**Draft #1- 2/21/14**

**Service and Emotional Support Animals Policy**

Syracuse University is committed to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities who require the assistance of service or emotional support animals. However, the University is also mindful of the health and safety concerns of the campus community. Thus, the University must balance the need of the individual with the disability with the potential impact of the animal on other campus patrons. The Office of Disability Services is responsible for implementing this policy. The successful implementation of the policy requires the cooperation of all students, faculty and staff.

**Definitions:**

**Disability:**

“Disability” is defined as a physical or mental condition or impairment that is medically cognizable, diagnosable, and substantially limits one or more of a person’s major life activities. These limitations may include: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. A person is substantially limited in major life activities if the individual is unable to perform the activity when compared to the average person.

**Service Animal:**

A “service animal” is any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. These tasks include but not limited to: guiding individuals with impaired vision; alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sound; providing minimal protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair; or fetching dropped items.

**Emotional Support Animal:**

An “emotional support animal” is an animal selected to play an integral part of a person’s treatment process that demonstrates a good temperament and reliable, predictable behavior. An emotional support animal is prescribed to an individual with a disability by a healthcare or mental health professional. An emotional support animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person with a disability at all times. However, an emotional support animal may be incorporated into a treatment process to assist in alleviating the symptoms of that individual’s disability. This treatment occurs within the person’s residence and therefore may be considered for access to university housing.

**Pet:**

A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or an emotional support animal, and therefore, it is not covered by this policy. Pets are not permitted on university property.

**Responsibility of Persons with Service or Emotional Support Animals**

**Care and Supervision:** Care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of the individual who benefits from the animal’s use. The person is required to maintain control of the animal at all times. The person is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal’s waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the University.

**Vaccination:**  The animal must be immunized against disease common to that type of animal. Dog must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag.

**Health:** The animal must be in good health. Animals to be housed in University housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The University has authority to direct that the animal receive veterinary attention.

**Licensing:** The City of Syracuse, Onondaga County required all dogs 4 months or older to be licensed. Dogs must wear license tags at all times.

**Training:** Service animals must be properly trained. An owner of a service animal may be asked to provide verification that the animal has been individually trained as a service animal to provide the service needed.

**Leash:** The animal must be on a leash, if appropriate for the animal, at all times.

**Other Conditions:** Syracuse University may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animals depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

**Requirements for Faculty, Staff, Students, and Other Members of the University Community**

Members of the University community are required to abide by the following practices:

1. Allow a service animal to accompany its owner at all times and in all places on campus, except where animals are specifically prohibited.
2. Do not touch or pet a service or emotional support animal.
3. Do not feed a service or emotional support animal.
4. Do not deliberately startle a service or emotional support animal.
5. Do not separate or attempt to separate an owner from his or her service or emotional support animal.
6. Do not inquire for details about a person’s disabilities. The nature of a person’s disability is a private matter.

**Removal of Service or Emotional Support Animal**

The owner of a service or emotional support animal may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities if the owner or animal fails to comply with this policy. The folling describes behaviors which may result in the removal of the animal:

**Disruptive Behavior:** An animal may be removed if its behavior is unruly or disruptive (eg: barking, growling, running around, or displaying aggressive behavior). If such behavior persists, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal on campus until the owner takes significant and effective remedial steps to correct the animal’s behavioral problems.

**Poor Health:** Animals that are ill or in poor health must not be taken into public areas. An owner with an ill animal may be required to remove the animal from University property.

**Uncleanliness:** Owners who fail to properly clean up and dispose of the animal’s waste may be required to remove the animal from University property. Owners of animals that re otherwise unclean or unkempt ma be required to remove the animal from University property. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud, but is otherwise clean, is considered a clean animal.

**Damage**

Owners of service or emotional support animals are solely responsible for any damage to persons or property caused by their animal.

**Areas Off Limits to Service Animals**

The University may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health and safety restrictions. (eg: where the animals may be in danger, or where their use may compromise the integrity of research). Restricted areas may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: custodial closets, boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, research laboratories, any areas housing research or teaching animals, classrooms with research/demonstration animals, areas where protective clothing is necessary, wood and metal shop, motor pools, and rooms with heavy machinery.

Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting the Office of Disability Services and the appropriate department representative. However, the person directing the restricted area has the final decision.

**Service and Emotional Support Animals in University Housing**

Service and emotional support animals may not reside in University housing without expressed approval of University officials. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a “service animal” such request should be processed as follows:

1. A person requesting a service or emotional support animal must provide the Office of Disability Services with appropriate documentation at least 30 days before prospective housing will be needed. Animals will not be allowed to reside in University housing if this condition of reasonable advance notice is not fulfilled in a timely manner.
2. Documentation includes a signed letter, on professional letterhead, from the person’s physical or mental healthcare licensed provider or therapist. The provider or therapist should be familiar with the professional literature concerning the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits of assistance animals for people with disabilities. A completed copy of the “Certification of Emotional Support Animal” form should also be provided if the animal s certified by a certification agency or organization. At minimum, the letter should include the following items:
	1. The provider’s diagnosis of the person’s condition.
	2. The provider’s professional opinion that the condition qualifies as a disability under federal law, including the major life activity which is substantially limited by the disability.
	3. The provider’s opinion that the service or emotional support animal has been prescribed for treatment purposes and is necessary to help alleviate symptoms associated with the person’s condition and/or to help the person use and enjoy University housing services.
	4. The provider’s description of the service(s) that the animal will provide.
	5. Any additional rationale or statement the University may reasonably need o understand the basis for the professional opinion.
3. The Office of Disability Services will review documentation and, if ODS determines a qualifying disability exists; it will forward a recommendation to the Housing Office. A Housing Office staff member will meet with person requesting that a service or emotional support animal be housed in University housing. This policy will be carefully reviewed with the person at that time and an interactive dialogue will take place to determine whether or not the animal is a reasonable accommodation considering alternative accommodations and the impact of the animal on the Syracuse University housing program.

**Verification of Disability and Need for a Service Animal**

A person desiring he assistance of a service animal to use University facilities and services must provide verification to the Office of Disability Services that he or she has a qualifying disability and that the service animal is needed for the use and enjoyment of University facilities and services. The person’s health care provider, who is familiar with the professional literature concerning the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits f assistance animals for people with disabilities, must submit a signed letter, on professional letterhead, expressing the following:

* 1. The provider’s diagnosis of the person’s condition.
	2. The provider’s professional opinion that the condition qualifies as a disability under federal law, including the major life activity which is substantially limited by the disability.
	3. The provider’s opinion that the service or emotional support animal has been prescribed for treatment purposes and is necessary to help alleviate symptoms associated with the person’s condition and/or to help the person use and enjoy University housing services.
	4. The provider’s description of the service(s) that the animal will provide.
	5. Any additional rationale or statement the University may reasonably need o understand the basis for the professional opinion.

**Conflicting Disabilities**

The Syracuse University Housing Office will make a reasonable effort to notify students in the residence hall where the animal will be located of the existence of a service or emotional support animal in the building.

Students with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) should contact the Housing Office if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a service or emotional support animal. The individual will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the condition(s), and will allow determination to be made as to whether the condition is disabling and whether there is a need for an accommodation.

offering an allergy informational sheet to any students who will be exposed to a service animal in residence halls, classrooms/lecture halls/labs, etc.

The Housing Office will resolve any conflict in a timely manner, considering the conflicting needs and/or accommodations of all persons involved. The Housing Office may use the Health Center as resource for information on health issues. In the event an agreement cannot be reached, the Housing Office decision is final and not subject to appeal.

**Service Animals in Training**

Syracuse University does not allow service animals in training.

**Questions**

Questions or concerns related to this policy should be addressed to:

* Office of Disability Services, 801 University Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13244 email: odssched@syr.edu phone voice: 315-443-4498, TDD: 315-443-1371, FAX: 315-443-1312
* Housing Office, Steele Hall, Room 206, Syracuse, NY 13244 email: housing@syr.edu, phone: 315-443-2721, FAX 315-443-5044

Consulted with websites from University of Minnesota, Catholic University of America NACUA Notes, Brigham Young University, Eckerd College and Clemson University.