



PROFESSOR PATTON

by Marianne Karwacki
Office of Disability Services

Professor Patton teaches an introductory nutrition course that is a requirement for students in a number of different majors. The first week of the semester, Tony, a student in Dr. Patton's class came to meet with him during office hours. Tony gave Dr. Patton a letter from Disability Services. The letter explained that Tony had a learning disability and listed the appropriate accommodations that would help him. These accommodations included having 50% additional time to complete tests, using a computer to type the answers if essay tests were given, and having the opportunity to tape record lectures.

Dr. Patton told Tony that he had worked with a number of students with learning disabilities in previous semesters. He said that it was fine for Tony to take the tests with extended time and informed him that there would not be any essay tests. However, he said that he did not wish Tony to tape record the lectures. Dr. Patton explained that his lectures often included information about research that he and his colleagues were involved in, and he did not feel it was right to have this information on tape, since it had not yet been published. Tony offered to sign an agreement stating that the tapes would be used solely by him and confirming that he would erase them after he had listened to them. Tony pointed out that he needed to tape record lectures because his dysgraphia made it impossible for him to write as fast as he needed to during a lecture. He said that as soon as he had listened to the tape of the lecture, and filled in any blanks in his notes, the tape would be erased. Dr. Patton said he still was not comfortable with having someone record every word he said.

Tony left Dr. Patton's office feeling dissatisfied. No other professor had ever raised objections about him tape recording lectures before and he wondered what could be done to resolve the situation.

Questions

1. Do you feel Dr. Patton is justified in denying Tony the opportunity to tape record his lectures?
2. Should Tony consider trying to switch into a different section of this course?
3. Given Dr. Patton's strong objections to a student tape recording his lectures, what other options might Tony and Dr. Patton pursue which will still provide Tony with the outcome he desires, i.e. getting as complete a set of notes as possible?
4. Might an instructor have qualms about students tape recording lectures for reasons other than the one Dr. Patton voiced? What possible solutions to these other scenarios can you envision?