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Dear Educators and Counsellors:

The Coordinators of Disability Services at College of the North Atlantic would like to take this opportunity to share our updated website with you and to highlight several key pieces of information important for a smooth transition from high school to college for students with disabilities.

We invite you to visit our site at <http://www.cna.nl.ca/disability-services> and we ask you to encourage your students, who may be applying to College of the North Atlantic, to view it, as well. The site contains information students with disabilities should be aware of prior to enrolling in their program of choice at CNA. We are continually improving and updating this site so please check it on a regular basis to keep abreast of what is happening with Disability Services at College of the North Atlantic.

Attached is a list highlighting very specific information we would like to share with you in an effort to enhance the transition process for students with disabilities. We believe that as we improve our ability to work together on behalf of students, we increase their opportunities for success in postsecondary. Students who are strong self-advocates and who are both well prepared and well informed experience a more seamless transition and are therefore more likely to succeed!

As CDS for (Placentia and Carbonear), I am available to assist in the transition process and welcome any opportunities to share information and to partner with you to enhance the services we provide to schools and to students. I am also available to consult and answer questions you may have about our policy and procedure, documentation requirements, etc.

I would like to thank you, in advance, for your support as we endeavour to strengthen our relationships with schools, educators, and students in our communities.

Regards,

Marie Traverse (709-227-6272)
Marie Traverse

Link to Disability Services Website

- Students/parents/service providers can easily access Disability Services information by visiting our website at : <http://www.cna.nl.ca/>
- Near the bottom of the homepage is a link to Disability Services. For a direct link go to <http://www.cna.nl.ca/disability-services/>
- The website holds a variety of information important to students with disabilities. If a student enters Transitioning to College, he/she can see all steps necessary to access disability services at CNA, including everything they need to know about support, equipment, technology, policies and procedures.

Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities (formerly known as Canada Student Grant)

- Above and beyond the base grant of \$2000 for students with Disabilities, there is an additional grant of up to \$8000 for students who meet the criteria for permanent disabilities and who demonstrate that they are in need of exceptional education-related services (such as tutoring) or equipment (hardware and/or software). See website below for additional information.
- <http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/postsec/money/grants/gsepd.shtml>
- This is a very underutilized funding source that high school students should be applying for, especially those with learning disabilities.

Documentation Form

- By going to the Disability Services link on CNA's home page, you will find a section called Documentation and Forms. On that page you will find the Disability Services Documentation Form: a new form developed to fall in line with other forms used in government.
- The form gives direction as to the information and documentation that is needed in order to access Disability Services while attending CNA

Current Assessments Required

- CNA accepts psycho-educational assessments that are less than 5 years old and preferably completed during the high school years.
- There is an expectation that the assessment will state a diagnosis of disability and support recommendations for post secondary accommodations.

- Please ensure the documentation accurately represents the student's permanent disability and functional limitations. Functional limitations should be related to the disability diagnosis, and recommendations for accommodations should be directly linked to functional limitations.
- The CDS will contact the counselor/psychologist if there is vagueness in the report or if there are challenges determining whether or not the student has a diagnosed disability. Assessments should provide clarity.
- By viewing CNA's Disability Services Documentation Form, students, teachers, assessors and parents can see the list of disabilities recognized for possible accommodations. Please be advised that low general cognitive ability (GCA) is not considered a disability as learning difficulties cannot be mitigated with academic accommodations.(See below for additional information)

Assistive Technology in Place of Human Support

- CNA prepares students for the workforce in many ways. One of those ways is through promoting independence in learning and performing tasks.
- The use of technology for students with disabilities is promoted and encouraged at all stages. This technology ranges from something as simple as a magnifier to software for reading and writing, with Kurzweil and Dragon Naturally Speaking softwares being the most common tools.
- Students should have access to and learn their technology before they arrive on CNA campuses. Valuable time can be lost having to learn the technology after arrival into a program.
- At some CNA campuses there are resource facilitators who will assist potential students in learning how to use common technology, (possibly during the summer months at some campuses) prior to entry. Check with a local campus for more information.

Welcoming Campus Visits

- Campus and classroom visits can be arranged by the CDS at any campus in the province if a student or group of students may be interested. These are opportunities to see firsthand what the programs look like and what the expectations are. CNA encourages these visits.

Differences in Accommodations from Secondary to Post Secondary

- Accommodations at CNA do not necessarily mirror those provided in secondary schools. It is important to note that only students with disabilities who have recent assessments and meet our criteria will receive accommodations.
- A list of the accommodations available (depending on disability and severity) can be found on the website under Helpful Links.
- CNA does not offer remedial support for learners accepted into programs. There are, however, Student Success Centers, Math and English Help Centers and Peer Tutoring at most campuses.

Low Cognitive Ability and the College Setting

- Students with low cognitive ability often meet the College's entrance requirements because they have a high school graduation certificate. CNA does not provide academic accommodations to students who do not have a documented disability (with current documentation).
- There is a minimal amount of support available to students who present with low general cognitive ability. The College does not have remedial or Instructional Resource teachers. Students may access some support through Student Success Centers or peer tutoring hours, both of which are available to all students of all abilities who may require additional academic supports.
- Students with low cognitive ability often struggle in college programs whether the programs are in the Trades or in Applied Arts. It is recommended that transition to college for this group of students start as early as possible to allow time to assess required supports and potential to achieve success in the program of choice or, where appropriate, to consider other programs or educational options.
- Many students who present as having low GCA access the Canada Student Loans program to cover their educational costs. Unfortunately too many of the students have limited success in college and subsequently find themselves in debt with few employment prospects that will enable them to repay that acquired debt. A good transition plan would help significantly decrease (or eliminate completely) the number of students negatively impacted in this way.

Transition Planning

- CNA cannot stress enough how important it is to support and provide transition planning for students with disabilities.
- CDS' are available to attend transition meetings at many schools throughout the province. Should travel become an issue, they can connect to a meeting via telephone to assist teams around students with disabilities who are planning to come to CNA.
- Students with disabilities who are most successful are those whose teams linked up with the CDS and planned the transition to College.

Alternate Format Textbooks

- CNA is aware that many students with various disabilities have accessed alternate format texts while in secondary school and are seeking the same support while in College.
- There is a procedure for accessing alternate format which is vastly different from the high school process. Students should be made aware of this process and the steps they will need to take when applying for this support. This is very important as most students have come unprepared to deal with this and are delayed in getting their texts in alternate format.
- Check the Disability Services website, under Helpful Links, for additional information.