Service Dog 101 for Faculty

On September 4, 2019, Georgia State University adopted a Policy on Service and Emotional Support Animals. Faculty are encouraged to read the Policy which can be found here: https://access.gsu.edu/files/2019/11/Service-and-Emotional-Support-Animals-Policy.pdf.

- Dogs (and in very rare instances miniature horses) are the only animals that can qualify as Service Animals.

- If a student comes to class with a dog and it is apparent that it is a service dog (e.g., a guide dog, a dog pulling an individual’s wheelchair, or a dog providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability), no questions may be asked.

- A student is not required to obtain an accommodation letter from the Access and Accommodation Center (AACE) for a service dog, to register the service dog with AACE or to require the service dog to wear identification.

- If it is not evident that the animal is a service dog, a supervisory level employee may discretely ask the owner of the dog only the following TWO questions:

  1. **Is this a service dog needed due to a disability?**
     
     a. If “YES,” you may not ask about the disability or for any verification.

  2. **If yes to #1, then: What task is the service dog trained to perform?** (You may not ask for a demonstration.)

- If the student indicates that the dog is NOT a service animal needed because of a disability, the student may be discretely asked whether the dog has been approved to be in this location as an accommodation for a disability. In this case, you may check with AACE for verification.

- If there is any doubt that a dog is a service dog, faculty should admit the animal and then consult with the AACE regarding future access.

- **A service dog and its owner are a working team so service dogs typically go where their owners go.** (For example: inside campus buildings and offices, inside the residence halls and rooms, in classrooms, in public restrooms, and in cafeteria areas.) When the owner is seated, the service dog will typically stay by the student’s side, at the student’s feet, next to the student’s chair, or sometimes – if the service dog can fit – underneath the student’s chair.

- The service dog owner must ensure that the dog is on a harness, leash or other tether, unless the student’s disability precludes use of such a tether, in which case the service dog must otherwise be under the voice control of the Owner or some other effective means.

- It is the duty of the service dog owner to maintain care of the service dog: to feed, bathe, and clean up after them.

- **Do Not Pet** the service dog when it is working. Petting distracts the dog from its job and the owner could get hurt. Also, don’t call the service dog by name when it is working: this, too, is distracting. Also, do not offer the service dog food or other distracting treats without the owner’s permission.

- Please contact the AACE at 404/413-1560, or acess@gsu.edu, if you have questions or concerns about service dogs.