

Service Animals on Campus

Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center's
OFFICE OF LEARNING RESOURCES (OLR)

We will have service animals on campus this year! A service animal is a highly trained animal that assists a person with a disability in the tasks of everyday life—it is NOT a pet. With a little knowledge and forethought, we can help ensure that the animal is able to carry out its duties and that everyone's experience with these animals is good.

Service animals are trained to “serve” in many ways. Depending on the needs of the owner, they may:

- Assist with navigation, retrieval of items, and other tasks
- Alert to the presence of such things as people, sounds, or allergens
- Provide non-violent protection or rescue work
- Pull a wheelchair
- Assist during a seizure (e.g. give advance notification, assist to a safe place)
- Provide physical support and assistance with balance and stability

Service animals are trained to be as unobtrusive as possible in public places and to avoid engaging in behaviors which might be distracting to others such as sniffing, making noise, personal grooming, and blocking an aisle or passageway.

A designated service animal may accompany the owner at all times and everywhere on campus where students or the general public are allowed to go—except for places where there is a health, environmental, or safety hazard.

Service animals' owners have received training, too. They know it is their responsibility to keep the animal in full control at all times (leashed when not providing service), to maintain good animal hygiene, and to plan ahead to take care of the animal's needs.

Service animals are “working professionals,” not pets. We can show our understanding of and respect for the role they play for their owner by:

- Avoiding behaviors that are distracting for the dog such as petting and feeding
- Not trying to deliberately startle the animal
- Not separating or attempting to separate the owner from the animal
- Asking the owner what is appropriate in specific circumstances
- Asking the owner if she/he would like assistance if there seems to be some confusion
- Accepting the owner's responsibility to respond to unexpected needs of the animal

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the service animals on campus, please contact the LTC's Office of Learning Resources at 229-2066 or learningresources@udayton.edu.