

## Promoting At-Promise Student Success

### Incoming Student Struggling to Receive Necessary Disability Accommodations

**Purpose:** This vignette highlights challenges that students may face in receiving accommodations under unusual circumstances, and provides insight into how instructors may provide assistance to their students.

#### Student Vignette:

Olivia has always struggled to focus in large groups and noisy environments, but has assumed it was a personal struggle she would overcome with time. She had just registered for courses for her first year of college and was excited to begin her journey in higher education. After registering and officially completing the enrollment process, Olivia's mom suggested that she go to a psychiatrist to address her struggle with focusing, prior to starting her courses. During her appointment, Olivia was clinically diagnosed with ADHD, and the doctor recommended that Olivia register for classes with smaller class sizes to help her focus and succeed in the classroom.

The problem was that Olivia had already registered for her courses, one of which she needed for her major, and was scheduled to have 300 students seated in a large auditorium. She tried to switch to the smaller section, but it was already full. Olivia reached out to you and the course instructor in hopes of receiving a late accommodation permit to switch to the smaller section. She explained the situation in an email and asked if there was any documentation she could provide to improve her chances of receiving the accommodation. She also asked if there were any next steps she should take to ensure the accommodation comes through before the start of the semester.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Have you encountered a situation like this? If so, briefly reflect on those experiences. How did you support the student? What approaches were beneficial? What approaches were less successful?
2. Describe the challenges Olivia is navigating. What are the key issues that need to be addressed to support Olivia before the semester ends? What resources exist on campus that may be helpful? What are her strengths that can be leveraged in this situation?
3. Given your role (e.g., academic advisor, program director, faculty, etc.), what might you do to support Olivia? What are some limitations in your current knowledge and skills in meeting Olivia's needs? What resources or opportunities can you connect her with on and off-campus?
4. Reflect on the concept of ecological validation. How could the norms framing student interactions (holistic, proactive, strengths-oriented, and developmental) and the work of educators (collaborative and reflective) be leveraged to support Olivia?
5. What policies and practices could be shifted to support students in a similar situation? What would need to happen to initiate change? Who would be involved in this process?