

May 29, 2014

## Transcription Derek

**Introduction:** A video in which Derek describes his experience with accommodation for vision loss.

What impact has your disability had on your college or university experience?

I have extremely low vision. I am able to see to walk around without needing to use a cane but it has meant that my ability to read the chalk board or the white board—I cannot do that. Reading a textbook is not possible just with straight eyesight but with a magnifier and other aids I have been able to do that. Meeting people has been a challenge—I need to usually set something up and let them know ahead of time where it's going to be or I need to ask directions of where classrooms are because the numbers on the doors are usually above and are pretty small.

What accommodation measures have you received to help you succeed in your studies?

The main accommodation I have received has been through the Student Accessibility Centre. They provide me with a room to write with a large desk and consistent lighting. A lot of the old classrooms have the little fold-up tables and I'm not able to bend over far enough to see, so having a table has been good. They provide a large version, they blow up the text onto an 18 x 11 sheet so the text is much larger and I can see that with a magnifier to answer without needing to use other technology to write my tests, which is also good that I do that in a small room instead of a classroom because the waving around in a full classroom—it's just good for the stress of both myself and the professors that I'm writing separately for that. They've been very good at any time that I've had any questions. Sometimes the tests have had things that are not clear to do and they go out of their way to try to contact the professor or if not, we jointly write a note of what was wrong with it so they do what they can to help me out. Other things that have really helped—I had a professor in my first year, I was doing a programming course and he usually was writing stuff on the board but he started doing things on the old fashioned overhead and afterwards he'd photocopy them so that I would have them to scan in and be able to read that way instead of writing on the board. Also, instead of just writing stuff I learned to speak so that I could write notes by what was said instead of what was on the board.

What other things have helped you overcome your challenges and be successful in your college or university life?

The main thing that I have found is that if I'm open and if I actually discuss so that people know what is going on that they will do their best to make the arrangements that are needed. Sometimes some quizzes were only 10 minutes so it wasn't practical to write at the Accessibility Centre but because I explained the situation and the challenges that were involved we worked it out and I could still attend the rest of class either by writing before or on a separate table at the front, or whatever was needed at the time. IT Services sometimes stepped in and helped on some of my computer courses where we linked monitors together so that when a group was sitting around a monitor, I had my own monitor to

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see instead of trying to see it from a distance. The other thing that's really helped is the use of technology. I use a tablet for all of my things with electronic textbooks and any handouts I scan in so that I can blow them up and read the text that way. I've never had to go as far as readers because with the electronic texts I can blow them up so that I can see them.