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| Policy Name: | Policy Regarding Service Animals for People with Disabilities | | | |
| Associated Form(s): | N/A | Policy Number: | 2016-10 | |
| Approval Authority: | President <i>Tim Hall</i> | Adopted: <i>9/6/16</i> | Reviewed & Approved: | Non-Academic Policy Review Council, 8/16/16 |
| Responsible Executive: | Chief Student Affairs Officer and Vice President for Operations and Facilities | Revised: | N/A | |
| Responsible Office: | Office of Student ACCESSibility and Office of Human Resources | Contact: | Director of ACCESSibility and Executive Director of Human Resources | |

I. Policy Statement

Mercy College is committed to making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures to permit the use of service animals by persons with disabilities. Service animals play an important role in ensuring the independence of people with disabilities, and it is therefore our policy to welcome to the College any animal that is individually trained to assist a person with a disability.

II. What is a Service Animal?

Service animals include any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Service animals do not always have a harness, a sign, or a symbol indicating that they are service animals. A service animal is not a pet. Service animals assist people with disabilities in many different ways, such as:

- Guiding people who are blind or have low vision and retrieving dropped objects for them;
- Alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds and the presence of others;
- Carrying and picking up items, opening doors, or flipping switches for people with disabilities who have limited use of hands or arms, limited use of their legs, or limited ability to bend or stoop;
- Pulling wheelchairs;
- Alerting people with disabilities to the onset of medical conditions such as seizures, protecting them and cushioning them if they fall, reviving them, and performing other tasks that reduce the risk of liability related injury;
- Doing work or performing tasks for persons with traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities, such as reminding a person with depression to take medication or waking him/her up, alerting a person with anxiety to the onset of panic attacks, orienting people with schizophrenia to reality, and helping people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities to locate misplaced items, find places, or follow daily routines; and
- Providing physical support and assisting people with physical disabilities with stability and balance.

III. Requirements with Regard to Service Animals

Most of the time, people with disabilities who use service animals may be easily identified without any need for questioning. If we can tell by looking, it is our policy not to make an individual feel unwelcome by asking questions. If we are unsure whether an animal meets the definition of a

service animal, it is our policy to ask the individual only two questions at the point that the individual seeks entry to the College or any of its buildings:

- 1) Is the service animal required because of a disability?
- 2) What work or task has the service animal been trained to perform?

If the individual says yes to the first question and explains the work or tasks that the animal is trained to perform, we will welcome the person and service animal to the College without asking any additional questions about his or her service animal. We will not ask an individual questions about his or her disability. We will not ask an individual to show a license, certification, or special ID card as proof of their animal's training. We must permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities to all areas of the College normally used by students or other members of the public and will treat individuals with service animals with the same courtesy and respect that we afford to all of our students.

If the answer is "no" to the first question, the College may inform the individual that the service animal is not permitted and he/she will be referred to the Student Handbook.

IV. Mercy College Responsibilities

Mercy College has the right to exclude a service animal from the College if the service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or the service animal is not housebroken. We will not exclude a particular service animal based on past experience with other animals or based on fear unrelated to an individual service animal's actual behavior. Each situation will be considered individually.