MEMORANDUM

To: Entering Law Students -- 2017

From: David H. Baum, Assistant Dean for Student Life and Special Counsel to the Dean

Re: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy and desire of the Law School to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students who may require some type of accommodation are encouraged to communicate their needs to us as soon as possible. Please note that the Law School’s Office of Student Life must receive written recommendations for exam accommodations from the University’s Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (“OSSD”) at least two (2) weeks prior to the first day of the in-class examination period for the first term in which accommodations are sought. To ensure that OSSD is able to send recommendations in time, please start your communication with OSSD at least six (6) weeks before the start of the exam period.

In order to make decisions based on a specific individual’s situation, we request that you provide certain information. This also facilitates adequate record keeping of accommodations which have been agreed upon and must be arranged each term and helps later in the assessment of the effectiveness of the accommodations. The Law School works closely with OSSD, and we recommend that you consult with its staff as you prepare any requests. We would like you to provide all information both to that office and to the Law School, which will decide upon what accommodations are possible. You will find contact information at the conclusion of this memorandum.

Your response to the following requests for information should be helpful to us, and we hope that the points of information are helpful to you as well.

1. We request that a physician who is familiar with your diagnosis and treatment provide us with documentation of your disability. In cases of learning disabilities, a report of a psychoeducational assessment which included aptitude and achievement tests and consists, in part, of all test and subtest scores and a description of test procedures is necessary. A professional qualified to diagnose a learning disability should prepare the report. The professional’s report should include any recommendations regarding accommodations as well. The OSSD may offer guidance regarding documentation and details about recommendations for accommodations. Please understand that until OSSD receives adequate documentation, the Law School will not be able to provide accommodations to you.

2. You should provide a written request regarding any type of exam or other academic accommodation you may require. Be as specific as possible. Tell us what has worked in the past. How much, if any, extra time might you need for objective tests, tests with short exam questions, or tests with long questions, etc.? What are your library needs and time constraints for papers? Do you have any equipment requirements, or
do you need auxiliary services such as interpreters or transcribers? If you use a computer for an exam, are your requirements for extra time modified? Is it important to take an exam in isolation? We have found that most of our learning-disabled students can complete our in-class and take home exams in time-and-one-half and in a room with several other students taking specially scheduled exams. Sometimes we have extended an examination period beyond the usual length. Paper extensions for work due at the end of the term have occasionally been arranged.

3. Reduced course loads must be approved and should be thoroughly planned because of accreditation requirements and also because of the serious financial implications for students who take extra time to complete degree requirements.

4. Let us know if you have particular housing needs.

5. Other issues may occur to you. The OSSD has a wealth of information and expertise about resources available at Michigan.

It is always possible that accommodations which seem appropriate at the admissions stage will not prove to be so after you learn more about legal studies; such accommodations may need modification. However, we encourage you to communicate your needs to us soon so that we will be able to give you an initial indication of the Law School’s decision about which accommodations are reasonable and our ability to provide the accommodations you desire. After receipt of your documentation, professional recommendations, and your personal requests, we will consult with the OSSD and communicate our response regarding accommodations to you. In complicated cases, the Law School Academic Standards and Practices Committee may not be able to reach a decision about an accommodation until the fall term has begun and they meet. If you are denied an accommodation you believe is reasonable, please let us know, and the Committee will review the request.

I worry that this memo is much more formal in tone than we actually are. Please get in touch with us personally to discuss your situation if you wish. We attempt to provide adequate accommodations and to ensure that the educational experience is a good one for all of our students. We can also put you in touch with other students with disabilities who will be happy to discuss their experiences with you.

If you would like more information about how the University supports students with disabilities, please contact our Services for Students with Disabilities at http://ssd.umich.edu/; in Room G-664 Haven Hall (505 S. State Street); at (734) 763-3000; or at ssdoffice@umich.edu. You should also feel free to contact me at (734) 764-0516 if you have questions or concerns.