Understanding the Differences
Between High School and College

High School	Postsecondary Institution
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008
Covers ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met	Covers students with disabilities regardless of age; school may not discriminate in recruitment, admission, or during enrollment, solely on the basis of a disability
Schools are required to identify students with disabilities through free assessment and the individualized education program (IEP) process	Students are required to submit documentation establishing their disability and need for accommodations. Services are only provided once a student self-identifies and provides appropriate documentation. Postsecondary institutions are not required to evaluate or test students
Students receive special education and related services to address needs based on an identified disability	Formal special education services are not available
Services include individually designed instruction, modification, and accommodations based on the IEP	Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation
Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parents and/or student	Students are required to monitor their own progress and communicate their needs to appropriate personnel

Adapted from *Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training*, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2003

At postsecondary Institutions…

- Students have new freedoms and new responsibilities and must make decisions on their own.
- Students must manage their own time and arrange their own schedules.
- Students must seek out assistance and campus resources.
- Students must develop strategies and learn how to advocate for themselves.
- Accommodation provided in high school may not necessarily be appropriate at the postsecondary level.

Students have responsibility to:

- Self-identify or disclose their disability to the designated office for disability services.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional source that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations.
- Act as independent adults and use appropriate self-advocacy skills.
- Arrange for and obtain their own personal assistants, tutoring and individually designed assistive technologies.

Postsecondary institutions are not required to:

- Reduce or waive any of the essential requirements of a course or program.
- Conduct testing and assessment of learning, psychological or medical disabilities.
- Provide personal assistants.
- Provide personal or private tutoring.
- Prepare Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)