SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

The following information is provided to help define the role and the place of service animals at UM-Helena College of Technology in promoting the safety, dignity, and independence of persons with disabilities.

As established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals shall not be excluded from University/College facilities or activities. The ADA defines a service animal as:
"...any . . . animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items."

To work on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

Service animals whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or is disruptive to the campus community may be excluded regardless of training or certification.

The guidelines below have been developed with the understanding that most service animals working on the college campus will be dogs. If another kind of animal is to be employed as a service animal on campus, the partner (person with a disability) should contact the disability services office as soon as possible to explore any additional health or safety concerns.

I. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY/STAFF/STUDENTS

-- Allow a service animal to accompany the disabled partner at all times and everywhere on campus except, where service animals are specifically prohibited.
-- Do not pet a service animal; petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.
-- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill or to be distracted.
-- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
-- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from her or his service animal.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DISABLED INDIVIDUALS USING SERVICE ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

A person with a disability who utilizes a service animal is strongly encouraged to register with the Disability Services office.

The cost of care, arrangements and responsibilities for the well-being of a service animal are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times.
Service animals on campus must:
-- Meet Non-University Requirements: All requirements for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by State or local ordinance must be followed.
-- Be Healthy: 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.
-- Be Under Control of Partner: The person with a disability must be in full control of the animal at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from service animals while on campus. If a service dog, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, the partner is expected to employ the proper training techniques to correct the situation.

Cleanup Rule: The partner must follow local ordinances in cleaning up after the animal defecates. Individuals with disabilities who physically cannot clean up after their own service animal may not be required to pick up and dispose of feces. However, these individuals should use marked service animal toileting areas when such areas are provided.

III. REMOVAL OF SERVICE ANIMALS:

Disruption: The partner of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g., barking, running around, bringing attention to itself) may be asked to remove the animal from university facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner may be told not to bring the animal into any university facility until the partner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation can include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the animal and the partner.

Ill Health: Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner with an ill animal may be asked to leave university facilities.

Uncleanliness: Partners with animals that are unclean, noisome and/or bedraggled may be asked to leave university facilities. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud or from being splashed on by a passing automobile, but is otherwise is clean, should be considered a clean animal. Animals that shed in the spring sometimes look bedraggled. If the animal in question usually is well groomed, consider the animal tidy even though its spring coat is uneven and messy appearing or it has become wet from weather or weather-related incidents.

IV. GRIEVANCES

Any partner dissatisfied with a decision made concerning a service animal should follow the applicable institutional Appeal/Grievance Procedures.