East Tennessee State University Faculty Attitudes and Student Perceptions in Providing Accommodations to Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine ETSU faculty attitudes and student perceptions in providing academic accommodations to students with disabilities.

Participants of the study were ETSU students with disabilities who are registered with the Disabilities Services office and faculty members of ETSU. Students with disabilities were interviewed. An online survey was sent to faculty members via the ETSU email system. Disability law and disability compliance year books served as the primary documents that were reviewed for pertinent information.

Grounded theory using a constant-comparison methodology served as the conceptual framework for the study. The grounded-theory approach allowed for the perspectives of students and faculty to be shared and analyzed. Constant-comparison methodology was used to interpret the data through the critical lens perspectives and experiences of students with disabilities. Interview, online survey, and document review were 3 methods of data collection used in this study.

The findings of the study indicated that the experiences and perspectives of ETSU students with disabilities differ regardless of visible or invisible disability. Findings also indicated that faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities were generally positive. However, attitudes of faculty members at ETSU did mirror the attitudes of faculty members at
other universities in the provision of certain accommodations based on type (classroom or testing.) In general, faculty members were less willing to alter a test than to provide extended time for a test. Also, faculty members were less willing to provide lecture notes as opposed to allowing a student to record a lecture. It is suggested that the willingness of a faculty member to provide accommodations may hinge on knowledge, experience, and ease of providing the accommodation.
DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to family members and friends who have encouraged me along the way. These include my late mother Susie, my father Dave, Jane, Luann, Bea, Jennie, Davenia, Walt, and many more.

In the midst of winter, I found there was within me, an invincible summer.

-Albert Camus
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

College students with disabilities face a multitude of barriers each day. A student with a medical disability may have to take medication, check blood sugar levels, or request a padded chair for his or her classroom. A student with a mobility issue may have to schedule classes in buildings that allow for greater accessibility, schedule classes so that travel time between classes is adequate, or request that his or her class be temporarily moved to a ground floor room in the event of an elevator outage. Students with mental health disabilities may face enormous challenges in simply attending classes with large enrollments. Students with learning disabilities may struggle to keep up with assigned readings even though they devote hours each night to this purpose. Each of these examples reflects common issues that students with various disabilities may cope with in their everyday lives. However, another issue that students with disabilities face is the attitudinal barriers of faculty members.

The role of faculty members in student success should not be underestimated. Effective teaching styles, the importance of timely feedback, positive reinforcement tactics, expertise with subject matter, and perceived degree of care or interest in the student as a person are attributes that students report as important qualities or characteristics for faculty to engage students and encourage retention (Kinzie, 2005). When a faculty member displays a negative attitude toward a student, several perceptions on the part of the student can be affected. The student’s sense of worth, belonging, and ability can be negatively impacted. These perceptions may be even more negative if the student perceives that the faculty member’s attitude is based solely on his or her
disability. Therefore, the role of student perceptions alongside the attitudes of faculty members is a strong determining factor in student success in higher education.

Background of the Problem

Disability prejudice and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities are not new. The United States Department of Justice oversees the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990, July 26) that offers protection in multiple areas (education, employment, healthcare, transportation, etc.) to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are regarded as having disabilities. Prior to 1990 individuals with disabilities received limited protection in employment from the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. However, the rule of law does not always apply to social situations. Multiple researchers point out that in general nondisabled society holds negative viewpoints of people with disabilities. As well, a look into disability compliance in the realm of higher education can be seen through case law year books that record and detail lawsuits that have developed from negative situations involving discrimination and the neglect or refusal to provide accommodations or access to students with disabilities.

The Setting: East Tennessee State University

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) is a regional university located in Johnson City, TN. Nestled in the Appalachian mountains, the university prides itself on being the regional university of choice. Much of the student population consists of local, recent high school graduates. Of the 13,000 plus students enrolled in ETSU courses, nearly 800 are actively registered with the ETSU Disability Services office. This represents approximately 6.5% of the ETSU student population. This percentage is slightly lower than the national average that
according to a 2002 report was 9% (National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002). Updated statistics from NCES for the population were not located. Assuming that classes at ETSU are reflective of the total student population and that the average class size is approximately 28 students, it is reasonable to suggest that approximately two students with disabilities will be on each class roster. With this population thus being presented, hundreds of ETSU faculty are required to provide testing and classroom accommodations. These accommodations are put into place for students with various disabilities encompassing medical, mental, mobility, visual, and hearing impairments.

Office of Disability Services

The Disability Services Office at East Tennessee State University offers qualifying students who register with the office a variety of accommodations and assistance. The mission of the office is to provide services and promote an accessible environment that allows individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in educational pursuits and other campus activities.

The university’s policy regarding admission and access prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. East Tennessee State University admits students without regard to disabling conditions. The university is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. ETSU makes reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the university setting.

Disability Services coordinates accommodations and services designed to provide access for students with disabilities. While students are not required to disclose disability information
during the admissions process, students are encouraged to contact Disability Services for information as soon as they consider enrolling at ETSU.

Documentation Guidelines and Student Accommodation

In compliance with the federal regulations outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is the policy of East Tennessee State University to make accommodations, course substitutions, and other academic adjustments when necessary to ensure equal access for students with disabilities.

While all students with disabilities are protected from discrimination, some students may not be eligible for all of the services coordinated by Disability Services. Classroom and testing accommodations are made on an individual, case-by-case basis. Students who wish to request an accommodation or academic adjustment because of a disability must follow the established process for self-identification by completing the intake process with Disability Services.

During the intake process, students are informed of the policies and procedures surrounding the accommodation process, student responsibilities, as well as ETSU responsibilities. Eligibility for classroom and testing accommodations and other support services coordinated by Disability Services is based on the review of the student’s documentation of disability. According to *Reasonable Accommodation: A Guide for Students, Parents, Faculty, and Staff* the university is not required to provide measures the student may specifically request, but rather they must provide accommodations that are effective even if it constitutes an alternative provision (Heyward, date unknown).
Intake applications are not complete until current documentation of disability has been received and reviewed by Disability Services. ETSU does not recognize individualized education plans (IEP) as documentation; however, information included in an IEP may be helpful when identifying the services that may be reasonable. According to Heyward, determining what is reasonable requires a balance of the student’s right to access and the university’s right to protect academic integrity.

*Statement of the Problem*

Linda Gibson, Director of Disability Services at ETSU, suspects that a range of faculty attitudes exist on campus and that these attitudes may be associated with experience. In an email correspondence she commented on faculty attitudes she has encountered throughout her career:

I have been a service provider for students with disabilities for 18 years—the past eight years at ETSU. In my experience, faculty attitudes toward accommodations have improved in general over the past 18 years. Interestingly enough, more seasoned faculty members are often open to making accommodations where younger faculty who have not been out of school very long can sometimes be the most rigid. When faculty are resistant to making accommodations, in my opinion, this is due to several underlying beliefs. These beliefs include:

- Accommodations are an “unfair advantage”
- Accommodations lower academic standards
- Accommodations make extra work for faculty
- Accommodations are the job of DS and as a result, faculty see students with disabilities differently than their other students
- Accommodations do not reflect the “real world of work”
- Accommodations are not emphasized within a department or a college as an important part of the faculty member’s duties—related to lack of departmental support for diversity and inclusion in the classroom
- Accommodations always require some kind of “special expertise” but asking DS for help or for clarification would suggest a weakness on the faculty member’s part—better to just avoid making an accommodation (June 24, 2009)
It is helpful to note that Mrs. Gibson believes that the overall attitudes of faculty members have improved during her 18 years of providing services. Whether this belief accurately reflects the reality at ETSU remains to be determined.

There are over 800 actively enrolled students with disabilities registered in the Disability Services office at ETSU. Because students with disabilities are not required to register with Disability Services, it can be assumed that more than 800 students with disabilities are attending ETSU. Fall 2008 enrollment figures for ETSU listed 13,646 total undergraduate and graduate students (East Tennessee State University, 2009). Therefore, at least 6% of the ETSU student population has a disability.

The purpose of this study was to examine ETSU faculty attitudes and student perceptions in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. It is hoped that this study will further the awareness of the experiences of this unique population of students and offer solutions to increase knowledge and support to faculty members in providing accommodations.

Several areas can be considered when researching faculty attitudes and students’ perceptions related to disability and disability accommodations. Researchers have studied societal perceptions of people with disabilities. Clapton and Fitzgerald (1997), Shreve (2002), and Senelick and Dougherty (2001) provided insights into negative examples of social interactions directly related to obvious or perceived disabilities. Other researchers have focused their work directly on the attitudes of college professors who have interacted with students with disabilities. Wolman, McCrink, Rodriguez, and Harris-Looby (2004) created a survey instrument to assess faculty attitudes toward accommodations for students with disabilities. Bourke, Strehorn, and Silver (2000) researched the attitudes and theoretical models of faculty at the
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in providing instructional accommodations to students with learning disabilities. Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Brulle (1999) surveyed the faculty at a large, public Midwestern university to determine their attitudes about providing accommodations; their experience of situations requiring accommodations; knowledge of learning disabilities and related law; and their thoughts about whether accommodations for students with disabilities were fair when compared with the work required of other students. Rao and Gartin (2003) recognized the need for research into the area of faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities with a literature review. Giving focus to “attitudinal barriers” that affect the success of students with disabilities, Rao and Gartin reviewed literature on various topics related to faculty attitudes.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudes of ETSU faculty about providing classroom and testing accommodations to students with disabilities?

2. Are the attitudes of ETSU faculty associated with gender, rank, discipline, age or experience?

3. What are the student perceptions of faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities?

Significance of the Study

This qualitative study examined faculty attitudes and student perceptions of providing accommodations to students with disabilities at ETSU. The goal of this study was to provide a
narrative of student perceptions and experiences and faculty attitudes in providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

The results of this study provide the much needed comparative information for other researchers completing case studies or further research into faculty attitudes and student perceptions towards providing accommodations in the realm of higher education. Student success can be increased as knowledge in this area is expanded and changes are implemented.

ETSU faculty and students with disabilities who seek accommodations should also benefit from this study. This study provides information about the levels to which positive or negative faculty attitudes exist at East Tennessee State University in order to better understand the experiences of this unique student population. Data collected and analyzed may be used to justify training programs, workshops, or student-centered support groups for this population. The results of this study will be used to enhance support of faculty and students during the provision of accommodations. Information generated from this study can also aid administrators in the overall understanding of the campus climate for this underrepresented group and for other underrepresented groups.

*Scope of the Study*

The scope of this study was limited to ETSU; therefore, this study may be considered a case study. The quantitative data presented supports the qualitative nature of the study. Because I wanted to focus my attention on the perceptions of students and the attitudes of faculty at ETSU, I interviewed six students with disabilities who were actively enrolled in courses at ETSU. An online survey was constructed and sent to faculty members at ETSU. I also corresponded with questions via email to Linda Gibson, Director of ETSU Disability Services, so that a record of
her responses could be maintained in my research files. I also conducted a document review of related disability law and recent case law rulings in order to gain further knowledge of this subject area. Information gathered from these sources allowed for greater insight into the campus climate for students with disabilities as it relates to faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations.

Statement of Researcher’s Biases and Perceptions

As an employee at the office of Disability Services at ETSU, I have had many interactions with students with disabilities. Through these interactions I have been made aware of the variability of student campus experiences as they relate to the students’ disabilities. Faculty attitudes comprise just one of many barriers that students with disabilities face in their day-to-day lives. My interactions and experiences with students who have disabilities and with my fellow workers piqued my interest in my research topic. I have heard first-person accounts of pleasant and unpleasant interactions with faculty members. My intention for a better understanding of the campus experience for students with disabilities kept me focused. My hope that something beneficial may result from the findings kept me driven.

In order to objectively research faculty attitudes and student perceptions towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities, I instituted a system of triangulation in order to foster validity. Peer review was used for the interview questions and online survey. Member checks were used to verify the contents of the interview transcripts. Also, based on a suggestion from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at ETSU, my work-related access to student files was avoided so that any information generated was not skewed from a purposeful
sampling technique. Keeping these two areas clearly delineated allowed clear results to emerge from the study and limited the bias of the researcher.

Theoretical Framework

Grounded Theory (GT) is a qualitative research method that emphasizes the development of a theory based on the data. It is in direct opposition to inductive theory, which begins with a hypothesis and then seeks data to support or negate the hypothesis.

Sociologists Glaser and Strauss developed Grounded Theory. Their book, The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967) details how GT emerged from the constant-comparison method. However, the researchers’ opinions on GT split shortly after this book was published. Two paradigms of research theory emerged out of GT. The Glaserian paradigm claims that any data generated, whether they be from interviews, surveys, literature, or other materials, may be used in the comparative process; I am employing this method to the research study of student perceptions and faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations.

Overview of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction to college life as a student with a disability; the important role that faculty members play in student success; a condensed literature review that shows the emerging concern of faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities and the accommodations they must be given; a short introduction to disability civil rights; and information about ETSU and the campus make-up, including data on students and faculty. The statement of the problem; research questions; significance of the study and my biases are also provided. Chapter 2 provides a literature review that focuses on survey
instruments, faculty attitudes, student perceptions, and factors that influence student success. My method of research is explained in detail in Chapter 3. An analysis of the research findings is reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and further suggestions.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature shows the growing body of literature related to faculty attitudes and the success of students with disabilities in postsecondary educational settings. The research presented looked almost exclusively at 4-year institutions, although some data from 2-year institutions were included. Overwhelming evidence suggests that faculty attitudes toward providing accommodations are an influential factor in student satisfaction and success. The classic Pygmalion study (where teachers’ perceptions about the capabilities of students influence their attitudes towards those students, which in turn directly influence the students’ performances) also reiterates the importance of faculty attitudes.

In order to locate the material I have referenced in this literature review I did several searches. Initially I searched the internet search engine “Google” using the key word phrases “disability accommodations” and “faculty attitudes.” The search produced 54 hits, most of which were irrelevant to my research. In order to produce more information I broadened my search by using the keyword phrases “higher education,” “disability,” and “faculty attitudes.” These phrases produced approximately 1,700 hits. I reviewed these for their usefulness and relevancy to my research. In an attempt to narrow my search and include refereed academic journals in my results, I accessed research databases that were available through ETSU’s Sherrod Library. I selected the databases to search based on whether they were described as having information related to the field of education. These included *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, ERIC
(Educational Resources Information Center), Infotrac Onefile, Jstor, Project Muse, and Professional Collection. I again searched with both sets of my keyword phrases and found that the second set (“higher education,” “disability,” and “faculty attitudes”) produced more useful results. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* returned two results neither of which were useful. ERIC returned four search results with three of those being relevant. The three were referenced in this review. Infotrac Onefile returned one result based on the keywords I used. The article by Rao (2004) was located in earlier searches (Google, *The Chronicle*, and ERIC) and is included in this review. I found that Jstor and Project Muse both returned similar results but they were varied and off topic. Professional Collection, which was described as having articles related to education, returned no results.

**Faculty Survey Instruments**

Wolman, McCrink, Rodriguez, and Harris-Looby (2004) created a survey instrument to assess faculty attitudes towards accommodations for students with disabilities. The researchers did not focus their attention towards a specific university but instead compared American university faculty attitudes to Mexican university faculty attitudes. This particular study showed that American university faculty members were more positive about the potential of students with disabilities. However, American and Mexican university faculty members were similar in their eagerness to provide and support accommodations for students with disabilities.

Wolman et al. (2004) acknowledged that “extensive” research had been done concerning faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities but they also noted that no appropriate cross-cultural assessments had been completed. Therefore, the survey instrument they created was produced with the belief that teaching constructs transcended culture. Referred to as the
Accommodation of University Students with Disabilities Inventory (AUSDI), the English version of the survey included 98 items that encompassed background, experience with students with disabilities, experience with providing accommodations, familiarity with disability law, professional development, assumptions about students with disabilities, and friendships with students with disabilities. The Spanish version had 91 questions, with the difference being that there were fewer questions related to law.

One unique finding from the AUSDI was that both groups of faculty (American and Mexican) were more likely to accommodate students with learning disabilities, hearing impairments or deafness, and vision impairments or blindness, as opposed to accommodating students who presented with emotional or physical disabilities. Previous studies by Leyser (1989) and Szymansky et al. (1999) suggested that faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations were influenced by the types of disabilities for which they were accommodating. However, the Leyser (1989) study produced different results from the Wolman et al. (2004) study. Leyser (1989) found that faculty members were more positive about accommodating for visual and hearing impairments than for learning disabilities and emotional impairments.

Wolman et al. (2004) found that U.S. faculty members were more willing to accommodate students with visual or hearing impairments than were their Mexican counterparts. However, both groups were equally willing to accommodate students with other disabilities (learning disabilities, emotional or mental disorders, physical disabilities, etc.). As well, both groups were equally willing to become friends with people with disabilities.
Vogel et al. (1999) surveyed the faculty at a large, public midwestern university to determine their attitudes about providing accommodations; their experience of situations requiring accommodations; knowledge of learning disabilities and related law; and their thoughts about whether accommodations for students with disabilities were fair when compared with the work required of other students. The research was conducted for the purpose of enhancing student success. After the initial passage of disability protection law in 1973 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), the remainder of that decade and especially the 1980s saw a dramatic increase of students with disabilities in higher education (Brinkerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1993; Vogel & Adelman, 1993). First-time, full-time freshmen with disabilities rose from 2.6% in 1978 to 9.2% in 1994 (Henderson, 1995). However, as of 1999 Vogel et al. reported that little to no information existed regarding graduation and attrition rates of these students. The researchers reported that positive faculty attitudes and willingness to provide accommodations to students also was a strong determinant of student success. Research on this topic is noted, but negative attitudes are ascribed to a lack of knowledge of the nature and needs of students, particularly those with learning disabilities.

Through a 35-item survey instrument Vogel et al. (1999) researched faculty attitudes and practices in higher education. The instrument was divided into five parts: background information, faculty contact with individuals with disabilities, willingness to provide accommodations based on type (testing or classroom and type of accommodation), accommodations for teaching certification candidates, and suggestions and comments. The researchers discovered that the faculty of the institution were more eager to provide classroom accommodations as compared to testing accommodations. Regarding specific classroom accommodations, faculty were most willing to allow students to record lectures. Faculty were
least willing to give alternate assignments or materials. As far as specific testing accommodations, faculty were most willing to give extended testing time. Faculty were least willing to alter their exams. In the study it was found that female faculty members tended to express more positive attitudes towards students with disabilities than did their male counterparts. Faculty members with knowledge about disabilities also had more positive attitudes. Concerning discipline, faculty who were in Education were more accommodating than those from other academic areas.

Vogel et al. (1999) ended their report with recommendations to provide faculty members with more information about learning disabilities, teaching strategies, and available support services. Workshops were suggested as a means to disseminate this information. The happiness and success of students regardless of ability is viewed as the benefit of this needed action.

Faculty Attitudes and Theoretical Models

Bourke et al. (2000) researched the attitudes and theoretical models of faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in providing instructional accommodations to students with learning disabilities. In order to assess faculty attitudes the researchers constructed a survey that focused on three questions:

1. What was the degree of ease or difficulty that faculty experienced in implementing various instructional accommodations for students with learning disabilities?

2. How was the provision of the above instructional accommodations affected by the perceived level of support the faculty members received, the perceived sufficiency of resources available to faculty members to provide these instructional accommodations, and the faculty members’ own beliefs and understandings concerning the need for and benefit of providing instructional accommodations?
3. Were any of the demographic characteristics significantly related to the provision of instructional accommodations, perceived support, and understanding of the need for instructional accommodations? (p. 27)

The study found that faculty willingness to provide accommodations was based on whether the accommodation was thought to be helpful to the student. Also, faculty were more apt to be eager to provide accommodations if a sense of support was perceived from the university administration. Faculty also indicated that they felt that as the number of students with learning disabilities increased the amount of sufficient support from the university decreased. Heyward, Lawton, and Associates (1995) pointed out in an earlier study that when faculty perceived support from the university they were more likely to implement accommodations. Brinkerhoff (1992) touched upon this subject earlier when findings suggested that a close working relationship among faculty, administration, and service providers on campus was key to providing effective accommodations. The Bourke et al. (2000) study did note a difference in faculty attitude towards providing accommodations based upon whether the members were tenured or nontenured. Nontenured faculty tended to be more eager and supportive in providing accommodations. The researchers agreed that because their study focused on one institution, it would be inappropriate to generalize the results.

Gitlow (2001) conducted research on faculty attitudes among occupational therapy educators towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into 2-year, 4-year, and graduate programs. Gitlow found that faculty members were overall favorable toward including students with disabilities in OT programs. However, students with behavioral disabilities were viewed as less favorable for inclusion. Faculty attitude may not be prejudiced toward the student or the disability per se, but rather it may relate to uneasiness about how to work with or accommodate students with behavioral disabilities. Students with learning disabilities were viewed most
positively for inclusion. Students who were physically disabled or who exhibited disruptive behavior were viewed least favorably by faculty. Studies by Leyser (1989) and Wilczenski (1992, 1995) support this finding and likely reflected Hahn’s (1993) claim that the more visible a disability was, the more anxiety it produced in the nondisabled person. One differing factor in Gitlow as compared to Rao (2004) is that faculty members teaching in 2-year programs were less likely to be favorable to students with disabilities as opposed to faculty teaching in 4-year programs. This may be a significant finding in light of a 1996 study by Gingerich that found that 63% of students with disabilities attended community colleges rather than 4-year colleges. Gitlow ends her study like most others—suggesting that information provided to faculty may influence more positive attitudes.

Barazandeh’s (2005) introduction to the topic of faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities and providing accommodations is similar to many other articles covered in this research. She pointed out that the numbers of students with disabilities enrolling in postsecondary education continued to rise. Also, she noted that prior experience with disabilities or students with disabilities generally served to make faculty more receptive and accommodating. In her study Barazandeh focused her research on students at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). What she discovered offers unique insight into student perceptions concerning faculty attitudes. In survey responses 67% of students with disabilities wanted to know more about their disabilities. Over half of the responding students (55%) indicated that UCI faculty needed to know more about disabilities. Just 17.5% of students with disabilities had discussed the nature of their disability with a faculty member. Approximately 62% of students said they would be willing to share a disability factsheet with their faculty members if the factsheet were available through the Disabilities Services office. These last two figures likely
indicate willingness by the students to be open about their disability (67% indicated they had no problem in revealing their disability) but uneasiness about sharing too much information in doing so. An objective handout provided by the student could offer an easy method of informing the faculty member of the student’s needs. And, as noted previously, many faculty members are willing to aid students with disabilities but are unfamiliar with disabilities and/or accommodations.

Barazandeh (2005) noted that 50% of UCI students with disabilities think faculty members are only somewhat approachable or indifferent. Therefore, it is not surprising that 67.5% of these students think that there is a need for better communication between faculty and students with disabilities. Concerning faculty willingness to adapt strategies and course materials to meet accommodations, 70% of students indicated they thought their professors were indifferent or only somewhat willing to do so.

The findings of this researcher indicate what many of the journal articles presented in this review present—there is a strong need for change concerning faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations at the university level. There is information presented that leads researchers to believe that faculty may be receptive when presented with information and given support. Student success can ultimately hinge on these factors.

Smith (2007) produced a thesis entitled *Attitudes Towards Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Study of Rowan University Faculty*. Smith surveyed 350 assistant, associate, and full professors at Rowan University’s six colleges in order to determine how willing they were to provide accommodations or adapt strategies in order to meet the educational needs of students with learning disabilities. Four research questions guided the thesis:
• What are the attitudes of participating faculty members towards policy, instructional, examination, and institutional accommodations of students with learning disabilities?

• Is there a significant relationship between the demographic variables of age, gender, academic rank, college, teaching experience, and experience with learning disabled students and the faculty attitude statements?

• What impacts do participating faculty members report from the use of accommodations for students with learning disabilities?

• What recommendations do participating faculty members make in serving students with learning disabilities? (p. 5)

Smith had 171 usable surveys from which to collect data. Concerning his inquiries into age, he found that 56% of respondents were 40-59 years old. A majority of the respondents was male (56%). A mixture of full, associate, and assistant professors responded (30.4%; 36.8%; and 31.5%). Out of these, the Liberal Arts and Sciences department represented the most faculty respondents (61), followed by Education (39), Communication (25), and Business (16). Smith also discovered a range of years of teaching experience. Respondents constituted one third of each of the three groupings (1-15 years; 16-30 years; and 31+ years). However, when looking at the experience those faculty members reported about working with students with disabilities, only 18% claimed substantial experience. Yet, Smith found the overwhelming percentage (95%) understood the importance of accommodations for students with learning disabilities, with 80% agreeing that the accommodations were ‘fair.’ Smith also discovered that nearly 30% of faculty felt that some students took advantage of accommodations and 73% agreed that students with disabilities were as academically capable as other students.
Smith took a focused look at how faculty members responded to the types of accommodations offered to students with learning disabilities. Between 80% and 98% of faculty agreed that accommodations such as sharing their lecture notes, allowing students to record lectures, allowing a note taker, and giving extended testing time were appropriate. Faculty members responded with the least comfortable when providing a study guide with only 21% saying it would be appropriate. Less than 6% of responding Rowan faculty members stated that students were over-accommodated.

Smith’s research into faculty characteristics revealed several significant relationships. In general, younger faculty members tended to believe that accommodations were appropriate as opposed to older faculty members. Older faculty members also had a more negative view concerning the availability of support, resources, and training to provide accommodations. Throughout the responses gender did not seem to play a significant role. Weak relationships were also noted for academic discipline or college, years of experience, and experience with students with disability. The research ended with data that suggested that 51% of faculty members indicated that accommodations helped students to succeed and that 56% of respondents stated more training would be beneficial. Smith reported overall positive attitudes of faculty in providing accommodations.

Rao (2004) reported the need for research into the area of faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities with a literature review that was published as a journal article. Rao gave credit to 1920s researcher Louis Leon Thurstone for his article claiming that attitudes were measurable and for the Thurstone Scale that emerged from his research. As cited in Rao (2004), Cook (1992) noted that attitudes comprised three elements: affect, cognition, and behavior. As
cited in Rao (2004), Lefrancious (1994) and Wilzinki (1991) are also given credit for their study in the field of attitudes.

Focusing specifically on the topic of attitudes towards persons with disabilities, Rao like other researchers included in this literature review noted that faculty attitudes constituted an important factor in student success. Fichten (1988) and Beilke and Yssel (1998) did similar studies on the topic and support this stance. Like Vogel et al. (1999), Rao reports that Herr (1982) and Katz, Haz, and Bailey (1988) found that as the amount of knowledge about people with disabilities increases negative attitudes decrease.

Giving focus to the attitudinal barriers that affect the success of students with disabilities, Rao reviewed literature on various topics related to faculty attitudes. Faculty views of disabilities and the students who presented with them were covered. Considering the close relationship between attitudes toward students with disabilities and the accommodations they require, Rao’s literature review offers unique insight into the current climate surrounding this unique population and the services they need. Rao presented her findings which correlated results with several factors including gender, age, experience, rank, department, knowledge of disability law, and disability type. In most studies gender was found to be statistically significant, with female faculty expressing more positive attitudes. Few studies found that gender was not significant. All of the studies covered found that age had no effect on faculty attitude. Experience was described as previous interaction with or knowledge of students or others with disabilities. Experienced faculty were found to have a significantly more positive attitude towards students with disabilities. Concerning rank, only one study—Fonosch and Schwab, 1981—found that rank was associated with attitude, with professors and instructors scoring lower than assistant and
associate professors. Departmental affiliation was found to be a significant predictor of attitude. Overall, administrators were found to have more positive attitudes than were faculty, with several studies pointing to faculty in education as being more positive than their counterparts in other fields, especially the sciences. Just as previous experience led to a more positive attitude, so did knowledge of disability law. Type of disability was also covered as a determining factor for attitude. Rao found that studies suggested that faculty thought that moderate hearing and vision impairments were the least disabling. Quadriplegia and schizophrenia were viewed as the most disabling.

Rao (2004) ends the article with a suggestion to provide faculty with more knowledge about disabilities in general and students with disabilities. Information on support services should also be provided in order to facilitate positive attitudes. Rao suggested that a qualitative study that focused on what information and support services would best help faculty serve students with disabilities should be completed.

Faculty Perceptions of Students with Disabilities

Burgstahler, Duclos, and Turcotte (2000) examined the perceptions of faculty, teaching assistants, and students in accommodating students with disabilities in higher education. The researchers noted the academic difficulties students with disabilities faced. Referring to Horn and Bobbitt (1999), it was noted that only 53% of students with disabilities who enrolled for the first time in higher education graduated within 5 years. In comparison students without disabilities graduated at 64%. Some of the obstacles to graduation mentioned in the article include a lack of support systems, role models, and access to technology. Other key obstacles include negative faculty attitudes and low expectations from faculty. The researchers also noted that the National
Science Foundation task force concluded that negative attitudes are the most significant barrier to students in higher education with disabilities (Changing America, 1989). While faculty attitudes are not expressly mentioned, it can be assumed that faculty play a very important role in student success at the post-secondary level.

The intent of Burgstahler et al. (2000) was to develop focus groups in order to facilitate the DO-IT project at the University of Washington, Seattle. DO-IT was developed to give knowledge and skills to faculty, teaching assistants, and administrators so that they could better serve students with disabilities at the university. Some focus groups also worked with students with disabilities in order to determine their perceptions and experiences. Questions and prompts posed to faculty and staff via 19 focus groups included the following:

- Describe your positive and negative experiences working with students with disabilities. Describe your familiarity with services on your campus which provide accommodations to students with disabilities and your level of satisfaction (if applicable) with these services.
- In which types of course/activities has it been especially difficult for you to provide appropriate accommodations?
- What is your understanding of legal responsibilities to accommodate students with disabilities?
- Have you ever heard of or been offered professional development opportunities to learn how to work with students with disabilities? Did you participate? What did it involve? How was it scheduled? Was it satisfactory?
- Tell me what you think faculty and teaching assistants need to know about working with students with disabilities. (pp. 2-3)

Questions and prompts posed to students with disabilities included the following:

- Tell me what you know about the services on your campus that provide accommodations to students with disabilities and describe your level of satisfaction with these services.
Describe the accommodations you have used and how you obtained them.

Tell me about the courses or activities where it has been the most difficult to obtain appropriate accommodations.

What is your understanding of the legal responsibilities of colleges and universities to accommodate students with disabilities?

Tell me about specific experiences, positive and negative, that you have had with instructors (e.g. professors and teaching assistants) regarding accommodation issues.

How could instructors become better prepared to include students with disabilities in their courses? What information would be most useful for them to have? (p. 3)

The 19 focus groups included 12 faculty groups, 6 students groups, and 1 teaching assistant group. The groups were comprised of 21 students with disabilities, 45 faculty and staff members, and 4 teaching assistants. The two primary variables addressed were problems concerning origination (students or faculty and organizational structure) and solutions used by the students, faculty, or located in support services.

Faculty responses to positive and negative experiences were varied and included such statements as the following:

- We all put it in our syllabi with the intent that the student will come to us and let us know what their needs are. If they don’t come to us, how do you broach the subject?

- My experiences have been nothing but positive in the way they’ve interacted with me as a faculty member, and ease with forming accommodations for them...

- A lot of it was basically upon the student. I’ve had students that were absolutely wonderful and really added to the class and other students who were just very belligerent. (p. 4)

Responses to activities that were difficult to accommodate for included the following:
One thing that is difficult involves reading software used in my lab, particularly with a student with a vision impairment of a student possibly with epilepsy where the words flashing trigger a seizure.

Remote TV production is really tough for students in wheelchairs. We have a semi truck that we use to tape on location and when we purchased it and purchased it used, we tried to find one that had a ramp on the back like a U-Haul style ramp which interestingly enough is one inch too narrow for the narrowest of wheelchair wheels. (p. 5)

Concerning legal responsibilities, faculty responded as such:

- I just go by whatever form we get from the Disabled Student Services office.
- My approach is just to follow your orders. Whatever you guys say I’ll do to the best of my ability.
- I know that we are legally obligated to provide accommodation ‘within reason.’ I think it is the ‘within reason’ that is ambiguous. For some of us in the math department, should we be waiving all math requirements for someone who has a math handicap? (p. 5)

Support services received the following responses:

- I have had a lot of support from the DSS (Disabled Student Services) office. I don’t think they are funded well enough. They can’t be doing a lot of things they ought to be doing, and they know that. I have not had anything but respect for them and positive experiences.
- No familiarity. No opinion.
- Institutionally, I think our university has done an absolutely abysmal job of planning for access for disabled students. (p. 6)

Professional development opportunities were viewed to be rare and generally unhelpful. Faculty also responded that they just did not have enough time to attend such meetings. They also lamented that such sessions generally were not organized very well and lacked good information or good timing. Convenience was listed as a major determining factor for attendance at any support or information meetings that could be planned.
Student responses to the focus group questions were varied as well. Concerning knowledge of and satisfaction with disability services on campus, the students had the following comments:

- **Professors often don’t make their web pages available to screen readers.**
- **Well, you’re really good about everything except for books on tape. This past semester, I’m still waiting on books...**
- **I’ve used five or six accommodations and have been overall satisfied.**
- **If you try to get extra time on quizzes, you miss lecture.** (p. 10)

Of particular interest are the student responses to questions about their experiences with faculty and their perceptions of faculty attitudes:

- **I’ve had numerous professors that go out of their way.**
- **A lot of profs think it’s [learning disability] an excuse; they don’t understand you need extra time.**
- **A bad experience is when a professor brings it up in front of the whole class. It is disrespectful. I've had LD [learning disability] since the second grade, so I am used to it. I gave the letter to the professor in the hallway before class. He sat down in front of class and then read the letter out loud, looking at me, in front of this class of 35-40 people.** (p. 11)

Unfortunately, experiences such as these are not confined to one particular university or to one particular group of professors. As discussed in articles presented earlier in this review, some academic departments have faculty who are perceived as being more supportive of students with disabilities and some deem age and experience with the population as a determining factor in faculty attitudes. Direct quotes help to capture both the attitudes of the faculty and the frustration and concern of the students.

Murray, Lombardi, Wren, and Keys (2009) examined the relationship between prior disability-focused training and faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities. The
researchers primarily examined faculty attitudes towards students who had learning disabilities, who were reported to have lower 4-year university attendance rates compared to students with speech, hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments. Supports (in form of programs and faculty) are attributed to the attendance, success, or failure of students with disabilities.

The study found that faculty members who had attended disability-focused workshops or training displayed significantly more positive attitudes than those faculty members who had informal disability-related training. The researchers also found that multiple forms of training and extended duration training also led to more positive attitudes towards students with disabilities. Faculty members who had no training had the least positive attitudes towards students with disabilities.

Murray et al. admit that a causal relationship among the research participants is hard to determine because faculty members who have more positive attitudes are more likely to attend disability-related training workshops in the first place. Required training may have the ability to produce more accurate data. However, the findings of this study, which represents one of only a few that attempt to examine the connection between training and attitude, are promising.

Success Factors for Students with Disabilities

Pingry (2007) in a dissertation entitled Factors that Predict Graduation among College Students with Disabilities studied the records of 1,289 postgraduation students at three Midwestern universities. Environmental factors associated with the postsecondary experience were found to be associated with student success. According to Pingry those factors could affect student graduation rates even more than students’ disabilities. Paul (1998) also acknowledged that students with disabilities faced additional attitudinal and physical barriers when compared to students without disabilities. Another study by West et al. (1993) surveyed students with
disabilities about the barriers they face. Students reported that a lack of understanding from university faculty and staff was a significant barrier. Other researchers listed throughout this chapter include Hill (1996), West et al. (1993), Neal (1992), Nelson (1993), and Junco (2002). All reported a correlation between positive faculty attitudes and student success.

Pingry (2007) attributed student happiness and success to positive faculty attitudes but also acknowledges that the more articulate and precise a student is in asking for accommodations the more likely the faculty will strive to meet the needs of the student. However, it is noted that faculty can be very subjective in this process based upon perceived academic freedom. Self-advocacy skills on the part of the student and the aid of the campus Disability Services office may be necessary to resolve any conflicts (Farbman, 1983).

Malakpa (1997) studied the problems associated with admission and retention of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities were found to face an inordinate number of problems compared to students without disabilities. Physical access was determined to be one of the most limiting factors. Architectural and environmental barriers such as campus terrain, crowded classrooms, poorly designed disabled parking spaces, and inaccessible services (library shelves too high etc.) are but a few of the challenges faced by postsecondary students with disabilities.

However, Malakpa listed the negative attitudes of faculty members as being the third most significant barrier to student success, after accessibility problems and lack of available supportive services. Malakpa suggests that negative attitudes towards students with disabilities are more prominent at larger universities where there is less connection among students and faculty. Negative attitudes are also ascribed not only to faculty members but fellow students as well. Chew, Jensen, and Rosen (2009) addressed this phenomenon more recently with their study of college students’ attitudes toward their attention-deficit, hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) peers.
The research garnered from that study indicated that students who had more frequent contact with students with ADHD had more positive attitudes. However, students with ADHD were, overall, described with more negative adjectives than positive adjectives. It must be noted, though, that the *Community Attitudes Toward Mental Illness (CAMI)* was used as the survey tool for data collection. ADHD is not a mental illness; therefore, the nature of the survey tool may have negatively impacted the results.

*Student Perceptions of Faculty Attitudes*

There is limited research into the area of student perceptions of faculty attitude. Barnard-Brak, Lechtenberger, and Lan (2010) noted in their study of successful college students with disabilities that the students had similar strategies that may account for their success. Of particular note is that those successful students were effective at both negotiating accommodations with faculty and downplaying their disability status. While this study may also fit under the previous subsection that deals with success factors, the unique and alarming strategies presented by successful students demands that the perceptions of these students take precedence.

Barnard-Brack et al. (2010) interviewed five students at a southwestern university. These students represented both undergraduates and graduate students and had a variety of visible and invisible disabilities. The overall impression of the students was that while “each case is different” considering faculty willingness to accommodate, faculty members generally do not understand the experiences of students with disabilities. For that reason, students tend to develop personal yet informal scripts to use when speaking with faculty members about their disabilities. Some students employ these scripts to share information about their unique disabilities, while others use the scripts to simply ask for what accommodations they need. One student who limits
what information he shares with professor said they he does so because in his experience faculty members do not want to know much about the disability and appear to become uncomfortable when detailed information about the nature of the disability is shared.

The researchers note that it has been reported that most students with a disability can relate an instance of a faculty member reacting negatively to an accommodation request however only 1 student in 10 has reported the instance to official channels of the university. Students lamented that noncompliance on the part of the faculty member can have no positive effects. Worries of being “outed” and “blackballed” along with being labeled a “troublemaker” were voiced by at least two of the survey participants.

Downplaying one’s disability status is another strategy that students preferred in their interactions with faculty members. All of the participants in the study said that they would not share their status as a student with a disability if they did not need to have academic accommodations. One of the students explained the reasoning behind his decision as being related to the stigma associated with have a disability. Society tends to devalue persons who have or who are considered to have a disability. Thus, the ADA goes so far as to offer protection not only to people who have disabilities but also to those who are perceived to have disabilities.

Barnard-Brak et al. (2010) presented a unique view into student perceptions. The findings should be seriously considered when attempting to understand the experiences of this group of students as presented in other studies and in this dissertation. The assumption that the students in this study felt a need to both negotiate with their professors and protect themselves from negative consequences implicates faculty members in general for being discriminatory and inexperienced. University administrations must take action to correct these issues.
Denhart (2008) studied the perceptions of college students with learning disabilities (LDs). In attempting to do so Denhart interviewed 11 students at two colleges in the Pacific Northwest. According to Denhart’s research college students with LDs tended to be misunderstood, needed to work or study harder than students not labeled LD, and were required to seek out strategies for success. Being misunderstood can occur on both an internal and external level for students with LDs. For example, students with LDs complained that their professors considered them to be intellectually inferior. However, the students themselves also reported that they often felt that they were stupid or that their teachers or fellow students would discover them to be “frauds.” Much of this low self-esteem may be attributed to negative experiences from both early education (labels, peer pressure, etc.) and postsecondary education (faculty attitudes). No matter the cause the effects of negative experiences result in students with disabilities attempting to hide their disability and tending not to request accommodations.

Paradoxically, even though students with LDs are labeled as being lazy, they oftentimes spend double or triple the amount of time compared with students without disabilities on their studies and homework. A study by Lock and Layton (2001) found that some professors believe students with LDs use their disability as an excuse to get out of work. Students have also reported that professors have labeled them as ineffective in their chosen areas of study. Denhart reported that an engineering student divulged that she was labeled “dangerous” after she disclosed her disability and requested accommodations. The student also described attempts by the faculty to remove her from the major and from the department.

Another student in the study described interactions with a professor who later complained the student was “arrogant” when the student remained silent. After the intervention of the campus LD specialist who explained that the student was reserved due to previous negative
experiences, the professor understood and regained a positive impression of the student. The student described his response by saying, “I don’t talk much at all. And I definitely don’t talk under pressure, in class….I just like, freeze up.” Another student lamented that she, too, experiences similar effects: “I had these great things to say, but they just never came out right.”

Overcoming the learning barriers presented by LD are just as important as overcoming the barriers presented by faculty attitude. While the former may be combated by self-knowledge and self-advocacy, the latter is something that may only be overcome with disability awareness and the help of university administration. Each of the barriers must be given consideration in order to foster the success not only of students with LDs but also students with any disability.

**Laws Related to Disability and Recent Case Law Rulings**

Several disability laws affect faculty and students in higher education. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990, July 26) had a significant impact upon the services provided to students. These laws in particular allow for access. Access can be defined not only as physical access—e.g. curb cuts, elevators, lever handles on doors, etc.—but also as the access offered through academic accommodations.

For many students with disabilities the transition from the K-12 education environment to higher education has been made even more difficult because of the change in disability law that occurs once students complete their secondary education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) covers students during the K-12 experience and promotes success. Students who receive services under IDEA often experience a greater level of accommodation compared to what is offered under the laws governing higher education. Understanding these laws is helpful to any researcher who is studying student perceptions concerning accommodations.
When students feel that their rights have been denied lawsuits can emerge. Recent
disability case law decisions are discussed in *Disability Compliance for Higher Education*.
Denial of accommodations can be one of the claims that students present to the Office for Civil
Rights or to a lawyer. Case rulings depend on whether the student can prove that he or she was
denied accommodations. Under Section 504 a university cannot deny participation in a
university program. This equal opportunity requires that accommodations and aids be put into
place. Students are responsible for showing the necessity of accommodations, but once
determined faculty members cannot deny these accommodations. For example in the court case
“Letter to: Western Illinois University,” No. 05-06-2039, university officials sided with the
student in acknowledging that a professor denied accommodations. Training was used to inform
the professor of the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities. *Know These
Cases!* is another text that covers some of the most important case rulings concerning disability
law in higher education. These cases include *Southeast vs. Davis*, *Amir v. St. Louis University,*
and *Wynne v. Tufts University School of Medicine*. Each of these cases offered significant rulings
that still serve as the precedent in offering services and accommodations to students with
disabilities.

**Conclusion**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offered accessibility to both the job market and
institutions of higher learning to people with disabilities. Students took advantage of these laws
and steady increases in enrollment of students with disabilities have taken place in the decades
since the law was enacted. The ADA furthered accessibility in various areas including public
transportation and communications. The ADA-AA has also played a significant role in
redefining the rights of people with disabilities. Each of these laws serves directly to bolster
student attendance and success of students with disabilities in higher education. Students are offered protection and equal rights at institutions that receive federal funding; they can access public transportation in order to travel to campus; and accommodations that are reasonable are arranged.

However, the growing number of students entering institutions of higher education due to these laws resulted in a wave of concerns and research. The problems and experiences of these students were addressed on multiple levels. National and international researchers have sought to address faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities. Some of these researchers have taken a more focused approach with studies done within a specific state or even university (and such is the case with this dissertation). Other researchers have focused upon the experiences of students with specific disabilities (Chew et al. 2009, Lock & Layton 2001; etc.). Yet, other researchers have focused their studies on the types of support and programs available to students with disabilities.

The literature reviewed showed that faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities is of primary concern to many researchers. While attention to civil rights and changing societal perceptions have bolstered the movement to welcome all students regardless of disability into higher education, negative faculty attitudes have plagued efforts for student success at the postsecondary level. Some faculty simply refuse to provide or seem unwilling to understand the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities. Other faculty may exude negative attitudes based upon the medical and social models that dictate perception of people with disabilities. For example, the medical model associated with disability perception by people without disabilities describes a disability as something that is wrong with a person and requires fixing (Seelman, 2004). The social model associated with disability
perception describes a negative response by the nondisabled person that is grounded in fear of being like the person who is disabled; a tendency to generalize all disabilities into one group (i.e. the disabled); a vision of the ideal body (presented by the media, etc.); and ill-placed thoughts that disabilities are a kind of retribution for sin (Shreve, 2002). The degree to which the negative attitude pervades may be associated with the type of accommodation requested or the level of experience or interaction with students with disabilities that the faculty member has had.

Student perceptions are also important in determining student success in higher education. A growing body of literature attests to the many facets of this important topic. Students who perceive that a negative attitude exists on the part of the faculty member are less likely to persevere to graduation. The negative attitude of the faculty member, alongside the demands or barriers of presented by the disability itself, simply proves too great of an obstacle for the student.

However, certain factors can increase the chances for success for students with disabilities. Support programs, self-advocacy training for students with disabilities, and efforts to increase faculty understanding of disability and disability accommodations are all notable ways to make higher education more accessible and student success more likely. The degree to which these services and partnerships should be fostered at ETSU will be determined.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This case study researched the attitudes of faculty members and students’ perception in providing academic and testing accommodations to students with disabilities at East Tennessee State University. A random sampling method was used to determine a group of students with disabilities to interview. Linda Gibson Director of Disability Services at ETSU aided in the selection of these students by allowing the researcher use of the database to pull undergraduate and graduate student email addresses in order to send an email request for volunteers (Appendix F). Random sampling was then used to narrow volunteers to the final group of six students for interviewing. An online survey using a Likert scale for attitudinal questions was created in QuestionPro online survey software. A peer review of the online survey was done for critique and improvement. Feedback and changes for improvement were applied to the survey. The survey was emailed to all ETSU faculty, including adjunct faculty, whose email addresses were available (Appendix G).

Design of the Study

A qualitative approach that included data from interviews and the addition of an online survey for further insight into attitudinal characteristics of ETSU faculty members was chosen as the best method for investigating the research topic. Interviews allowed for student participants to share information that was critically insightful to the study. This information could not have been gathered and analyzed to a comparable level in any other medium. In order to allow faculty confidentiality and freedom of expression, an online survey was constructed that did not request the names of participants, thereby giving confidentiality to responders. Each of these methods of
data collection allowed for the participant’s perspectives to shape the research findings. The
descriptive narrative that emerged from the findings gives great insight into the attitudes of
faculty members at ETSU concerning the provision of academic and testing accommodations.

**Participants in the Study**

In order to best serve the direction of this dissertation a random sampling method was
used to select a number of undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities from an email
response pool. The group consisted of three undergraduate students and three graduate students.
These students had a combination of visible and invisible disabilities. They can be defined as the
following:

1. Student one/ Undergraduate/ Male/ ADD

2. Student two/ Undergraduate/ Female/ Blind, using a guide dog

3. Student three/ Undergraduate/ Male/ Dyslexia

4. Student four/ Graduate/ Male/ Deaf

5. Student five/ Graduate/ Male/ Psychiatric Disability and Learning Disability

6. Student six/ Graduate/ Female/ Orthopedic Impairment

All students signed an informed consent document and agreed to answer interview
questions. These questions can be found in Appendix B. A peer auditor—an experienced
transcriptionist—was used to verify the accuracy of the transcription performed by me and
member checks were used to ensure that student answers were as intended. Pertinent themes that
arose among participants to particular questions were given consideration and are presented.
Group two consisted of ETSU faculty inclusive of the College of Medicine faculty and part-time faculty. This group was asked to complete an online survey via an email request. All faculty listed under “ETSU staff” in the OIT distribution list were contacted. This list was comprised of 1,293 members, according to OIT staff member Dwight Brown. Executive Aides in each of the departments on campus were also contacted via email and requested to provide part-time staff members’ email addresses. Many executive aides responded that part-time staff were on the distribution list or that they preferred not to be contacted via email. Thirteen additional email addresses were attained from executive aides for a total of 1,306 faculty that were emailed.

The online faculty survey was created in QuestionPro online survey software. A copy of the survey questions can be found in Appendix A. These questions surveyed faculty about background and policy knowledge, attitudes towards classroom accommodations, and attitudes for testing accommodations. Suggestions from faculty were also sought. The survey was sent out via mass distribution on January 21, 2010. The survey was closed on January 31, 2010. A total of 146 faculty members began the survey, with 121 completing it, thereby generating an 82% completion rate of those beginning the survey. An overall completion rate of 9% of faculty occurred. Themes that arose from the faculty responses to the online survey are presented.

Figure 1 offers a visual representation of the participation statistics of faculty.
Figure 1. Faculty Participation in Online Survey

Student Interviews

Each interviewee offered a personal story that enabled me to gain insight into the research topic. Linda Gibson, Director of Disability Services at ETSU, and I have each met and been contacted by students who have used accommodations at ETSU. I knew of several students who had expressed both concerns with and appreciation for the way their professors had reacted when asked to provide accommodations. She knew of several as well. However, in order to obtain a random sampling, two email messages were created. One email message was sent to registered undergraduate students, and one email message was sent to registered graduate students. This was done to vary the students and, hopefully, the possible experiences reported by them. Random sampling allowed for six diverse candidates (both undergraduate and graduate and a range of disabilities) to emerge from willing volunteers. I decided to approach those students...
students with an invitation to interview. Interviews were conducted in neutral locations on campus (outside of the Disability Services office and not in close proximity to any faculty offices).

*Interview Script*

My interview questions were developed so that students could offer varying levels of description based upon their comfort levels. Having worked with students with disabilities for several years (2001-2003; 2007-current) I am aware that students have different views about their disabilities, their abilities, societal perceptions, and other factors. The questions I have constructed stem from my professional experience with these students and the focus of my research. The questions were peer reviewed. Students were informed that their responses would be kept confidential. A peer auditor was used in the transcription process.

*Online Survey*

In order to structure the online survey in an organized manner, I developed questions based upon four categories: Background and Policy, Classroom Accommodations, Testing Accommodations, and Suggestions. In my experience in working with students with disabilities I have oftentimes acted as a liaison between students and professors. My experience in this role has been mostly positive. However, I am aware that due to my position the professors may have been responding to my suggestions or questions in a manner that would be affected by their perceptions of my support of students with disabilities or of my work in advocating for students’ rights in the classroom. Often times this was related to classroom or testing accommodations. Thus, keeping in mind the benefits of using an ethical protocol, I wanted the online survey to come from an anonymous source. Constructing the survey in QuestionPro and sending the survey out through the ETSU faculty list served allowed me this anonymity.
**Online Survey Details**

The survey consisted of 24 response items and two comment boxes. The first 6 items of the survey (see Appendix A) served to gather data related to gender, rank, teaching experience, academic department, age, and experience in working with students with disabilities. Items 7-12 used a Likert scale to measure general knowledge of policies and attitude toward accommodations. Items 13-19 measured attitude specifically towards classroom accommodations. Items 20-24 measured attitude specifically toward testing accommodations. Statements related to providing accommodations to students with disabilities were used in conjunction with a Likert-type scale for items 7-24. Two comment boxes at the end of the survey allowed faculty to offer further comments and to give suggestions.

**Document Review**

Document review for this research project consisted of reviewing relative disability laws that offer protection to students with disabilities in higher education settings. Case law rulings were also researched. Documents that are in use at the Disability Services office were also reviewed: a “Reasonable Accommodations” booklet, the office pamphlet, and various forms. Student files were not reviewed at the suggestion of the ETSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Staff at the IRB suggested that I make every effort to separate my position as Assistant Director of Disability Services from my position as a researcher.

Case law related to disability offers insight into the current climate of disability rights. Each year LRP Publications compiles a yearbook of cases related to disability rights and higher education. These cases relate to access, employment, discrimination, etc. For the purpose of this study cases involving accommodations were researched. A variety of cases existed for the 2008
yearbook which was made available in 2009 and serves as the latest compilation. Court rulings indicated that faculty attitude played an important role in many of the claims. If a faculty member strived to provide an accommodation and verified that the accommodation had been put into place the law had been met. However, faculty members who denied accommodations were met with sanctions and a duty to begin providing accommodations regardless of whether they agreed that the accommodations were beneficial or necessary. It is not a faculty member’s decision to determine accommodations, rather he or she must provide the accommodation specified as being reasonable by the Disability Services office. Individual faculty members may also be sued apart from the university by students claiming denial of accommodations.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred from the use of three methods of research: interviews, an online survey, and document review.

Student Interviews

Students who agreed to participate in interviews were met at various locations on campus outside of the Disability Services office and not in close proximity to any faculty member’s office. This choice for a neutral location was made so that students were less likely to equate my position in Disability Services to the driving force for the research. Maintaining a physical distance from any faculty member’s office was done to keep interviewees comfortable with their responses. The interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder to ensure the accuracy of the responses. Those recordings were later transcribed so that interviewees could be quoted in the research findings. The decision to record the interviews rather than to take notes during the
interview was made so that the flow of conversation would not be impeded by the pauses caused from writing the interviewees’ responses.

**Online Survey**

The online survey was constructed in QuestionPro, a website that hosts surveys. QuestionPro offers efficient surveying tools that allow surveys to have a professional appearance and to be accessed easily through a URL. There are a variety of online survey hosting services on the internet, but QuestionPro was chosen for its growing reputation of being both dependable and user-friendly. As well, QuestionPro generates on-demand reports of data collected from survey responses. QuestionPro does not relay identifying information of respondents so anonymity is maintained. An online survey was chosen as a cost-effective alternative to a paper survey. Online surveys are also convenient for respondents, as very little effort is required to submit the responses. QuestionPro also offered report generation which made data analysis simple.

**Document Review**

Document review was used to gather information about disability law, case rulings, and documents used at Disability Services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was reviewed as was Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The American with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADA-AA) as well as other laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were also examined. The *Disability Compliance for Higher Education Yearbook* was used to research recent court cases related to disability law. Particular attention was given to cases involving student accommodations. Pamphlets and other documents used by the Disability Services office were
reviewed. These included the general office pamphlet and a “Reasonable Accommodations” booklet.

Data Analysis

Data analysis should organize all the data collected in order to make sense of what was learned (Glesne, 1999). Themes that emerged from the triangulation of data allowed me to use the constant-comparison method to better understand these results. A narrative and data results are presented alongside a commentary that supports the emergent themes.

Student Interviews

Interviews were transcribed, data were collected from the online survey results, and notes from the document review were analyzed. The transcription process for the six interviews took several hours. Common themes formed connections between the three methods of data collection. These common themes formed the background of the research findings. Interviews and the online survey results were central to the findings. Document review gave supplemental information about laws that aided in the overall research of the study.

After common themes were determined from numerous readings of the transcriptions, a system of categories was identified to allow for the constant-comparison method to be employed. Open and axial coding were also used in this method. Open coding is the initial coding stage where themes are selected for their value relation to the data. Axial coding uses a coding paradigm to find causal relationships among the themes. Themes that emerged included positive attitudes, negative attitudes, faculty characteristics, accommodation types, lasting effects, and success factors. Figure 2 offers a visual representation of the emergent themes.
Online Survey

Questions for the online survey were constructed within categories so that results could be examined for connections through a method of cross-tabulation. Themes related to faculty characteristics were cross-tabulated to determine whether any connections arose. The online survey, while producing a great deal of quantitative data, was essential to this qualitative study. In order to present the data collected in a streamlined and user-friendly manner, Likert-scale options, such as “strongly agree” or “tend to agree,” were sometimes combined to report the
results. For example, “34% of participants strongly agreed or tended to agree that…[denotation].”

Every effort was made to analyze and present the findings in an objective manner. A copy of the findings can be found in Appendix E.

Document Review

Documents chosen for review were analyzed in order to further understand the role of disability services in higher education. Readings were analyzed for their purpose and intent. All documents and literature reviewed support the disability rights movement. However, this angle of support did not impede the proceedings of this research.

A constant-comparison method was again used in order to pick up on prevalent themes such as accommodation type, faculty attitudes, and success factors. Each document reviewed provided further insight into the research goals of this dissertation. These goals included understanding the concerns and current climate in higher education for students with disabilities who were requesting academic accommodations.

Ethical Protocol and Establishing Trust

Several methods were used to establish trust within the research. Validity (both externally and internally) and reliability were of concern to the researcher. External validity is the validity of generalized inferences one makes during research. Trochim (1999) stated that a threat to external validity is how a researcher may be wrong in making a generalization. For example, a finding can never be truly proven but rather only argued. Validity, derived from the latin word for “strength,” relates to the strength of the inference or argument. Some qualitative research
equates external validity with transferability—the ability for research findings to be transferred to situations with similar characteristics (parameters and populations). Internal validity is based on causal inferences. The relationship between two variables should be realistically demonstrated if the research is valid. Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002) described three criteria for causal inferences:

1. The cause precedes the effect in time (temporal precedence),
2. The cause of the effect are related (covariation), and
3. There are no plausible alternative explanations for the observed covariation (nonpuriousness) (pg. 87)

There are many threats to internal validity. These include confounding, selection bias, maturation, repeated testing, instrument change, experimenter bias, diffusion, and regression toward the mean. I took precautions to avoid threats to the internal validity of the research. Making a vigilant effort to remain an objective researcher was one method used to preserve internal validity. I also adhered to the suggestions of the IRB in implementing a random sampling process to obtain interviewees so as to not have selection bias and skew the results.

Triangulation via the combination of in-depth interviews, the survey, and document review was employed during data analysis. To increase reliability, interviewees were asked to verify transcriptions of their interview responses. This method of member checks allowed the researcher to verify that responses were recorded accurately.

Due to the intrusiveness of qualitative research, ethical guidelines must be used to ensure the protection of research participants. At the behest of the IRB a random sampling method, as opposed to a purposeful sampling method, was used to determine interview participants. Interview transcriptions were secured and will be destroyed after completion of the degree.
Every effort was made to protect the identity of interview participants. Participants also signed an informed consent document. An online consent form was constructed within the faculty survey as well. IRB approval was gained for all areas of the research.

**Perspective of the Researcher**

During my years in working with students with disabilities, I have developed a concern for their fair treatment. I have a first-hand awareness of the prejudice that exists and that students must deal with in their everyday lives. It is my hope that my work in the Disability Services office at ETSU has alleviated the stress and frustration that some of these students have faced. It has also been my pleasure to witness the abilities of students with disabilities. The intelligence, creativity, insight, determination, and compassion that are oftentimes displayed by students with disabilities eclipses the expectations of society.

My role does not prevent me from objectively analyzing the data. I have reported the results obtained and offered an objective analysis. I have no personal benefit in whether faculty attitudes are perceived as being negative or positive. My first concern in undertaking this study was to arrive at an accurate understanding of the current state of faculty attitudes and student perceptions towards providing accommodations. These attitudes and perceptions may fluctuate over time and a variety of methods may be suggested to alleviate problems associated with the phenomena.

**Summary**

Because this was a qualitative case study, student interviews were necessary in order to garner descriptive responses about the phenomenon. A random sampling process was employed
to delineate my role as researcher from my role as Assistant Director in Disability Services. In an attempt to see the research topic from both angles (those of student and professor) an online survey for faculty responses was also constructed and a link was distributed by email. An online survey hosting site was used to offer a degree of anonymity in order to avoid skewness in the responses of the faculty. Document review aided in the research in offering background information related to student complaints associated with failure to receive access or accommodations at the postsecondary level. Efforts to ensure validity and reliability were made when conducting the research and analyzing the data. These included efforts to acknowledge and limit my bias as a researcher and triangulation.

Students with disabilities face multiple barriers. This study was essentially undertaken to make higher education more accessible to all students. However, the effort to better understand the campus climate at ETSU will benefit the entire community.
Chapter 2 offered insight into recent research studies involving faculty attitudes. Although those studies found various attitudes at different colleges and universities, no study of this topic had been completed at ETSU. Because Disability Services offices are a relatively recent higher education phenomenon, ETSU’s office has been in existence since 1993 and the local private schools King and Milligan College have only established offices within the last few years, it is important to gauge faculty attitudes in providing the accommodations that Disability Services determines to be reasonable. Studies have shown that teachers who have supported and thought favorably of their students have fostered success in those same students. Having supportive professors may be even more important for students with disabilities, as oftentimes this population lacks self-advocacy skills and has received mixed signals from society and the media. Rao and Gartin (2003) stated the importance of faculty attitudes in their literature review that compiled several studies of faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations and towards students with disabilities.

Faculty Attitudes from Student Perceptions

The research questions developed for this study focused on the attitudes of ETSU faculty members and student perception in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. The research questions are:

1. What are the attitudes of ETSU faculty about providing classroom and testing accommodations to students with disabilities?
2. Are the attitudes of ETSU faculty associated with gender, rank, discipline, age and experience?

3. What are the student perceptions of faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities?

These research questions acted as the driving force behind the student interviews and the faculty survey. Student interviews were conducted to allow for a rich narrative to accompany the results generated from the faculty survey. The interviews also allowed for the students’ voices to be heard.

**Student Interviews**

Students were asked a series of five questions in order to answer this research question. Question #1 of the student interview asked:

1. What has been your experience with faculty attitudes when you request accommodations in the classroom?

A range of responses were offered by students. Some students had an overall positive view of faculty attitudes while some reported incidences of negative attitudes. Responses offered insight into research question #1 that states:

What are the attitudes of ETSU faculty about providing classroom and testing accommodations to students with disabilities?

Each interviewee had a unique insight into the question because he or she has a variety of disabilities and personal experiences. For example, student interviewee #3 responded:
All of them have helped me to the best of their ability…all of the older ones [professors] have dealt with Disability Services before, that knew how, they…did exactly what I was requesting or exactly as far as their guidelines would allow…to…help me if they could. I’ve had a lot of faculty that would meet with me…a few that would tutor with me if that’s what I needed. They seem to have a legitimate interest in helping me get through college.

Other students echoed the sentiment of this student. Student interviewee #1 stated:

Usually it’s fine. I did it [requested accommodations] with Professor_______ the other day and she said I could go past what my paper [faculty accommodation form] said—my accommodations, which are to use a laptop on a test and she said I could use it in class also.

Student interviewee #5 mentioned some concern for the attitude of a faculty member but seemed to resolve the issue when his academic work showed his potential:

Attitudes have been generally favorable. On only one occasion, a professor seemed a little ambivalent, wanting to adhere to policy, though seeming to doubt my requiring the accommodations. I believe the attitude stemmed from the high quality of my work, which was common knowledge in the department.

While the response concerning faculty attitudes from student interviewee #5 offers room for debate, student interviewee #6 strongly relates an incident of encountering negative faculty attitude:

I will be very honest with you. I had a horrific experience with Dr._________ in Science. This class was a science core requirement for my major…It was the first time I had needed to request accommodations…[The professor] was very rude, very curt, and blatantly discriminatory when I went to [the professor’s] office to inquire about getting some extra time on the upcoming tests for the semester. In a nutshell [the professor] implicated, “those people who want accommodations are ridiculous.”

The student went on to say that she had filed a complaint with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) but that she never intended litigation. She simply wanted the professor to be reprimanded for the behavior. Whether that ever happened is unknown.
Student interviewees #2 and #4 shared stories that focused more on policy and experience of the faculty member in working with students with disabilities. Student interviewee #2 pointed out that while she has an obvious disability (blind and using a guide dog) the professor is adamant that the faculty accommodation form be presented in order to provide her with accommodations. She elaborates on her experience as she answers the question:

The attitudes seem somewhat misguided. That letter [faculty accommodation form] means everything, it seems. Without it, they are obligated to do nothing if they choose not to. That letter validates my disability…. Once the letter is given to them, they have been receptive to making accommodations and usually become easier to approach on these matters. There are two professors I have encountered who were distant about the matter of in-class accommodations. I dropped a course taught by one of these professors. With the other, after he was approached by the Disability Services office on my behalf, he became much more approachable and ready to listen.

Faculty members are correct in only providing accommodations to students who present the faculty accommodation form. The perception of this student may be somewhat influenced by the fact that the student has an obvious disability, yet she must produce a letter in order to formally obtain accommodations. Disability Services adheres to this procedure in order to follow guidelines that require all students to verify their disability by filing professional documentation with the office.

Student interviewee #4 makes light of inexperienced faculty dealing with his accommodation requests. He relates an episode that he implies occurs repeatedly in his academic career:

Some of them were a lot of the time…were surprised. It’s because when I first come in and ask for accommodations they just look at you like [makes dubious face]. They look at my body or they’re looking for what, you know…and…I say I need to have an interpreter and they go, “Oh! Really? You don’t look deaf.” And I have to add, “What does deaf look like?”…and they get quiet. They go, “Ok, sure. We’ll be glad…” It’s like after that they got caught or something.
The range of student responses can be indicative of the range of ETSU faculty attitudes, but it can also be indicative of the range of student perception. Students have dealt with various levels of barriers (both within and outside of the academic arena) based upon the nature of their disability. These barriers may have fostered a negative viewpoint on the part of the student. This particular student had a cochlear implant at early age and confided that he was taunted by other deaf students while attending Gallaudet University. Apparently, some deaf students took offense at another student who would willingly attempt to change his naturally deaf condition. This line of thinking is often common within the deaf community.

Question #2 of the student interview allowed the researcher to answer research question #3. Question #2 stated:

2. Do you feel that whether or not the accommodation is for testing or for the classroom affects the faculty member’s attitude in providing you with the accommodation? Why? Do you feel that the nature of your disability played a role in the faculty member’s attitude?

Again a range of responses came forth from the student interviewees. Some indicated positive experiences regardless of the category of accommodation provided, whereas others lamented the inexperience of faculty members in dealing with particular disabilities. Student interviewee #3 responded in this manner:

Not really. There’s some of them that have restrictions on their tests that don’t…you know they don’t want me to bring the test to Disability Services but they do allow me to bring someone from Disability Services to help me with the test…you know, under their supervision. And I understand that.

Student interviewee #1 echoed the same generally positive attitude but did point out the experiences of a fellow student with a visible disability:
I don’t think so, though I feel, um…I go to class with ________ (a blind student) sometimes…and I feel that some professors don’t quite know how to respond to her. And so, I have mild disability. But I feel like some people with major disabilities…they just don’t know how to react [to them] sometimes.

Student interviewee #4 also stated that the nature of his disability affects the attitude of the professor. And while interviewee #1 attributes the attitude to inexperience, interviewee #4 reported that attitude is a constant, no matter the disability, but that disability can cause a pitying attitude:

I mean, when they come into that room they’re still that person. They don’t come to the door with a different hat—you know a teacher—but they go outside and they are father, brother, sister, but they still got that human nature where, you know, you hear the word about disability and it comes down to [making sad faces and mimicking pitying actions toward the student]… “poor thing.”

Student interviewee #2 makes a clear statement about her beliefs regarding the nature of the disability affecting faculty attitudes:

I do believe that the nature of one’s disability certainly does play a role in the attitudes that are held by faculty members…I had one professor…I went to the first day of class she…handed out introduction cards. Students were asked to fill out these cards and hand these back in for her to review. She came to me and said, “Can you write?” I said, “Not with a pen, but yes, I do use Braille.” She grew quiet and walked away initially, not even asking if someone could help me fill in the card and certainly not offering her own services to help with this.

The student goes on to relate that after she progressed through the course the professor displayed a more supportive attitude towards her. By the end of the semester the professor stated that it had been a pleasure to have her in class. This situation mirrors the situation student interviewee #5 described in question #1. The question remains is that had the students not proven themselves academically would they still be met with a negative attitude.

Question #3 of the student interview helped the researcher to attempt to find a correlation between characteristics of faculty members and their attitudes. The question reads:
3. In your realm of experience are there typical characteristics of a professor (age, gender, rank, department, experience) that indicate to you what the professor’s attitude towards providing accommodations may be? Describe.

Three of the student interviewees seem to think that the characteristics do not play a role in indicating faculty attitude. Interviewee #6 reported that faculty of the science department are not particularly accommodating while the two other interviewees (student #3 and #4) state that older professors typically are more accommodating than their younger counterparts. Student interviewee #3 details his response:

The older professors seem to have a whole lot more ideas as far as how to help me…what will work for me.

Student interviewee #4 elaborates on his reasoning behind the same stance:

Younger people are more pushy—but in a good way. I mean they really care. You know you can be one-legged, three-legged, they’re still gonna say you can do it. Unless you can really, really prove—like bring a Dr.’s excuse you can’t do it. The older teachers…I don’t know what it is…But the older ones, like fairly close to my age, I say my leg hurts and they say, “I know what you mean. You just have a seat. We’ll have someone help you.”

Student interviewee #4 also touches upon gender differences in his remarks:

The female teachers are more motherly…But the young [teachers] can be a woman or a man. They push. I mean they don’t care. They care that you’re a student….They care, but if you’re in that class you’re supposed to do certain things like everybody else and you do it.

Characteristics as they relate to faculty attitudes will be presented during the analysis of the faculty survey results, as well. The findings generally support the perceptions of these two interviewees.

Question #4 of the student interview asked the following:

4. Has the attitude of a faculty member ever caused you not to request accommodations in that class or a future class? Why?
This question can be related to any of the research questions and was included primarily to show the influence that faculty members’ attitudes can have upon students and their potential for success. As stated in Chapter 2, some researchers have suggested that the most significant barrier to students in higher education is negative faculty attitudes (Changing America, 1989).

At least one student interviewee (#6) stated that the negative attitude of a faculty member caused her to stop requesting accommodations at ETSU:

This kept me from ever asking any other professors for any type of accommodations and left me feeling ashamed as if I should not tell anyone that I am in any way connected to the Disability Services [office] on campus.

Student interviewees #2 and #4 suggested that while they may have been met with negative attitudes at some point in their higher education career, they did not let it interfere with their requesting accommodations. Student #2 states:

I have always requested accommodations no matter what the attitudes of a faculty member have been. I need certain accommodations, and that goes without saying. At this time, I would never consider not requesting accommodations, but then, I have a visible disability that cannot be covered by various strategies to compensate for the disability.

Student interviewee #4 shares the same sentiment in requesting accommodations but goes further in relating a negative experience from another university he attended:

They [the professor] even told the interpreter, “You’re not coming in here.” They pointed and told them to go out the door. And the interpreter looked at me, and I looked at her. I shook my head no. I then said verbally, “She ain’t leaving.” And he looked at me and said, “We’ll deal with this after class.” And I go, “Yep, we will”…and after class…he said, “You talk so well, you don’t need an interpreter. I don’t think you’re really deaf.” And I said, “Well, I only know you’re an idiot.”

Student interviewee #1 suggested that his professors thought the accommodations may not be useful, but the student did follow up with the request:
I don’t think so [that the attitude of a professor has caused him not to request an accommodation now or in the future]...there are some that say…I probably won’t use it [the accommodations]...and sometimes I am just like...well I’d rather you just go ahead and sign it [the receipt form] and still take it [the faculty accommodation form].

Student interviewee #3 admits to not always using his accommodations, but said that he is to blame, not the attitude of a faculty member:

I don’t know that it was ever the attitude of a faculty member...when I first started taking classes here I would generally try to take the first test without assistance...after I failed a few tests ya’ll [Disability Services] got pretty adamant about me having help [accommodations] when I took tests...that wasn’t the attitude of the faculty, that was...me not wanting the help.

Interview question #5 most closely aligned with research question #4. The interview question queried students for their suggestions:

5. If you think faculty attitudes should be altered give a suggestion as to how this may occur. If you do not think they should be altered state why. How might faculty members better provide accommodations to you?

Multiple suggestions emerged from the student interviewees. Two interviewees (#4 and #5) suggested that faculty be better educated. Student interviewee #4 suggested a workshop series, whereas student interviewee #5 suggested a lecture. Another student interviewee (#6) stated that the attitudes of professors mirrored the attitudes of society in general. She lamented that laws had to be made to ensure that people with disabilities were protected and received needed services. This student interviewee suggested that stricter guidelines from ETSU’s Human Resources department would be the best method to change negative attitudes. Two interviewees (#2 and #3) responded to only the latter part of the question and suggested that professors can show support of students with disabilities by employing technology to a greater extent so that materials such as syllabi, readings, etc. are more accessible in a timely manner. Only one student (interviewee #1) saw no need for improvement.
ETSU faculty were emailed to request their participation in a survey designed to determine faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities. The 26-item survey is found in Appendix A. The survey items were arranged in categories including background and policy questions, classroom accommodation statements, testing accommodation questions, and suggestions and comments.

The email request for faculty to participate was sent on January 21, 2010, from the president’s office to all faculty listed under the mass email distribution list maintained by OIT. The survey was closed at midnight January 31, 2010. The number of faculty receiving an email request to participate in the survey was 1,306. Out of these, 146 began the survey and 121 completed the survey for a participation rate of 9%. While a higher response rate was desired and is more likely to be representative of a population, it is important to note that qualitative studies allow for a range of response rates. The University of Texas, Department of Instructional Assessment, lists 30% as an average response rate for online surveys (depending upon the way the survey is administered). Seven to 10 days of availability time for an online survey is also considered to be sufficient (University of Texas, 2010). One suggestion is that surveys be easy to read and complete. Twenty-six items do take several minutes to complete but the depth was warranted. However, what is more concerning to this researcher was the need to place the IRB informed consent document, which I consider to be in need of revision and streamlining, in the email request to participate in the survey. The length and wording of the document can have the effect of discouraging participation. A recommendation to address this problem is included in Chapter 5.
The survey began with background questions that were developed to determine the characteristics of responders. Female participants numbered 69 (57.5%) while male participants numbered 51 (42.5%). One participant did not respond to the question regarding gender. The overall make-up associated with rank of responding faculty members was varied. Nineteen percent of responders were full professors; 25% were assistant professors; 22.4% were associate professors; 12% were instructors; and 20.6% were adjunct instructors. One hundred sixteen responders answered the question. This information should be viewed in light of the faculty make-up at ETSU. According to Jack Sanders, Director of the Office of Institutional Research at ETSU, the following information shows the current ranks of ETSU faculty:

- Professors – 229
- Assoc. Professors – 211
- Asst. Professors – 243
- Instructors – 27
- Adjuncts – 313
- Lecturers – 38
- Non Standard Faculty (Post Retirees) – 9

Remaining 236: librarians, administrators, University School faculty, Veterans Administration faculty, additional adjuncts, College of Pharmacy part-time faculty, College of Medicine part-time faculty, etc.

(Email correspondence and phone conversation, May 19, 2010)

According to these numbers, the response rates for each responding rank can be reported as follows:

- Professors – 10% (23)
- Assoc. Professors – 12% (26)
- Asst. Professors – 12% (29)
Instructors – 50% (14)  
Adjuncts – 8% (24)

Thus, response rates on average seemed to be around 10%. Oddly, the instructors had a very high response rate. Therefore, I tend to think that the number of instructors may be greater than what was reported and may, therefore, encompass some of the remaining 236 faculty listed on the email distribution list. Another explanation may be the lecturers, who were not offered a rank selection, may have chosen instructor, which is the nearest equivalent rank. If that possibility is considered, that puts the response rate for instructors (and lecturers) at 19%, which seems more likely. There rates were analyzed to determine whether a connection to rank offered insight to response rates. Considering that some faculty are tenured while other are not could have ramifications on whether the faculty member felt at liberty to respond or whether he or she had the resources to respond. For example, many adjunct faculty lack designated office space that could have played a part in a lack of response. Likewise, many instructors wish to have their contracts renewed and may fear that their responses, even though confidential, could in some way negatively implicate the department. However, because these response rates are relatively equally distributed, outside of this possibly skewed occurrence with instructors, they likely do not offer any special insight into the overall analysis of data. However, if the data from instructors are not skewed, then there is an overwhelming response from this rank of faculty.

Responses related to teaching experience showed that about 44% had between less than a year to 10 years of teaching experience, whereas 50% had between 11 and 30 years’ experience. Only 6% of responders had more than 30 years of teaching experience. It must be noted that these categories encompass relatively large spans of years. However, the researcher determined the breakdown by considering the typical experience levels of faculty. Less experienced faculty
tend to fall in the 10 years or less range. Faculty having 11 to 30 years experience have gained much experience and are often considered to hold a level of expertise in both their academic fields and in classroom management. Faculty with more than 30 years of teaching experience are nearing retirement and offer a retrospective view of their careers. The detailed breakdown of these results is found in Appendix E.

The age of responders appeared to be balanced, with 44% being between 31 and 50 years of age and 45% being between 51 and 70 years of age. Responders aged 20 to 30 constituted 9% of survey responders. Fewer than 2% of responders were over the age of 70. Age, like experience, should be considered for its ramifications on a social and academic level.

Concerning experience in working with students with disabilities, 34% admitted “no” or “very little” experienced. 48% claimed “some experience,” while 17% claimed significant experience. Therefore, the experience levels of faculty constitute a diverse range. Experience in working with students with disabilities can be attributed to age, teaching experience, or any other related experience (family members, etc.). Cross-tabulation has been used to examine connections to these and the other characteristics discovered in questions 1-6 with the responses in items 7-24.

Survey items 7-12 used a Likert-type scale to determine attitudes related to statements based on background and policy. Background referred to the faculty member’s experience and knowledge of the benefit of accommodations to students with disabilities and policy referred to the faculty member’s knowledge of the general procedures and guidelines for working with students with disabilities at ETSU.
Most faculty members agreed that students must present a faculty accommodation form in order to get accommodations. Nearly 84% strongly agreed or tended to agree with that statement. Twelve percent tended to disagree or strongly disagreed, indicating that students may not be required to present the form in order to get accommodations.

Nearly 96% of faculty agreed that they were willing to make adjustments to their teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation. These adjustments could constitute a number of alternatives, but it is important to note that the objectives of the course must still be fulfilled with any alternative teaching or testing strategies. Often it is the expertise of the faculty member that is relied upon to create the alternative instruction or assessment.

Almost 86% of faculty members strongly agreed or tended to agree that they understood the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities. Less than 8% tended to disagree or strongly disagreed with the statement. However, even a number as small as 8% warrants an investigation into whether information or training about the necessity of accommodations might be necessary. Self-selection of survey respondents is also a concern and should be considered for its ability to skew the results.

When the statement of the necessity of accommodations was further defined as classroom accommodations and reworded to say these accommodations were necessary for student success, nearly 89% of responders agreed. However, when posed with the same statement concerning testing accommodations, the respondents answered nearly 10 percentage points less with 78% tending to agree or agreeing that testing accommodations were necessary for student success. The attitude divide between classroom and testing accommodations has been further defined by the survey.
When presented with the statement, “I sometimes question whether a student with a disability takes advantage of the accommodations provided,” nearly 43% tended to agree or strongly agreed. However, because several respondents later suggested that the question could have several meanings, the intended negative attitude of suspicion of students “taking advantage,” i.e. of the accommodation process, data are not used from the answers given for this question. This question may not offer any insight into the phenomenon because of this problem.

Survey items 13-19 sought to determine the attitude of professors towards providing classroom accommodations. Nearly 78% of responders were willing to help arrange for a volunteer note-taker in class for a student with a disability. This may mean making an announcement or helping to identify a potential candidate for taking notes. Nearly 97% of responders were willing to let a student record lectures, and the same amount were also willing to allow students a priority seating arrangement. As well, 97% of responders were willing to allow a sign-language interpreter into their class. Fewer responders were willing to provide lecture notes (75%). In order to help a hearing impaired student hear the lecture, 92% were willing to wear a microphone. And, if a student could provide his or her own laptop, then 94% of responders were willing to allow that student to use it for note taking or essay writing. Overall, the percentages suggest that ETSU faculty are quite willing to provide the classroom accommodations covered in the survey. It is important to note, however, that faculty were more willing to allow classroom accommodations when it required less additional effort on their part. For example, a faculty member does not need to do anything to allow a student to record his or her lectures. However, in order to help a student arrange for a note-taker a faculty member may have to make several announcements, approach possibly willing students, and funnel note-taker paper from the student with the disability to the note-taker.
Survey items 20-24 were used to determine faculty attitudes towards providing testing accommodations. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 tended to suggest that faculty were less likely to be favorable towards testing accommodations when compared to classroom accommodations. ETSU faculty attitudes align with those results.

Item #20 gauged faculty attitudes towards providing extended time on tests. Responses indicated that 85% of faculty tended to agree or strongly agreed that they were comfortable in allowing the extended time accommodation. Extended time at ETSU is considered to be double testing time. Other universities vary between time-and-a-half and double-time when defining extended time.

Over 92% of faculty reported that they were comfortable in allowing students to test in a low-distraction environment. Over 76% of these faculty reported that they were adequately prepared to schedule a test in a room designated as being low-distraction. Suggestions to alleviate this situation are presented in Chapter 5.

Fewer than half (47%) of responding faculty members reported that they were comfortable in altering an exam for a student; however, 87% reported that they were comfortable offering an alternate answer sheet. Altering an exam does take planning on the part of the faculty member, especially when planning to assess the same objectives as the original test. Providing an alternate—oftentimes enlarged—answer sheet helps students with fine motor skills or visual impairments to complete their tests. An accommodation of this type usually does not involve the same amount of planning.
Survey item #25 asked faculty members for suggestions for providing classroom and testing accommodations. Fifty of the participants responded to this item. Of those 16 voiced concern about arranging for a low-distraction room or extended testing time for a student needing those accommodations. This constituted the most frequent commonly-themed suggestion for this survey item. Most responders indicated that they felt the Disability Services office should be active in arranging these accommodations. For example, the following response was given:

We need a student disability testing center rather than forcing faculty to locate a distraction-free environment for a period of time longer than the class. Some faculty do not even have an office, let alone a separate space for students.

Another faculty member echoes this concern and makes the same suggestion:

Space in our building is limited. Some instructors have office space in a large room with cubicles. Adjunct faculty do not have an office or access to areas outside of the assigned classroom. Faculty do not have access to a distraction-free environment in our building. The university needs to provide and manage a secure testing area for students who need distraction-free testing.

Creating a university testing center was suggested by 6 of the 16 responders who had concerns about arranging for testing accommodations.

Seven suggestions left by faculty members concerned the need for information about the student’s disability or accommodation needs in order to best serve the student. Six responses concerned physical access on campus or at ETSU satellite campuses. These varied from lamenting that the desks in one classroom could not physically accommodate a student with a mobility impairment to the recent and ongoing problems with elevator outages at the main campus. Other comments expressed support of providing accommodations and a willingness to
consider accommodations on a case-by-case basis based upon the nature of the student’s disability.

Survey item #26 asked faculty what suggestions they had for the Disability Services office to improve accommodations. Fifty people responded to this item. Again, six responders said they needed help when arranging the testing accommodations of extended time and low-distraction rooms. However, a new concern came to light in this section. The need for help in arranging a note-taker for a student was acknowledged by five responders. However, the highest number of commonly-themed suggestions was requests for more communication and information related to providing accommodations. Professors want more information about specific disabilities and how to accommodate for them. Some responders stated that this information should accompany the faculty accommodation form while others stated that a workshop overview may be the best method of sharing general accommodation and disability information.

A connection of the responses is necessary to answer research question #2 that states:

2. Are the attitudes of ETSU faculty associated with gender, rank, discipline, age and experience?

Connection of Responses to Faculty Characteristics

Gender, rank, discipline, age, and experience were queried in the online faculty survey. The results have been discussed but the categories have not been connected to specific attitudinal statements related to background and policy, classroom accommodations, or testing accommodations. Cross-tabulation between these characteristics and statements from the three categories have been used to present results.
To begin the cross-tabulation examination of survey results, gender has been used as the first variable to cross-tabulate with the statements. An analysis of the results shows that both genders nearly equally responded to survey items 7-12 that concern background policy. Responses were within 2-3 percentage points except for five survey items. Results for item #7 reported that 77% of males compared to 87% of females strongly agreed or tended to agree that faculty forms must be presented in order to secure accommodations. A difference of 8 percentage points was noted for survey item #11, with 73% of males and 81% of females strongly agreeing or tending to agree that testing accommodations were necessary for the success of students with disabilities.

Gender was also examined for connections from responses related to classroom accommodations. Results were similar to the background and policy section with most statements varying between 1-3 percentage points based on gender. Three items had results with percentage point differences of 6-12 points. Fewer males (71%) than females (83%) strongly agreed or tended to agree to be willing to help arrange a volunteer note taker in class. However, more males (83%) than females (71%) strongly agreed or tended to agree to provide lecture notes. All responding females (100%) strongly agreed or tended to agree to provide a priority seating arrangement compared to 94% of males.

An association between gender and the provision of testing accommodations was also examined. Results showed that nearly the same percentage of female and male faculty strongly agreed or tended to agree that they were comfortable in allowing extended time on tests (F-85%; M-86%) and a low-distraction environment (F-92%; M-92%). A slightly lower percentage of females strongly agreed or tended to agree that they felt comfortable in arranging for a low-
distraction environment for students (F-75%; M-80%). However, the greatest divide between the genders is evident with survey item #23. Results show that only 37% of male faculty strongly agreed or tended to agree that they felt comfortable altering an exam compared to 49% of female faculty responders. As well, fewer male (84%) than female (91%) faculty strongly agreed or tended to agree that they felt comfortable altering the exam answer sheet for a student with a disability. Figure 3 offers a visual representation of the data.

Figure 3. Connecting Gender to Faculty Responses

A careful analysis and consideration of the role gender may play in attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities seems to indicate that slight variations do exist. However, with the largest divide of responses being 13 percentage points, gender does not seem to play a divisive role in this attitudinal survey. Yet, for those survey items where these
variations do occur, further investigation into why each gender responded differently may prove useful.

An association between rank and the answers to the survey items was also examined via cross-tabulation. Unique results emerged from the analysis. For example, 100% of instructors strongly agreed or tended to agree that students must provide faculty accommodation forms in order to secure accommodations. Yet, only 77% of full professors and 78% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or tended to agree with the same statement.

A high percentage of faculty strongly agreed or tended to agree that that they would be willing to make necessary adjustments to teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation. The detailed results of this survey item showed that 100% of both full professors and associate professors strongly agreed or tended to agree with this statement. Assistant professors (96%), instructors (93%), and adjunct instructors (87%) had similar but slightly lower percentages.

A variation existed for faculty who strongly agreed or tended to agree that they had a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations. While 95% of full professors agreed with that statement, only 71% of instructors did. Adjunct instructors were only slightly higher in this field with 78%. A variation also existed for faculty who strongly agreed or agreed that testing accommodations were necessary for student success. While 92% of associate professors and 86% of full professors agreed with the statement, only between 69%-71% of assistant professors, instructors, and adjunct instructors agreed.
Examining classroom accommodations with the rank of responders for possible connections yielded only slight variations in a few of the survey items. Notable differences existed in the survey item concerning willingness to arrange a volunteer note taker. Only 64% of instructors strongly agreed or tended to agree to with the statement. Another variation unique to instructors was that only 61% strongly agreed or tended to agree to be willing to wear a microphone in order to help accommodate a student with a hearing impairment.

When surveyed about willingness to provide lecture notes to a student, only 64% of assistant professors strongly agreed or agreed. Other ranks of faculty varied from 71%-85%, with associate professors ranking highest. Other classroom accommodation survey items did not have a significant variation in responses.

Survey items related to testing accommodations showed the most significant variation in one particular survey item. Only 14% of instructors strongly agreed or tended to agree that they felt comfortable altering an exam for a student. This was followed by 34% of assistant professors, 41% of full professors, 50% of associate professors, and 65% of adjunct instructors. When responding to being comfortable in making an alternate answer sheet for a test, only 64% of instructors strongly agreed or tended to agree. Figure 4 offers a visual representation of the data results.
Figure 4. Connecting Rank to Faculty Responses
Results from the examination of rank and responses shows that instructors, when compared to other ranks seem to be more hesitant in feeling comfortable in providing classroom and testing accommodations. Both adjunct instructors and instructors seem to express the most need for more information related to the necessity of accommodations. And, professors and adjunct instructors appear to need more information related to Disability Services policy requiring faculty forms in order to provide accommodations.

Survey responses were also examined for connections to discipline. In order to narrow the data to a usable amount, I focused on attempting to connect discipline to survey items that tended to produce the greatest amount of variation among responders. These were determined to be survey items #10, #11, #13, #15, #23, and #24. It is important to note that not all responders shared their discipline in the survey field provided.

After delineating discipline areas among responders, a careful analysis was done on each responder’s answers. Correlation results did not indicate a pattern among responders from any one discipline. Rather, faculty of different ranks tended to express some degree of attitudinal differences even within specific disciplines. This information is interesting because of the natural differences between the sciences and humanities or social sciences. For example, science courses typically involve labs and therefore faculty may need to employ a variety of accommodations to serve students with disabilities. As well, humanities or social science classes may involve more lecture and discussion and therefore students may need to use different accommodations than what they would in a biology course. However, no significant correlation could be found among discipline and attitude towards providing accommodations.
Results to survey questions were also examined for connections with the age of the faculty members. Categories for age were included to range from 20-30, 31-50, 51-70, and over 70 years of age. In order to better understand the statistics associated with the data generated it is important to note the number of respondents for each of these age categories. The 20-30 age category had 11 responders. The 31-50 age category had 52 responders. The 51-70 age category had 50 responders. The over 70 category had two responders; the over 70 category responses are included, but it can be easily understood that with so few responders the results may not be a true representation of this age category of faculty on campus.

An overall review of connections of age with responses indicated only slight differences in a few survey items. Of particular note is survey item #13, concerning willingness to help arrange a volunteer note taker. Age category 31-50 and age category 51-70 reported 77% and 79%, respectively, as strongly agreeing or tending to agree to that statement. Yet, 91% of the age 20-30 category participants and one of two of the over 70 category participants expressed a willingness to agree.

Only 80% of responders in the 20-30 age category were willing to wear a microphone, while responders in the other age categories varied in strongly agreeing and tending to agree with the ranges of 90%-100%. One possible explanation is that the teaching methodology for courses typically taught by newer or adjunct faculty has undergone a paradigm shift where group work and discussion is favored over traditional lecture. Therefore, more recently-trained faculty may feel that wearing a microphone is a moot point. However, it is important to point out that students with hearing impairments still need this accommodation even if it is only to hear the opening and closing instructions given by the teacher.
Another notable variant among the age categories occurred in survey item #22 concerning comfort in arranging a location for a low-distraction testing accommodation. Only 69% of participants aged 31-50 strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement. Responders in the 20-30 category and 51-70 category responded to the same statement at 82% and 85%, respectively. Figure 5 is a visual representation of the results.

Figure 5. Connecting Age to Faculty Responses
Age appears to play a slight but ultimately insignificant role in the attitudes of faculty. Inexperienced associated with age, lack of knowledge related to disability accommodations, or even the multiple commitments of faculty members’ teaching schedules may have influenced the data that emerged from this correlation. Knowledge and experience may be two solutions to answering and alleviating these variations.

Experience in working with students with disabilities was also examined for connections to the survey responses. Categories listed as “no experience,” “very little experience,” “some experience,” and “significant experience” characterized the responders. Cross-tabulation was used to reference the characteristic with each survey item.

Participants indicating “some experience” in working with students with disabilities were 48% while participants selecting “very little experience” were 27%. Only 8% of responders listed “no experience.” Those choosing “significant experience” were 17.5%.

A large variety of results were generated by the cross-tabulation of experience and each survey item statement. In order to narrow the results I focused on responders who strongly agreed with the survey item statements. This allowed me to get detailed information on each of the experience categories as they related to the statements.

Faculty who claimed “no experience” in working with students with disabilities produced generally weak percentage numbers in background and policy survey statements. Only 14% of faculty claiming “no experience” strongly agreed that testing accommodations were necessary for student success and that they had a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations. Just 29% of responders in this same experience category strongly agreed that students must
provide a faculty accommodation form in order to receive accommodations and that classroom accommodations were necessary for student success. However, faculty members claiming “no experience” held the highest percentage of those strongly agreeing to make necessary adjustments to teaching and testing strategies in order to provide and accommodation (71%).

Concerning classroom and testing accommodations, only 29% of faculty claiming “no experience” strongly agreed to be willing to provide lecture notes. The same percentage strongly agreed that they were comfortable in allowing extended time on tests. Only 43% strongly agreed that they felt comfortable in arranging a low-distraction testing locations. No one in this same experience category strongly agreed that he or she was comfortable in altering an exam.

Faculty members claiming “some experience” produced slightly higher percentages in these same areas. For example, 33% of faculty claiming “some experience” strongly agreed that testing accommodations were necessary for student success. And, 55% of faculty with “some experience” (compared with 29% of faculty with “no experience”) strongly agreed that a faculty accommodation form must be presented in order to receive accommodations. Faculty claiming “some experience” (48%) also purported to have a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations.

Concerning classroom and testing accommodations, slightly more faculty with “some experience,” compared to those with “no experience,” strongly agreed that they were willing to provide lecture notes as an accommodation (40%). Only 10% of faculty claiming “very little experience” strongly agreed that they were comfortable in altering an exam.
Faculty claiming “very little experience” expressed a lesser degree of comfort in arranging a low-distraction testing location than faculty with no experience (36% compared to 43%). Faculty choosing “very little experience” also expressed a lesser degree of comfort in allowing extended time (26% to 29%) and in offering an alternate test answer sheet (48% to 86%) when compared to those pronouncing no experience.

Faculty choosing “some experience” produced slightly to significantly higher percentages compared to their coworkers claiming “no experience” or “very little experience” in their responses to survey statements. Only four survey items produced lower percentages for this experience group. These items were in willingness to allow a sign-language interpreter (88%), willingness to arrange a volunteer note-taker (59%), comfort in offering an alternate test answer sheet (67%), and willingness to make necessary adjustments to teaching and testing strategies (70%).

Faculty claiming “significant experience” generally did not produce the highest percentage numbers, as might have been expected. Instead the percentages tended to be slightly lower than those for faculty claiming “some experience.” Any number of reasons could exist for this but a degree of temperance influenced by experience may be a plausible explanation. Or, the fact the faculty were allowed to self-identify their own level of experience could also lend itself to discrepancies in the results. For example one faculty member who has accommodated a few students over several semesters and felt somewhat comfortable in doing so may claim “significant experience,” whereas another faculty member who has accommodated many students over many years may only feel that they have “some experience” in working with students with disabilities. The only survey statement where faculty claiming significant
experience strongly agreed at a higher percentage than those claiming some experience was item #9, which concerns having a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations (76% compared to 53%). Figure 6 can be used to refer to the data results.

Figure 6. Connecting Experience to Faculty Responses
Summary

The responses from students and faculty suggest that some of the perceptions of students are supported by the data reported by faculty concerning attitudes towards providing specific accommodations and reported knowledge of background and policy. For example, interviewees #1 and #3 perceived an overall positive experience when dealing with faculty. The data generated from the faculty survey support a generally positive attitude towards providing accommodations. However, perceptions that focused on specific details were not always supported by the data. On page 66, interviewee #4 indicated that he believed that faculty who were older were more apt to be accommodating towards students. However, the data generated by the faculty survey indicated that age is linked to only slight variations in attitudes towards providing accommodations. Other perceptions indicated by students were also not supported by the data. Interviewee #6 indicated that a science professor was very unaccommodating towards her. However, data from the online survey could find no connection between academic discipline and faculty attitude.

In considering the data generated by the online faculty survey it is important to note that a few particular accommodations do seem to generate a more negative attitude from faculty members. These include arranging a volunteer note-taker, altering an exam, offering an alternate test answer sheet, and arranging a low-distraction room. Plausible reasons for the attitude results for these accommodations could include lack of willingness to exert the effort needed to meet the accommodation, lack of training on techniques to adequately make the accommodation without fundamentally altering the objectives of the course, and a lack of physical resources (rooms, etc.) needed for the accommodation.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Students with disabilities constitute approximately 6.5% of the student population at ETSU. Due to their disabilities their experiences on campus are unique. My work in the Disability Services office on campus has introduced me to these students and to their stories. Ultimately, the experience of students is intertwined with their interactions with faculty. My focus on faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations allowed me to narrow my field of research in order to better understand the current campus climate. As seen in Chapter 2, several studies of faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities have been completed at other universities and even in comparison studies between American and Mexican faculty. This study comprises the first research into this subject at ETSU.

Students with disabilities rely on academic accommodations in order to have the necessary adjustments that compensate for the nature of the disability. Students with disabilities receive federal protection granting them the rights to these accommodations under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and through the Office of Civil Rights. Unfortunately, societal perception has negated the necessity of these accommodations. People who are not aware of the necessity of accommodations run the risk of considering adjustments to be privileges. Unfortunately, this is one characteristic of discrimination based on disability.

Faculty are not immune from practicing disability discrimination. My interactions with students have made me privy to stories of blatant and latent injustice. Higher education is often
referred to as the “ivory tower.” Several interpretations of this phrase are possible, but a common interpretation is that the noble pursuit of higher learning occurs in a utopian environment. Progressive movements for human rights and other democratic causes in modern history have oftentimes originated on college campuses. It is unfortunate that a minority group such as students with disabilities has not received a satisfactory level of support.

My interest for this study was to determine the current climate on the ETSU campus as it relates to the attitudes of faculty members in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. My three research questions served as the parameters to my study. A narrative emerging from student interviews was analyzed alongside data collected from an online faculty survey. Responses to the survey were further examined for connections via cross-tabulation with faculty characteristics. Results from this study will be used to further disability awareness on campus, extend information related to disability law and accommodations to faculty members, and make a recommendation for a campus testing center that offers accommodations.

Summary of the Study Results

Research Question #1

What are the attitudes of ETSU faculty about providing classroom and testing accommodations to students with disabilities?

The driving force behind this study initially began with this question. Determining the attitudes of faculty members hinged on several factors. First, a survey that categorized questions needed to be constructed. Second, a scale for determining the attitude needed to be chosen. And third, faculty participation was necessary to garnering reliable data to analyze. After consulting
the surveys of other faculty attitude assessments reviewed in Chapter 2, I developed a 26-item online survey to assess ETSU faculty attitudes. A Likert scale was used for its recognition as an attitudinal survey tool. After the survey was created in the online software QuestionPro, I constructed an email with the informed consent form and a link to the online survey. ETSU administration allowed me to send this email to all ETSU faculty members. The survey was opened on January 21, 2010, and closed on January 31, 2010. At the end of 10 days, 121 surveys were completed, constituting a 9% response rate from faculty.

Student interviews were conducted alongside the online faculty survey in order to garner a rich narrative of first-hand experiences and student perceptions of faculty attitudes. Six undergraduate and graduate students with a variety of visible and invisible disabilities offered their responses. These narratives allowed this study to have a unique glimpse into the experiences of ETSU students with disabilities.

The results of the online survey indicate that the responding faculty members generally have a positive attitude towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities. However, several survey items suggest that more knowledge, experience, and support is needed among faculty members. Overall, responding faculty tended to have a less positive attitude or be less willing to accommodate students for certain academic adjustments. For example, one of the key results indicated that faculty are generally not willing to accommodate a student by altering a test. Faculty also appear to be less willing to provide lecture notes and arrange for low-distraction testing locations when compared to providing other accommodations. Results tend to indicate that some faculty are less willing to accommodate based upon the amount of effort needed to meet the accommodation. Helping students find note-takers within the classroom also
seems to present a problem. Apparently faculty members view the effort to be difficult. Arranging a low-distraction environment takes planning and coordinating. Wearing a microphone takes some effort to set-up and attach but is not as complicated as expected. Faculty training should increase understanding of the effort involved in providing accommodations and therefore increase the willingness of professors to accommodate students. Figures 7 and 8 offer a quick reference to statistical percentages generated.

Figure 7. Faculty Willingness to Provide Classroom Accommodations (in percentages)
Research Question #2

Are the attitudes of ETSU faculty associated with gender, rank, discipline, age, and experience?

Cross-tabulation was used to examine connections from survey responses to gender, rank, discipline, and experience. Results were varied. Concerning gender, responses to all except five survey items were within 2-3 percentage points. These five survey items reported that females strongly agreed or tended to agree to a greater extent than males that faculty forms must be presented in order to secure accommodations. Also, a greater percentage of females strongly agreed or tended to agree that testing accommodations were necessary for the success of students with disabilities. Fewer males than females strongly agreed or tended to agree to be willing to help arrange a volunteer note taker in class. However, more males than females strongly agreed or tended to agree to provide lecture notes. All responding females strongly agreed or tended to
agree to provide a priority seating arrangement compared to males. The differences between genders for those five items were less than 15 percentage points in range for each.

Results from the association of rank and responses shows that instructors when compared to other ranks seem to be more hesitant in feeling comfortable in providing classroom and testing accommodations. Both adjunct instructors and instructors seem to express the most need for more information related to the necessity of accommodations. And, full professors and adjunct instructors appear to need more information related to Disability Services policy requiring faculty forms in order to provide accommodations.

Connecting discipline to faculty responses did not yield any clear significance. Efforts were made to track individual responses with cross-tabulation of reported discipline. No pattern of responses could be established for faculty members claiming a specific teaching discipline. Thus, the discipline of responding ETSU faculty members does not appear to play a role in attitude towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

Age appears to play only a slight but mainly insignificant role in the attitudes of faculty. Inexperience associated with age, lack of knowledge related to disability accommodations, or even the multiple commitments of faculty members’ teaching schedules could influence the data that emerged from this correlation. Knowledge and experience may be two solutions to this problem. Student interviews also produced narrative where at least two students suggested that older faculty members tend to be more apt to provide accommodations or understand the nature of the disability at hand.
Experience also seems to play a minor role in faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations. Overall faculty claiming “some experience” or “significant experience” in working with students with disabilities most often strongly agreed to be willing or comfortable in providing accommodations. One notable variation in this pattern was that faculty claiming “significant experience” often strongly agreed to a lesser percentage than those claiming “some experience.” My own interpretation of this information is that faculty members who claim “significant experience” may temper their replies with a degree of caution.

The results of this study tend to mirror the results of the Vogel et al. study (1999). In that study faculty responses were correlated with gender, age, rank, and experience. Experience was the only category that indicated significance as a factor that affected attitude.

Research Question #3

What are the student perceptions of faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities?

Student perceptions of faculty attitudes are varied. This was a likely result and perhaps speaks to the validity of using the random sampling method for interview participants. Had the results shown entirely negative or entirely positive perceptions, an investigation into whether they were skewed would have been in order.

Two students (interviewees #1 and #3) expressed generally positive perceptions. Student interviewees #2, #4, and #5 expressed mixed sentiments based upon the questions. Student interviewee #6 expressed overwhelmingly negative perceptions of her interaction with faculty. The details of their perceptions and responses have been thoroughly presented in Chapter 4.
The results of this research study aligned with some studies covered in Chapter 2. The results of this study mirrored the results of Vogel et al. (1999) with faculty in both studies being least willing to alter exams. As reported in Chapter 2 Rao (2004) connected faculty characteristics with survey responses. Rao reported that earlier studies into this area showed that gender was significant, with females displaying more positive attitudes than males. However, Rao reported that age had no effect on faculty attitude. Experience had an effect, with more experience leading to more positive attitudes. Only one study (Fonosch & Schwab, 1981) reported that rank influenced attitude, with full professors and instructors having less positive attitudes than associate or assistant professors. However, Rao reported that studies indicate a significant correlation between faculty attitude and discipline, with education and the arts yielding more positive attitudes among faculty than the sciences. Results from this study suggest that responding ETSU faculty may have slightly different correlations with age playing a more significant role and discipline not playing a role in faculty attitudes.

Barazandeh’s (2005) study indicated that prior experience with students with disabilities and more information about how to accommodate students with disabilities had led to more positive attitudes on the part of faculty members. Therefore, no matter the cause or correlation, results that indicate a degree of hesitation in willingness or comfort in attitude towards providing accommodations may be remedied with training or knowledge. Students themselves have reported that a lack of understanding from university faculty was a significant barrier (West et al., 1993).
Smith’s (2007) thesis, like this study, reported overall positive attitudes in providing accommodations by faculty at a 4-year university. And Pingry’s (2007) dissertation study attributes a great deal of student happiness and success at the postsecondary level to faculty attitudes. However, one important note that Pingry included was that self-advocacy and precise articulation on the part of the student when asking for accommodations played a significant role in faculty attitude. Although that topic was not addressed in this study, recommendations for practice can include a method to address this issue.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

I recommend that further research be conducted as follows:

1. Further research should be conducted to examine the perceptions of students with disabilities who attend other institutions of higher education in Tennessee and nationwide.

2. A comparative study examining faculty attitudes and student perceptions in 2-year and private colleges and universities should be undertaken.

3. A follow-up study should be conducted that examines faculty attitudes and student perceptions in providing accommodations to students with disabilities using an in-depth interview method.

4. Further research should be conducted to determine the most effective methods of providing disability awareness training to faculty members.

**Recommendations to Improve Practice**

Higher education is subject to constant change. Change is necessary for growth. The results of this study indicate that some change should be implemented at ETSU. Based upon faculty responses, student interviews, and the analysis of recent research into the subject, I propose that four efforts to promote change for the betterment of provision of accommodations to students with disabilities take place on the campus of ETSU. These efforts should be:
1. An effort should be made to train ETSU faculty members about the necessity of and the best practices in providing accommodations to students with disabilities, including specialized foci on how to aid a student in finding a competent note-taker, determining when it is appropriate to provide available lecture notes, and understanding pedagogical techniques such as how to alter tests in a fair manner;

2. An effort should be made to bolster self-advocacy among ETSU students with disabilities so that students confidently request accommodations and understand the nature of their disability alongside provisions made by federal law;

3. ETSU administration should consider the possibility of developing a testing center on campus that would serve students with disabilities due to the hardships faculty indicated in locating available low-distraction testing space; and

4. The ETSU Institutional Review Board should analyze and examine the current informed consent document template and make changes so that ease of reading improves response rates for online surveys.

Various methods could be used to offer training to faculty members. Convenience should be considered in the development and coordination of training. Online training may be the most convenient and far-reaching medium, but the nature of online training limits interaction and questions from participants. However, a program similar to ETSU’s sexual harassment training program could be instated. Support from administration would be needed in order to bolster the necessity of such training and to encourage or require faculty participation.

Workshops may be another method used to offer faculty training. These could be offered at intervals through the semesters or could be incorporated into new faculty orientation training which occurs each August. However, special care must given to training the new faculty during this orientation. The danger of not effectively covering the importance of serving students with disabilities may be even more of a concern than not covering the information at all. Ill-informed faculty members run the risk of violating students’ rights just as much as uninformed faculty members. Therefore, sufficient time should be given to faculty training.
Another method of offering more training to faculty members would be to provide more information for students to give to faculty members regarding the nature of the student’s disability and the importance of the accommodations given to the student. For example a generic information sheet that covers some of the major disabilities could be developed by the Disability Services office. Students could pick these sheets up when they get their faculty accommodation forms. The only concern with this method would be with protecting the student’s privacy. Therefore, information provided to the faculty would have to be at the discretion of the student. Some students prefer not to divulge the nature of their disability for a variety of reasons and this decision must be respected. Therefore, uneven distribution of this information is a possibility.

Self-advocacy workshops for students could be coordinated and produced by the Disability Services office at ETSU. Students should be encouraged rather than required to attend, and workshop presenters could be anyone with knowledge or insight into the area. These could include Disability Services staff, fellow ETSU students with disabilities, and ETSU faculty members with experience in working with students with disabilities. A team taught workshop may offer great insight and information for ETSU students with disabilities. An agenda could be developed with the support of the Disability Services office.

Many faculty members expressed a need for support in arranging a low-distraction room for testing accommodations. Unfortunately, low-distraction rooms on campus are difficult to locate during regular office and classroom hours. The Disability Services office offers space, when available, but only one enclosed area in the Disability Services area qualifies as being somewhat of a low-distraction testing room. This area (a conference room) also serves as a
location for staff and student organization meetings. While the office expresses support in finding a low-distraction area, these locations are sometimes simply unavailable on campus.

A location on campus could easily be retrofitted to accommodate students with a need for a low-distraction room. The space would need a monitor or proctor, several cubicles, a test safe or cabinet, and lockers or a space for students’ personal belongings. A proctor with good organization and attention to detail could arrange for multiple testing times throughout normal business hours.

The ETSU IRB should consider revising and streamlining the informed consent template offered to researchers. This template encompasses over a full page of wording and must be signed or confirmed before a participant is allowed to participate in a study. This initial document can be very unappealing and discourage participation. Simplifying the language and design of the document may encourage participation that will benefit any research.

Each of the recommended efforts has the ability to better the climate of ETSU for students with disabilities. Although the results of this study indicate that the campus climate concerning faculty attitudes and student perceptions is generally good, barriers continue to exist for this group of students. The limitations of this study must also be considered when analyzing the results. While this study is a case study in that it focuses on phenomena of faculty attitudes and student perceptions at ETSU, truly each student with a disability represents a unique case. Therefore, a continued effort to offer meaningful support to each student at ETSU is necessary. ETSU prides itself on being the best regional university in the country. Retaining this title greatly depends upon our commitment to student support. The recommendations I have made are both
reasonable and timely. It is my hope that the university will consider the results and act upon the suggestions of this study.
REFERENCES


Gephart, D.J., & Filo, E. (2001). *Know these cases! The most important judicial decisions and OCR rulings in higher education*. Horsham, PA: LRP.


U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *Data sources on students with disabilities in higher education from the National Center on Education Statistics*. Washington, DC: NCES.


APPENDICES

Appendix A

Faculty Survey

ETSU Faculty Attitudes and Student Perceptions Towards Providing Accommodations to Students with Disability

1. What is your gender?
   a) Female
   b) Male

2. What is your rank at ETSU?
   a) Full Professor
   b) Assistant Professor
   c) Associate Professor
   d) Instructor
   e) Adjunct

3. How many years of experience do you have in teaching at the higher educational level?
   a) Less than 1 year
   b) 1-10 years
   c) 11-20 years
   d) 21-30 years
   e) More than 30 years

4. For which academic department do you teach?
Comment box

5. How old are you?
   a) 20-30 years old
   b) 31-50 years old
   c) 51-70 years old
   d) 70+ years old

6. How much experience do you have working with students with disabilities?
   a) No experience
   b) Very little experience
   c) Some experience
   d) Significant experience

For the following questions please rank your agreement or disagreement on the 5-point Likert scale:

(Background/Policy Questions)

7. Students who need accommodations must provide me with a faculty accommodation form which verifies their registration with Disability Services and lists accommodations.

8. I am willing to make necessary adjustments to my teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.

9. I have a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.

10. Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.

11. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.
12. I sometimes question whether a student with a disability takes advantage of the accommodations provided.

(Classroom Accommodation Questions)

13. I am willing to help a student with a disability arrange a volunteer note taker in my class.

14. I am willing to let a student with a disability record my lectures.

15. I am willing to provide lecture notes to a student with a disability.

16. I am willing to allow a student with a disability a priority seating arrangement.

17. I am willing to wear a microphone in order to allow a student with a hearing impairment to hear my lecture.

18. I am willing to allow a sign-language interpreter in my class.

19. I am willing to allow a student with a disability to bring their laptop to class to use for note taking or essay writing.

(Testing Accommodation Questions)

20. I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on tests.

21. I feel comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low-distraction environment.

22. I feel comfortable arranging the location for a low-distraction testing environment for a student.

23. I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.

24. I feel comfortable offering an alternate test answer sheet for a student with a disability (e.g. I feel comfortable making an alternate answer sheet if a student has difficulty marking answers on a scantron.)

(Suggestions)
25. What suggestions would you like to make about providing classroom and testing accommodations to students with disabilities?

26. What suggestions would you make to the Disabilities Services office at ETSU to improve the accommodation process?
Appendix B

Student Interview

ETSU Faculty Attitudes and Student Perceptions Towards Providing Accommodations to Students with Disability

1. What has been your experience with faculty attitudes when you request accommodations in the classroom?

2. Do you feel that whether or not the accommodation is for testing or for the classroom affects the faculty member’s attitude in providing you with the accommodation? Why? Do you feel that the nature of your disability played a role in the faculty member’s attitude?

3. In your realm of experience are there typical characteristics of a professor (age, gender, rank, department, experience) that indicate to you what the professor’s attitude towards providing accommodations may be? Describe.

4. Has the attitude of a faculty member ever caused you not to request accommodations in that class or a future class? Why?

5. If you think faculty attitudes should be altered give a suggestion as to how this may occur. If you do not think they should be altered state why. How might faculty members better provide accommodations to you?
This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

**PURPOSE:** This study is a dissertation study necessary to fulfill the requirements of my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. The purpose is to discover faculty attitudes related to providing accommodations to students with disabilities at ETSU.

The purpose(s) of this research study is/are as follows:

An analysis of the data collected through the interviews should identify how students perceive the attitudes of ETSU faculty members in providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

**DURATION**

The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour to complete. Participants are not requested to do any type of preparation for the interview or any type of closure afterwards.
PROCEDURES

I will ask you to explain your experiences with faculty members when you have requested accommodations related to your disability. I will request your permission to record the interview so the script can be coded and categorized into similar concepts. I will also be taking notes to associate your emotions and expressions with your comments. Your participation in this interview will not affect services provided to you by the Disability Services office at ETSU.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS

Your decision to not participate in the study will not affect you in any way, including the provision of services to you provided by the Disability Services office at ETSU. You can stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time before the completion of the dissertation.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

This study does not pose any foreseeable risks or discomforts to those who participate.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

You may obtain individual personal benefits for participating in this study if the results are used to enhance faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities. The possible benefits of your participation are the improvement of faculty attitudes and increased disability awareness on campus.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling me, Michelle Byrd, whose phone number is 423-439-8492. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

In addition, if significant new findings during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation are likely, the consent process must disclose that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

In addition, if there might be adverse consequences (physical, social, economic, legal, or psychological) of your decision to withdraw from the research, the consent process must disclose those consequences and procedures for orderly termination of participation by you.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call me, Michelle Byrd, at 423-439-8492, or Dr. J. Renner at 423-439-7629. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in Warf-Pickel, room 501 for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings
without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU, and personnel particular to this research, members of my dissertation committee, have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

_____________________________________________________________________
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

_____________________________________________________________________
PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT DATE

_____________________________________________________________________
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR DATE

_____________________________________________________________________
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable) DATE
Appendix D

Informed Consent - Faculty Survey

East Tennessee State University

Institutional Review Board

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

**PURPOSE:** This study is a dissertation study necessary to fulfill the requirements of my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. The purpose is to discover faculty attitudes related to providing accommodations to students with disabilities at ETSU.

The purpose(s) of this research study is/are as follows:

An analysis of the data collected through the survey should identify faculty attitudes in providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

**DURATION**

The survey will take 15 to 30 minutes to complete. Participants are not to requested to do any type of preparation for the survey or any type of closure afterwards.

**PROCEDURES**
I will ask you to respond to a survey that attempts to measure your attitude in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. An online survey provider will record your confidential responses and provide those responses to me in a spreadsheet format.

**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS**

Your decision to not participate in the study will not affect you in any way. You can stop the survey and withdraw from the study at any time before the completion of the dissertation.

**POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

This study does not pose any foreseeable risks or discomforts to those who participate.

**POSSIBLE BENEFITS**

You may obtain individual personal benefits for participating in this study if the results are used to determine and implement measures to increase faculty training in providing accommodations to students with disabilities and disability awareness on campus.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling me, Michelle Byrd, whose phone number is 423-439-8492. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**
If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call me, Michelle Byrd, at 423-439-8492, or Dr. J. Renner at 423-439-7629. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in Warf-Pickel, room 501 for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU, and personnel particular to this research, members of my dissertation committee, have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

In lieu of the required signature, by proceeding with this survey you acknowledge that you give consent to volunteer your responses for this research study.

Survey Lead Paragraph:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study titled East Tennessee State University Faculty Attitudes Towards Providing Accommodations to Students with
Disabilities. The purpose of this study is to determine ETSU faculty attitudes and student perceptions towards providing academic accommodations to students with disabilities. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. You may quit the survey at any time. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and your submission will remain anonymous. If you have any questions or need further information you may contact 423-426-6966 or Dr. Jasmine Renner at 439-7629. Note that the completion of the electronic survey will be considered your consent for participation in this study.
Appendix E

Faculty Online Survey Results

### Survey Statistics

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Started</td>
<td>146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>82.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drop Outs (After Starting)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average time taken to complete survey: 6 minute(s)

### What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Female</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total 120 100%

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.425
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.336 - 1.514]
  
  \[ n = 120 \]
What is your rank at ETSU?

### Frequency Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Full Professor</td>
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<td>2. Assistant Professor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
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<td>3. Associate Professor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Instructor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.07%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Adjunct</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.69%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>116</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**Key Analytics**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence Interval @ 95%</td>
<td>[2.631 - 3.145]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 116</td>
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</table>

**Key Facts**

- 47.41% chose the following options:
  - Assistant Professor
  - Associate Professor

- Least chosen option 12.07%:
  - Instructor

How many years of experience do you have in teaching at the higher educational level?

### Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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### Frequency Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 20-30 years old</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. 31-50 years old</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. 51-70 years old</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Over 70 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 120 100%

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 2.871
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [2.690 - 3.051]  
  \( n = 116 \)
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.992
- **Standard Error**: 0.092

### Key Facts

- **68.97%** chose the following options:
  - 1-10 years
  - 11-20 years

- Least chosen option **3.45%**:
  - Less than 1 year
### Frequency Analysis

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<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. No experience</td>
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<td>7.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Very little experience</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Some experience</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48.33%</td>
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<td>4. Significant experience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
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<td>120</td>
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### Key Analytics

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<td>Standard Error</td>
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### Key Facts

- **89.17%** chose the following options:
  - 51-70 years old
  - 31-50 years old
- Least chosen option **1.67%**:
  - Over 70 years old

How much experience do you have working with students with disabilities?

For the following statements please rank your agreement or disagreement on the 5-point scale.
Students who need accommodations must provide me with a faculty form which verifies their registration with Disability Services and lists accommodations.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>1.769</td>
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### Frequency Analysis

<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
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<td>2. Tend to Agree</td>
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<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
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<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
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### Key Analytics

- Mean: 1.769
- Standard Deviation: 1.163
- Standard Error: 0.107

**Key Facts**

- 83.76% chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option: 4.27%
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
I am willing to make necessary adjustments to my teaching and testing strategies in order to provide an accommodation.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

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<th>Question</th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
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### Frequency Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
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<th>100%</th>
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</tr>
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<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
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<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
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</tr>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.457
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.306 - 1.608]  
  \( n = 116 \)
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.828
- **Standard Error**: 0.077

**Key Facts**

- **95.69%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
I have a good understanding of the necessity of accommodations for students with disabilities.

**Overall Matrix Scorecard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
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**Frequency Analysis**

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**Key Analytics**

- **Mean**: 1.709
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.531 - 1.888]
- **n = 117**
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.983
- **Standard Error**: 0.091

**Key Facts**

- 85.47% chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option: 2.56% : Strongly Disagree
Classroom accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
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### Frequency Analysis

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### Key Analytics

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### Key Facts

- **88.7%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree

- Least chosen option **0.87%**:
  - Tend to Disagree
Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are necessary for their success.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
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### Key Analytics

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<td>Confidence Interval @ 95%</td>
<td>[1.724 - 2.086]</td>
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</table>

**Key Facts**

- **78.45%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree

- **Least chosen option 2.59%**:
  - Strongly Disagree
I sometimes question whether a student with a disability takes advantage of the accommodations provided.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>Tend to Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 2.932
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [2.717 - 3.147], n = 117
- **Standard Deviation**: 1.187
- **Standard Error**: 0.110

**Key Facts**

- **58.97%** chose the following options:
  - Tend to Agree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
- **Least chosen option 9.4%**:
  - Strongly Agree
I am willing to help a student with a disability arrange a volunteer note taker in my class.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
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### Frequency Analysis

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<tr>
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<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.98%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.752
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.574 - 1.930]
  - \( n = 117 \)
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.982
- **Standard Error**: 0.091

**Key Facts**

- **77.78%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- **Least chosen option 0.85%**:
  - Strongly Disagree
I am willing to let a student with a disability record my lectures.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.85%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.231
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.116 - 1.346]  
  \[n = 117\]
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.635
- **Standard Error**: 0.059

**Key Facts**

- **96.58%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree

- Least chosen option **0.85%**:
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
I am willing to provide lecture notes to a student with a disability.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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### Frequency Analysis

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<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
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<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
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<table>
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**Key Facts**

- **75.65%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option **3.48%**:
  - Strongly Disagree
I am willing to allow a student with a disability a priority seating arrangement.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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### Frequency Analysis

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<th>60%</th>
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### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.154
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.060 - 1.248] (n = 117)
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.519
- **Standard Error**: 0.048

**Key Facts**

- **97.44%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree

I am willing to wear a microphone in order to allow a student with a hearing impairment to
hear my lecture.

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<th>Score</th>
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<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>16.52%</td>
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<td>2.61%</td>
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**Key Analytics**

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<td>Least chosen option 0.87% :</td>
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Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
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<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
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Frequency Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>83.48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.74%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.200
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.109 - 1.291]  
  \( n = 115 \)
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.499
- **Standard Error**: 0.047

**Key Facts**

- 97.39% chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
taking or essay writing.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>83.76%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tend to Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.265
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.136 - 1.394]
- **n = 117**
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.712
- **Standard Error**: 0.066

**Key Facts**

- **94.02%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- **Least chosen option 0.85%**:
  - Strongly Disagree
I feel comfortable allowing students extended time on tests.

**Overall Matrix Scorecard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.741</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Agree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Analytics**

- Mean: 1.741
- Confidence Interval @ 95%
  - [1.562 - 1.921]
  - n = 116
- Standard Deviation: 0.988
- Standard Error: 0.092

**Key Facts**

- 85.34% chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option 1.72%:
  - Strongly Disagree
I feel comfortable allowing students to take a test in a low-distraction environment.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.491</td>
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</table>

### Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Agree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>1.491</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence Interval @ 95%</td>
<td>[1.342 - 1.640]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>0.076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Facts**

- **92.24%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option **0.86%**: Strongly Disagree
I feel comfortable arranging the location for a low-distraction testing environment for a student.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1.838</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

### Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51.28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2. Tend to Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.64%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.68%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.84%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.838
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.644 - 2.031]
- **n**: 117
- **Standard Deviation**: 1.066
- **Standard Error**: 0.099

**Key Facts**

- 76.92% chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree
- Least chosen option 2.56%:
  - Strongly Disagree
I feel comfortable altering my exam for a student with a disability.

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.829</td>
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### Frequency Analysis

<table>
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<th>Count</th>
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<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.37%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tend to Agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.79%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.97%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- Mean: 2.829
- Confidence Interval @ 95%: [2.586 - 3.072]
- Standard Deviation: 1.341
- Standard Error: 0.124

**Key Facts**

- 47.86% chose the following options:
  - Tend to Disagree
  - Tend to Agree

- Least chosen option 11.97%:
  - Strongly Disagree
I feel comfortable offering an alternate test answer sheet for a student with a disability (e.g. I feel comfortable making an alternate answer sheet if a student has difficulty marking answers on a scantron.)

### Overall Matrix Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

### Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60.68%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tend to Agree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Analytics

- **Mean**: 1.547
- **Confidence Interval @ 95%**: [1.405 - 1.689]
- **n**: 117
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.782
- **Standard Error**: 0.072

### Key Facts

- **87.18%** chose the following options:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Tend to Agree

Analytics Powered by [QuestionPro](https://www.questionpro.com)
Appendix F

Initial Email to Potential Student Interviewees

Hello. This is Michelle Byrd. I would like to ask you to volunteer to participate in an interview concerning your perceptions of ETSU faculty attitudes in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. Participation in this interview will help me collect data necessary to complete my dissertation for my doctorate program. The title of my dissertation is ETSU Faculty Attitudes and Student Perceptions Towards Providing Accommodations to Students with Disabilities.

I am searching for three undergraduate students and three graduate students to interview. If I receive more than three volunteers from each category of students I will use a random sampling process to select the students to interview. If selected to interview, your participation is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw at any time before the dissertation is submitted for approval. No comments included in my dissertation study will be associated with your name. Participation in the interview and your responses will not affect the services provided to you by the Disability Services office at ETSU. The interview will take about an hour to complete and you won’t be required to do anything before or after the interview. You must be a current ETSU student to participate in the interview.

If you would like to volunteer for selection for these interviews, please send me an email to byrdt@etsu.edu or call me at 423-439-8492. I’ll acknowledge your decision and include you in the list of volunteers. Within a few days I will confirm my random selection of interviewees and contact those selected to set up interview times.

Thanks,

Michelle Byrd
Assistant Director, Disability Services
East Tennessee State University
Box 70605
Johnson City, TN 37614
Phone: 423-439-8346
Fax: 423-439-8489
Email: byrdt@etsu.edu
Appendix G

Email Request for Faculty Participation in Online Survey

ETSU Professors,

I am completing a research study concerning ETSU faculty attitudes towards providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

Your input is very valuable to me. I hope you will consider devoting approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete the survey located at the link at the bottom of this page.

Results that emerge from the survey may be used to implement improvements to the accommodation process or to campus awareness of disability services issues. Please read over the informed consent information prior to beginning the survey. I sincerely appreciate your time.

After reading the informed consent below, please access the survey using the link at the bottom.

Informed Consent Document

East Tennessee State University

Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Form

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

**PURPOSE:** This study is a dissertation study necessary to fulfill the requirements of my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. The purpose is to discover faculty attitudes related to providing accommodations to students with disabilities at ETSU.

The purpose(s) of this research study is/are as follows:
An analysis of the data collected through the survey should identify faculty attitudes in providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

**DURATION:**

The survey will take 15 to 30 minutes to complete. Participants are not to be requested to do any type of preparation for the survey or any type of closure afterwards.

**PROCEDURES:**

I will ask you to respond to a survey that attempts to measure your attitude in providing accommodations to students with disabilities. An online survey provider will record your confidential responses and provide those responses to me in a spreadsheet format.

**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS**

Your decision to not participate in the study will not affect you in any way. You can stop the survey and withdraw from the study at any time before the completion of the dissertation.

**POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

This study does not pose any foreseeable risks or discomforts to those who participate.

**POSSIBLE BENEFITS**

You may obtain individual personal benefits for participating in this study if the results are used to determine and implement measures to increase faculty training in providing accommodations to students with disabilities and disability awareness on campus.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling Michelle Byrd, whose phone number is 423-439-8492. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call me, Michelle Byrd, at 423-439-8492, or Dr. J. Renner at 423-439-7629. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439-6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in Warf-Pickel, room 501 for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU, and personnel particular to this research, members of my dissertation committee, have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

In lieu of the required signature, by proceeding with this survey you acknowledge that you give consent to volunteer your responses for this research study.

SURVEY LINK:

http://questionpro.com/t/ADQkgZGq7o
VITA

TERRE DAVENIA MICHELLE BYRD

Personal Data: Date of Birth: August 19, 1977

Place of Birth: Johnson City, Tennessee

Education: B.A., English, Milligan College,


M.A., English, East Tennessee State University,

Johnson City, Tennessee, 2002.

M.A.T., East Tennessee State University,


Ed.D., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis,

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,


Assistant Director, Disability Services, East Tennessee State University, 2007-Present.