Service Animal Policy

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General Description

Policy Summary:

Trinity University allows the use of a trained service animal by individuals with disabilities in all public areas of the university. This policy covers the parameters of such an allowance.

Purpose:

This policy concerning service animals was developed to provide the fullest reasonable access to individuals with disabilities and their service animals and to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Texas state law. The ADA takes priority over state and local laws and regulations when it provides greater access or protection for individuals with disabilities.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Trinity University faculty, staff, students, and visitors at the university involved in and accessing public accommodations and services at the university.

Policy Content

Definition of Service Animal

The Federal definition of a Service Animal (SA) is a dog that has been specifically trained to perform specific tasks directly related to the handler's disability diagnosis. **The person handling the animal is solely responsible for the animal's well-being and behavior, including clean up after nature breaks and maintaining control of the animal at all times.**

Service Animal In Training

The State of Texas does recognize Service Animals in Training to have access to the same areas as trained service animals as long as they are accompanied by an approved trainer. *State of Texas Code Sec.121.003 (i)* states a service animal in training shall not be denied admittance to any public facility when accompanied by an approved trainer.

Access

Presence On Campus

In almost all cases, a service animal should be allowed to accompany a partner with a disability into any area of the University to which a person of the same status (e.g., student, staff member, or guest) would ordinarily have access. A service animal should be admitted to indoor areas even when not actively “working” or assisting a person with a disability, including dining facilities and residence halls. A service animal in training should be granted access when accompanied by an approved trainer (an agent of an organization that provides training for service animals). When in doubt, the animal should be admitted as a service animal. Follow-up questions may be addressed to Human Resourcesor Student Accessibility Services.

Identification

Service animals are not required to have identification or evidence as to the service animal’s credentials or training. Outside of the following two questions, the individual receiving assistance from the service animal is not required to answer any questions regarding their disability or provide verification of their disability in relation to the service animal:

1. Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task is the dog trained to perform?

Residential Requirements

A student requesting that a service animal lives with them in a residence hall is not required to register the animal with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) or any other University office. The student may be required to submit evidence of good health and vaccinations to SAS and sign the appropriate agreements with Residential Life before the animal can take residence. The animal must have an annual certification of good health from a licensed veterinarian and be current on the appropriate vaccination series for that type of animal and per state and local ordinances. A person living with a service animal will not be required to pay extra compensation for the animal but is liable for damage done to the premise by the animal.

Exceptions

Health & Safety

A person handling a service animal may be asked to remove it from University facilities if its behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or if it is disruptive. The person with the disability should have full control of the animal, with a halter or a leash. If an animal repeatedly barks, growls, bites, or jumps on people, the handler may be asked to remove the

animal from the facility. The person should be given a chance to return and use the facility without the animal.

Location-Based Considerations

The administrator in charge of an area potentially dangerous to a service animal (such as laboratories or workshops with certain chemicals, organisms, or equipment that might be hazardous to the animal) will make a decision on a case-by-case basis as to whether a specific animal will be admitted. An animal may be excluded by the administrator if its presence might contaminate or otherwise interfere with the work being done. If a service animal cannot be admitted to a laboratory or other facility for these reasons, the faculty/staff member in charge should consult with Student Accessibility Services to make reasonable efforts to provide other accommodations that allow the person with a disability to participate in the program or activity.

Enforcement

A person or organization that fails to admit a service animal may be charged with a misdemeanor and/or with depriving the person with a disability of his/her civil rights. A person who uses a special harness or leash falsely to represent his or her animal as a service animal may be guilty of a misdemeanor, and a student who does so may be charged with violating the University's Standards of Conduct for Students and Texas Statute, Sec. 121.006. IMPROPER USE OF ASSISTANCE AND SERVICE ANIMALS.

This policy applies to students, employees, and visitors to the University. Any questions should be directed to Human Resources (for employees and visitors) or Student Accessibility Services (for students)

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

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Vice President Approval:

Name:	Title:
Megan Mustain	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs