

### Student with a Short-term disability Warrants Support

**Purpose:** This vignette highlights the challenges facing students with short-term disabilities in getting the support and accommodations they need.

**Student Vignette:** Oscar (a third-year computer science major) was recently in a car accident while driving home from his job working at a restaurant. While Oscar's car was totaled, he was lucky that the other car was okay and that his only injury—a broken arm—will heal in time. However, since Oscar broke his arm, he has been unable to take notes, do homework in a timely manner, or fully participate in the labs required for one of his classes. He will not be able to work for at least three months. By the time Oscar approaches you two weeks after the accident, he is behind in all his classes and relying entirely on his friends to share their notes and help him study. Oscar also tells you that he is juggling multiple doctors' appointments and physical therapy that take up a lot of time each week—obligations that are made even more difficult by the intense anxiety Oscar experiences every time he gets in a car to go to his appointment because of the accident. When you ask Oscar about getting help, he initially dismisses you because his "arm will heal eventually." He says that disability services are for students with "real disabilities" and shares that he would feel like he was taking advantage of services meant for other students.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Have you encountered situations like this? If so, reflect on what the situation was, how you handled it, and what you learned.
2. Describe the challenges Oscar is navigating. How might you address these challenges?
3. What strengths of Oscar's can be leveraged in this situation? What campus resources exist to support Oscar?
4. Given your role (e.g., academic advisor, program director, faculty, etc.), what might you do to support Oscar? What additional information or resources might you need?
5. Reflect on the concept of ecological validation. How could the norms that frame student interactions (holistic, proactive, strengths-oriented, and developmental) and the work of educators (collaborative and reflective) be leveraged to support Oscar?
6. What policies and practices could be shifted to support students in a similar situation? How might this occur?