 which will advocate for more sustainability in the strategic plan and get more of the campus' energy from renewable resources.

Georgia State's Office of Sustainability will be hosting an earth week festival on the April 18 as well as other events.