



## size diversity in higher education

**We come in  
all sizes. . .**



Source: UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

# **NAAFA SIZE DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION TOOL KIT**

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**Diversity is not limited to the inclusion of people of different races and cultures; it includes sizes, shapes and other physical appearances and abilities.**



Photo by: Morgan Weinert of Naked Eye Photography



## Higher Education Accessibility and Discrimination: Issues and Solutions for Students of Size



Photo by: Pattie Thomas

***“How am I going to participate and get a grade in my class, when the only seat for me is on the floor?”***

### Foreword

by Maria Pena, MS, ABD

Working in Disabled Student Support Services at institutions of higher education is a daunting task, to say the least. There are students with differing types of disabilities “A through Z,” and there will always be new challenges to accommodate them. By thinking creatively, usually a support services professional can figure out a solution to ensure that students are provided legally entitled equity<sup>1</sup> via academic accommodations so that their grades and successes (or failures) are indicative of their abilities and not their disabilities.

In this era of sensitivity, anti-bullying and teaching tolerance, body size prejudice is widespread and institutionalized. There may be post-secondary educators reading this Tool Kit that have never heard the term “Students of Size” before in their entire careers - you may be one of them. By reading this information, you have taken the first step to understanding; with education and knowledge come understanding, respect and support.

### Societal Expectations and Post-Secondary Education

The idea that someone can be both physically attractive and have a large body is mutually exclusive in American society. Prejudice is rampant and visible at the elementary and

## Foreword (cont'd.)

### Societal Expectations and Post-Secondary Education (cont'd.)

secondary levels of education, and rampant yet covert in post-secondary education. A study by Canning and Mayer stated that, of 2,506 college applications from prospective college freshmen, only 31% of female and 42% of male “obese”<sup>2</sup> applicants were accepted despite having equivalent grades and qualifications as the other “non-obese” students. Families are less likely to fund their “obese” daughters to attend college.<sup>3</sup> Even at the upper levels in graduate education the prejudice is rampant.

In 2011, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) made a determination as to workplace discrimination against size:

“Congress amended the Americans with Disabilities Act to extend workplace disability protections to morbidly obese people, defined as those 100 percent or more above the healthy weight range for their height. In April and July of 2012, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) gained settlements in its first two major cases on weight-related workplace discrimination.”<sup>4</sup>

But unfortunately the discrimination and micro-aggressions remain. Here is a memory from Laura P.’s college experience:

“I always felt particularly isolated from events on campus that offered free shirts because they would never come in my size. The shirts would go up to an L, or an XL if we were lucky. I knew that I would not be welcome to enter certain events or promotions that promised clothing because I knew that I would not fit.”

Discrimination continues even in graduate school as evidenced in Virginia D.’s story:

“While earning my master’s degree in public health, a nutrition student in one of my classes did her final presentation on ‘childhood obesity.’ She quoted statistics on how many fat children experience bullying, and she concluded that the solution was to help those children lose weight. When I questioned the logic, I was silenced by the professor. That is only one example of several times in that program in which I, as a fat woman, was considered ‘biased’ when speaking up against poorly reasoned anti-fat arguments.”

With the advent of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, colleges and universities across the United States must now take notice of the reasonable accommodation needs of this student population and are being called to task when they do not. We hope that this Tool Kit gives educators the information they need to incorporate size-friendly, universal design not just into the classroom furniture, but in the curriculum and the collegiate environment as well.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> “Legally entitled equity” (referring to any under-represented population) means establishing their rightful status among those legally entitled to a place in the mainstream

<sup>2</sup> The terms “obese” or “obesity” refer to a Body Mass Index of >30. These terms are not accepted terms used to identify fat persons in the size diversity community. Any reference to these terms in this Tool Kit will be shown within quote marks denoting that the term was used in the referenced study.

<sup>3</sup> *Obesity - Its Possible Effect on College Acceptance*, Canning and Mayer, DOI: 10.1056/NEJM196611242752107, 11/24/66

<sup>4</sup> *Obesity Discrimination On The Job Provokes Dispute Over Best Remedy*, Christina Wilkie, National Reporter, Huffington Post, 10/04/2012



Photo by: Pattie Thomas

**In their 2014-2015 Resolutions, the National Education Association includes “size” as one criterion when talking about diversity.**

#### **Resolution B-12. Diversity**

The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, physical ability, **size**, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society.

The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations.

The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs, and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2002)

**“So if a college education is indispensable, the challenge as I see it is how to make it more accessible.”**

**- Gordon Gee**



## How to Use This Tool Kit

Each section will deal with a certain barrier Students of Size may encounter at an institution of higher education. Some colleges and universities may have already remedied accessibility issues, so some of the barriers may be applicable and some may not. Feel free to skip around and “rummage through the Tool Kit” to look for the information you need about problems and barriers you have encountered for Students of Size on your campus. This is a constantly changing Tool Kit, so if while you are reading, you think of barriers that have not been addressed, or some innovative tools to address them, please let us know.



*“Let’s stop ‘tolerating’ or ‘accepting’ difference, as if we’re so much better for not being different in the first place. Instead, let’s celebrate difference, because in this world it takes a lot of guts to be different.” - Kate Bornstein*



## Campus Topography

by Maria Pena, MS, ABD and Pattie Thomas, PhD



### Campus Parking, Bus Stops, Carts and Campus Vehicles

Elizabeth F.:

“Parking presented one of the biggest obstacles for me. There were times when I was able to manage the half-mile or more hike from my car to class with relative ease, but then there were those times when I wasn’t up to the walk. After I had an emergency gallbladder removal surgery during summer school, I was given a medical permit which allowed me to park on campus. After the permit expired, and I still wasn’t feeling up to walking the distances, I learned that if I drove to a bus stop off-campus, I could catch the bus to class and be dropped off near the front door of the classroom building. No matter what mode of transportation you choose, be sure and get a good quality backpack for your books and notebooks. I had no problems adjusting mine to accommodate for my size, I was able to save myself from unnecessary backaches and it helped me blend in with other students.”

This is a common problem, not just for Students of Size, but for students with mobility disabilities. There are just enough parking spaces for Students with Disabilities<sup>5</sup> per the code, but that usually is not enough for all who need to use them. Many Students of Size have limited mobility, not necessarily as a result of their size, but due to the nature of a co-morbid condition, such as rheumatoid arthritis. The sizes of the actual parking spaces for the student body are usually cut much smaller so as to make room for more vehicles, so getting in and out of a car can be extremely difficult for Students of Size, even with a compact car.

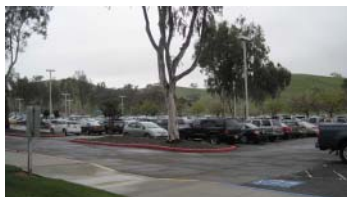
Then there is the issue of distance to the location on campus. Staff and disability-placard students have the closest parking places; however, those spots fill up too, and there may be accidents or construction and other unforeseen issues.

Bus stops may not have a covered seating area, so Students of Size who are left standing for a long time without covered seating will have difficulty waiting for the bus, especially in hot or inclement weather. Ambulation to the bus stop may be at issue: if a class concludes with only a few minutes to spare before the bus arrives, it may be difficult or impossible to meet the bus in time to ride it.

These are common problems faced by students every day; however, for Students of Size, they entail constant struggle.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout this Tool Kit we will be utilizing “people-first language” when referring to disabilities (other than when referring to department names, such as Disabled Student Services). Although there is controversy over the use of people-first language, with some believing that it is condescending, the authors of the Tool Kit believe that it is the more accepted terminology currently used in institutional settings.





## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

**Some suggestions for improvement:**

### **Mobility Scores and Parking:**

1. There are publications that rate cities and attractions with a “Walk-Score.” We suggest that campuses create a “Mobility Score” using the Mobility Score Matrix on the next page. The higher the number of the score, the greater ease of mobility to the location. When publishing maps either online or in hard copy, colleges and universities could utilize that score system and post it. If a student is new to the campus, they are not only able to determine how far or close their campus building is for classes, they will be able to see that in advance in order to find the best parking lot and/or the best bus stop. A building that looks close to a parking lot on a map, may not be in close proximity at all. Scores would give students realistic information for appropriate planning.
2. Post-Secondary educators should explain the advantages of Students of Size taking a practice trip to the campus. Students who are visually impaired have orientation and mobility instructors who assist them. Explain to students that by taking a trip to campus, they will be better prepared to get to their location quickly on the first day of classes. The trip will offer them the opportunity to explore alternate routes and different parking lots, should the first route present a problem.
3. Text messages to students: Many times a student will come on to campus, only to see their parking lot blocked off with a sign that the lot is full. Most campuses now have an emergency text messaging system that could alert students via a text to their cell phone as to alternate routes and parking lots. Construction, accidents or other possible delays can also be announced.
4. All bus stops should have size-friendly benches with some shade or shelter above them. If a student is hypersensitive to climate changes, for example, they could have an adverse health reaction, opening the institution to liability issues.
5. Faculty can be of assistance to Students of Size, just as they are to students with mobility limitations. When the student goes to Disabled Student Services to arrange for an adaptive table and a size-friendly chair, the student may also request, through the ADAAA interactive process with the disability specialist, to make a statement on the Academic Accommodations Plan. Their statement should indicate that they need to leave class a few minutes early to catch a bus or get to their next class which is located a great distance away. This gives them time to get to where they are going.
6. If there is a cart service at the institution through the Disabled Student Services Office, with authorization the student can be picked up in a cart and taken to their destination (the ADAAA does not mandate this service; however, there are colleges and universities which still provide the service). The carts need to be size-friendly with armless seating and extra-long seat belts to accommodate passengers of size.

## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Mobility Score Matrix

Mobility Score	Description
90 - 100	<b>Mobility Utopia</b> Distances are minimal and easy to navigate; handicapped parking is available near the building; ramps are easy to access and benches/accessible seating are available along the route; covered bus stops with benches/accessible seating are available near the buildings
70 - 89	<b>Very Accessible</b> Distance between parking area/bus stop and the building is no more than a block; ramps are easy to access and benches/accessible seating are available along the route; covered bus stops with benches/accessible seating are available
50 - 69	<b>Somewhat Accessible</b> Campus has numerous buildings which require walking or a mobility device to access; ramps are easy to access and benches/accessible seating are available along the route; size accessible carts and campus vehicles are available in the parking area to assist in getting to your appropriate building; covered bus stops with benches/accessible seating are available
25 - 49	<b>Car/Transportation Tentative</b> Movement around the campus may require a car; size accessible carts and campus vehicles are available in the parking area to assist in getting to your appropriate building; covered bus stops with benches/accessible seating are available; access to parts of the campus are on an incline
0 - 24	<b>Car/Transportation Dependent</b> Movement around the campus requires a car; no size accessible carts or campus vehicles are available; bus stops do not have benches/accessible seating; access to many parts of the campus are on an incline

### Handicapped Parking Enforcement

**Parking for Students with Disabilities:** The blue parking spots on campus, marked with the wheelchair designation are for all Students with Disabilities who have a state authorized placard or license plates on their car allowing them to park in the designated spaces. There always seem to be fewer parking spaces than Students with Disabilities needing them. The key is enforcement. Any person authorized to park in the assigned spaces must have an identity card or printout from the DMV which needs to be displayed and produced should a police officer or campus law enforcement officer inquire. If a Student of Size has a placard or plates, it is for a legitimate medical reason which prevents their ability to be mobile, not necessarily due solely to being a Person of Size. Parking enforcement officials on campus need to be sensitive to a student's particular circumstance when making inquiries of Students of Size parked in the blue parking spaces.



## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Walking Trails on Campus

1. If a campus has walking trails for students and the public to enjoy, then (along with each emergency call box) there should be a bolted-down, size-friendly bench. In the event a student becomes ill or needs to rest, it is reassuring to have the emergency campus phone in close proximity to a seat. Gates (instead of turnstiles), when added to a location like a botanical garden, should be size-friendly for persons to ambulate through without having to “side” themselves first.
2. Unusual inclines on walking trails should be indicated by appropriate signage along the route. Students of Size may not be able to ambulate through the area and may need to walk in another direction or choose another route.



Photo by: Pattie Thomas



## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Bookstores and Libraries

Both height and width considerations should be made in bookstore and library aisles. Aisles should be at least 36-inches wide to accommodate Students of Size and students who use assistive devices. If books must be put at heights above six feet, step stools that can hold a Person of Size should be easily available for those who can use them. Some effort should be made to put the most popular selections two- to five-feet high so that most persons, whether tall, short or in a chair will be able to reach most books, reserving bottom and top shelves for least popular items. In libraries and in larger bookstores, seating without arms or benches should be available throughout the shelves. Seating should be strong enough for Persons of Size and placed in accessible areas. Personnel should be on the alert for persons trying to find out-of-reach items and should politely inquire if the student needs help retrieving any items.

In addition, ensure that college logo attire available for sale includes plus sizes (up to 10X).



### Cafeterias and Food Courts

Best accommodations would include easily movable chairs and tables that can be configured in a diverse manner allowing for accommodation on the basis of size and use of assistive devices. Fixed tables or chairs create barriers and do not allow for easy accommodation. Counters for ordering and picking up food should be low enough for persons sitting on assistive devices to order, pay and receive food. Displays of food items should also be low enough for viewing by short persons and persons using assistive devices.

Efforts should be made to manage lines so they are not long, forcing students to stand for a long period of time. During peak periods employ strategies such as opening multiple tills, creating more than one place to order food and accommodating those who cannot stand extensively.

If the space between ordering and sitting to eat is divided, benches or chairs without arms should be available for use while waiting to order or pick up completed orders.

Since some conditions involving food and gluten sensitivities can lead to increases in weight, and thus can often be an issue for Persons of Size, efforts should be made to avoid cross-contaminating foods with potential allergens such as nuts, seafood, milk, etc. Signs should be posted to warn students of potential allergens and inform students of efforts to avoid cross-contamination.

Gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan alternatives should be available.

## Campus Topography (cont'd.)



### Restrooms

Doors to restrooms and to stalls should be 36-inches wide. Heavier doors should be automated with hands-free door openers to assist with entry. Doors should also have a working door stop to be used when automation is not working. There should be a notice with contact information posted on doors to alert Maintenance when automated doors are in need of repair.

Restrooms designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities should be marked as such. Make sure that all items hanging on the walls for use in restroom stalls (trash bin, toilet paper dispenser, bag hook, etc.) are placed above the grab bar, not below it--but not too high.

The door to the designated handicapped stall should swing out, not into the stall, or swing both ways. Locks should be low enough to be reached from an assistive device. Locks and handles should be universally designed and easy for persons with fine-muscle or arthritic difficulties to move them. Note that universally designed door handles will also make it easier for students carrying books to use the doors. (See <https://www.ncsu.edu/project/design-projects/sites/cud/content/principles/principles.html> for an understanding of universal design.)

Paper towels and hand dryers should be at a height that is easy to reach from an assistive device. At least one sink should allow for a wheelchair user to slide under the sink even if they are a Person of Size.

Trash cans should not be placed near the doorway, especially just to the side of the door as these block efforts to open the door from a chair or scooter.

Signs should be posted in the restrooms to encourage people to only use the handicapped stall if needed and to not move the trash cans.



### Student Services Buildings

Efforts should be made to reduce the size of lines so that students who have difficulty standing for long periods of time will not be forced to stand in line. These include multiple lines during peak periods, line alternatives for those who need it, online and phone options to avoid a trip to student services, kiosk service and appointments. If long lines do occur, then benches or chairs without arms should be available to allow students to sit while waiting.

Counters and kiosks should be at a height accessible to persons using assistive devices.

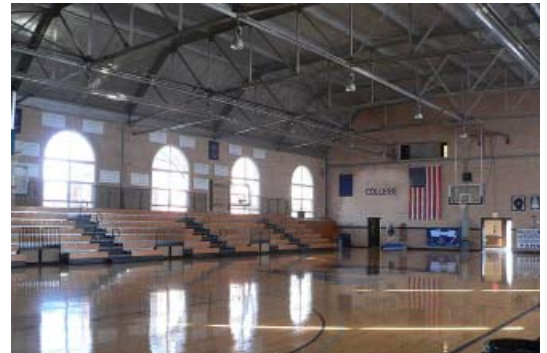
## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Test Centers

Test Centers should endeavor to reduce line check-in so that students who have difficulty standing for long periods of time will not be forced to stand in line. These include multiple check-in points, appointments and online alternatives.

Test room aisles and doors should be 36-inches wide.

Similar to classroom issues, testing centers should have tables and chairs that universally accommodate persons of all sizes. If computers are used for tests, the height of the computers and screens should accommodate students of varying sizes or using assistive devices.



### Locker Rooms, Gym and Sports Complexes

All dressing rooms, sports equipment and exercise or game rooms should be accessible to persons using assistive devices as well as Persons of Size. This includes:

- Elevators to multiple levels
- Doors and aisles should be 36-inches wide throughout the facilities
- Equipment should be available at the right height for persons using assistive devices
- Equipment should be able to hold the weight of Persons of Size
- Zero-step entrances to all areas
- Zero-step entrances to shower stalls
- Shower stalls for wheelchairs should have doors that swing out or both ways
- Door handles should be universally designed, accommodating persons with fine-muscle and arthritic difficulties
- Zero tolerance of name-calling, teasing or bullying for any reason
- Alternative sports or activities to accommodate Students of Size and Students with Disabilities

All personnel should be trained to understand and teach the safe usage of equipment by Students of Size and Students with Disabilities.



## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Theaters, Auditoriums and Stadiums on Campus

Alternative seating in these venues should be available to accommodate assistive devices and persons who do not fit in the preinstalled seating.

All parts of these areas should be accessible. This includes any field or stage, which should be either zero stepped or ramped to allow participation of all persons in events, whether as performers or audience members.

The accessibility should be built into the venue, not “arranged for” on a special basis. Clear signs should inform audience members and event participants of these accommodations. They should also be clearly advertised as part of any event promotion.

Alternative seating should be integrated into the regular seating so that persons needing accommodation can sit with persons who are able to use the preinstalled seating. No separate section should be created, segregating persons in need of accommodations from other people.

Personnel should be trained to identify and ask patrons of any size or ability if they need accommodation for their party. Staff should be trained to listen to all members of the party, not just the thin or more able-bodied persons.

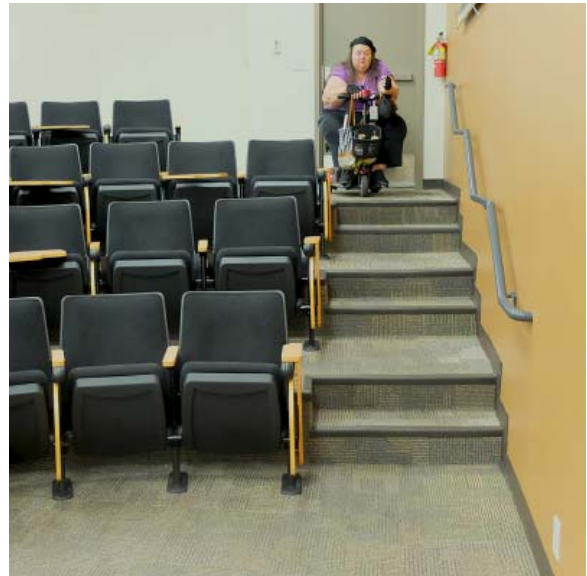


Photo by: Clark Beltran



Photo by: Pattie Thomas

### Student Health Centers

All medical equipment, office supplies and patient practices should follow:

- Guidelines for Healthcare Providers Who Treat Fat Patients ([www.naafaonline.com/dev2/about/Brochures/NAAFA Guidelines for Healthcare Providers.pdf](http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/about/Brochures/NAAFA_Guidelines_for_Healthcare_Providers.pdf))
- Americans with Disabilities Act: Access To Medical Care For Individuals With Mobility Disabilities ([www.ada.gov/medcare\\_mobility ta/medcare ta.htm](http://www.ada.gov/medcare_mobility_ta/medcare_ta.htm))



## Campus Topography (cont'd.)

### Student Health Centers (cont'd)

Seating in the waiting room should include larger chairs, benches and/or chairs without arms to accommodate Students of Size. Seating should also be moveable to allow for accommodation of persons using assistive devices.

Check-in counters should be of a height to accommodate persons using assistive devices.

Examination rooms should also have accessible seating and enough room for assistive devices, including 36-inch-wide doors and plenty of floor space.

Weighing patients should be optional unless a medical test or medication dosage requires weight consideration. If it is required that the student be weighed, allow the student to be weighed while facing away from the scale, with no comment from staff. Students who refuse to weigh should be allowed to refuse. If a student requests that weight loss discussions not take place, indicating they do not want to make weight loss a goal, a note should be made in the chart and this request should be honored. Discussions of exercise and eating should be centered around health, not weight loss.

As part of the consent process, students should be informed of the medical reasons for dietary, exercise and weight control treatments, including a full understanding of the efficacy and success rates for these treatments.

An ombudsman or other mediator should be available to assist with patient's rights, and students should be clearly notified of those rights and whom to contact for assistance. All ombudsmen should be trained to understand specific concerns of Patients of Size and Patients with Disabilities so they can better sort through any issues.

### In Case of Emergencies

As part of the emergency management plans for each building, signs indicating the location of gathering points for persons who need assistance should be posted by each Emergency Instructions sign. Workers or volunteers should be trained in both basic first aid and procedures to assist persons who cannot negotiate stairs with or without assistive devices, to exit the building. This would include an override key for elevators when a fire or emergency system disables elevators upon alarms.



## Inside the Classroom by Maria Pena, MS, ABD

The environment in a college classroom can make a student's collegiate experience the best in their academic life, or the worst during their post-secondary years. There are both social and physical environments. This section is about how the physical environment of a classroom can be welcoming or inhospitable to Students of Size.



Photo by: Pattie Thomas

### Seating Nightmares

Students of Size may not be able to fit comfortably in the traditional classroom chairs with tables for writing attached (tablet desks). The biggest issue for a Student of Size is the seats in which they must sit in order to equitably participate in the classroom with the professor and students. When Students of Size enroll in classes, they must actively address the seating issue because characteristically, the basic needs of Students of Size are usually an afterthought. They are viewed as just another task for a college or university to address when and if a student requests, or in many cases complains about, seating during the first week of the semester. In the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (and usually only in a perfect world) all accommodations should be readily available to students on the first day of classes. Seating is a basic need of a student in any class on campus and, in the practice of Universal Design (UD), seats should be adjustable, augmentable and available to students with needs specific to their comfort while seated in them.

Every semester there are Students of Size who come into disability support offices to ask for assistance—a facility modification so that they can benefit from instruction just like the other students in the class. The challenge is what to do the first day of class when the student walks into the classroom only to be embarrassed by being told by the professor or an administrator that, because of their size, they have to sit on the floor. The indignity of that micro-aggression on the part of educators toward size-different students is tantamount to the historical discrimination against African-Americans' being relegated to seats in the back of the bus. Students will come to my office in tears. Seeing that I too am a woman of size gives them some respite and validation when they tell me about the affront to their dignity.

More from Elizabeth F. when she made that first call to the Disabled Student Services Office at her university:

“Hello, I need to make special seating arrangements for some of my classes,’ I said to the voice at the other end of the line. ‘What’s your disability?’ she asked. I hesitated. ‘I don’t have a disability... the seats do.’ Silence. ‘W..whhat?’ This clearly was not the answer she was accustomed to hearing, but she did make an appointment to ‘see’ me, and she got me what I needed in order to be comfortable. An armless chair and a small table were provided for me in any classroom, at my request.”



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

Universal Design is a practice by which the removal of topographical or physical plant barriers on campus is incorporated into the original design of the environment, rather than a reaction to a subsequent accommodation or access issue on the part of the college or university community. With this thought in mind, seating becomes a major issue in working with Students of Size.

Some of the common problems of seating have to do with the institution's overwhelming need to place as many students in a class as the fire code allows. The more students, the more money generated; and like any business, a postsecondary institution's main objective is to perpetuate itself. To that end, seats are characteristically designed for a small- to average-size student. To save space, a chair has a writing table attached to it (nomenclature is a "Tablet Desk"). If the student has a lower body mass index, the ease of fitting into the desk is not a matter of great importance. With the increasing numbers of Students of Size and a more stringent enforcement of the ADA, colleges and universities must pay attention to seating and the students' comfort while seated in the classroom.

Here is Elizabeth F.'s experience:

"For three years I spent my classes stuffed into a desk, with much of the left half of my body hanging off the edge of a too small seat. Sitting in that predicament for 90 minutes, with my left foot falling asleep from the strain of balancing my body, eventually grew to be more than I could bear, and I dropped out of school.

Ten years later, I decided to give it another try. I had hoped that things would be better, but the torturous desks hadn't changed. Fortunately, I had. As I began my journey of self-acceptance, I learned one simple thing: I am worth having whatever amount of space I need in order to be comfortable."



What is defined as a good task chair for a classroom for a Student of Size depends entirely on the individual student's need and the department's budget. Good chairs are expensive. A suggestion for task chairs designed for People of Size can be found at the [SAFCO website](#).

Why is the chair pictured considered suitable for use in a classroom? How do you know what the student needs versus wants? The first thing the disability services provider should engage in is the interactive process with the student. The interactive process is mandated in the ADA as the communication and exchange of best practice ideas of certain accommodations customized on an individualized basis. Simply put, the provider must ask the student what kind of chair has worked for them in a classroom or work setting before requesting this accommodation. This does not mean that the institution must provide exactly what the student wants or feels that they need in class. The provider will look at the request and, based on their professional opinion, will determine if it is reasonable given the individual disability.



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

Adaptive furniture which may be cost prohibitive for many institutions can be replaced with less expensive, equally reliable options. So what is the perfect chair for a Student of Size?

1. The chair must be without arms. Arms confine the student to certain parameters and restrict movement. It is difficult to do work in a class with the chair arms gouging your sides.
2. A seat with these or similar measurements would be defined as a size-friendly chair: Seat Size: 22.25"W x 20.75"D. Back Size: 23"W x 23"H. Seat Height Adjustment: 19.5" -23.5"H. Overall: 44.75"H x 27"W x 30.25"D.
3. Depending on the student, some degree of padding in the back and the seat of the chair may be needed. At minimum, a padded seat works well.
4. The chair should be sturdy, well built and always properly maintained. A weight capacity of at least 450 pounds is a good rule of thumb. The chair pictured on the previous page has a weight capacity of 500 pounds. Metal chairs with high backs and vinyl padding usually work best.
5. A good relationship with the Facilities Department can expedite maintenance on campus, so it behooves the Disability Services Provider to establish rapport with that department. Metal frame chairs can break and there are only so many times the metal alloy can be welded back together before it needs to be replaced.
6. Accidents do happen with broken chairs, so when the Facilities Department places the chair/ table set-up in the classroom, make an up-to-date spreadsheet to assist them with maintenance and upkeep. It is advantageous to know where the adaptive furniture is and have a means to access the information because, if chairs and tables are placed in one part of a classroom area, that does not mean they will remain there for the next class. Students should not have to move their chairs and tables back to the accessible placement in the classroom. It opens the institution up for litigation from a negligence claim and/or an Office for Civil Rights (OCR) complaint should a student be injured while moving a table.
7. Faculty must be kept in the communication loop. When a Student of Size makes an accommodation request for an adaptive chair for their class, it is imperative to make the request work by enforcing it. The chair and its placement in the room need to be indicated on the Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP). When the AAP copy is given to the professor, they have been put on notice that this is an official college accommodation for a specific student with a disability. As such, the chair and table should not be moved or otherwise interfered with while in the classroom.



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

### Too Many Requests for Adaptive Tables

Tables for Students of Size are just as important as the chairs in a classroom. The table must not be attached to the chair, and needs to be height adjustable. A height adjustable table is useful for students who are wheelchair users, so their chairs can wheel right under the table, the same way a person who is not a wheelchair user scoots up a chair to be closer to the desk. With a Student of Size, the height of the table can be adjusted in order to improve their comfort, and improve their reach radius. Usually a table can be elevated as much as 34 to 36 inches, but they also cost more for the institution.

Some examples of good adaptive tables are:

The SCH-2100 wheelchair accessible desk design, from the [Theradapt Company](#), which combines strength and functionality and blends perfectly into any classroom scenario. Heavy 16-gauge frame with integral U-brace.

- Features a generous 20" x 36" work surface offered in 5/8" thick solid plastic in beige or grey
- Standard nylon base self-leveling glide has a chrome plated finish providing sustained durability and is rubber cushioned for noise dampening
- Dual bolt attachments on the threaded 16-gauge leg inserts ensure stability at each height adjustability ranging from 26"-34" in one inch increments



The table provides enough room for writing and has the height feature to change as needed. This table costs approximately \$220.00.

If a student has an adaptive chair, they should have an adaptive table as well. The table needs to be adapted to the height of the person and the ergonomic reach of the student, so they can be comfortable taking notes in class. Pedestal Base Computer Tables with Adjustable Height by [Correll](#) are one example.

Features:

These pedestal school tables by Correll have durable high pressure laminate tops that are available in a variety of colors. Designed using heavy-duty welded steel frames and adjustable nylon glides; stretcher bar adds stability. Legs adjust from 21"-29"H in 1" increments. This table costs approximately \$210.00.



The problem with tables that are small enough for one person to carry or drag means that there will be a greater chance of the table disappearing and being placed into an office or other area, instead of being left in the classroom. This is why faculty are so important to the maintenance and monitoring process.



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

### Table Wars

Due to limited funding, limited classroom space, and inattention by the student to their own accommodation needs, issues between students regarding use of the tables will sometimes arise.

For example, one student with a mobility impairment went through the appropriate department to secure an adaptive table; in the classroom, a Student of Size arrives (with no authorization for services) before the student with the mobility impairment does and proceeds to sit in the adaptive chair at the table. An uncomfortable situation arises where a Student of Size argues with another student who procedurally has the right to sit there.

If Universal Design had been implemented, all classrooms on campus would have long tables and armless chairs for all students to use. What is often the case is that, in these unpleasant situations, the faculty member refuses to get involved; usually because it is so uncomfortable a matter that they feel they will be blamed for discrimination. So they stay out of it. It is not an uncommon scenario that students become so angry that the campus police are called in to break up escalating verbal altercations or worse.

*Sorry, limited availability*

### Lessons Learned

There are several lessons to be learned here.

One lesson is for the professor of the class to be an active participant in accommodations for all Students with Disabilities in the classroom. The professor could have resolved the situation by discreetly telling the Student of Size that the other student had made prior arrangements for use of the table and the chair in the classroom. The Student of Size must schedule an appointment with Disabled Student Services to make arrangements for tables in their classes. The professor can, again discreetly, give the student a business card with the Disability Coordinator's name, phone and email information for their convenience. But what can be done that day in class? The professor needs to do one of the following:

1. Contact the Facilities Department either via a cell phone or a classroom phone and request a set-up if one is available to be placed in the room as soon as possible.
2. Ask the facilities workers to move a set-up not currently in use for the class time then move it back to its place of origin after the class concludes.
3. Contact the Disabled Student Services (DSS) office and ask for their assistance.

The students will see a proactive professor willing to help out, and tensions will be eased substantially.

## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

The second lesson that should be learned is for the Student(s) of Size. Faculty should politely and confidentially tell all Students of Size that call, email or come into the office to:

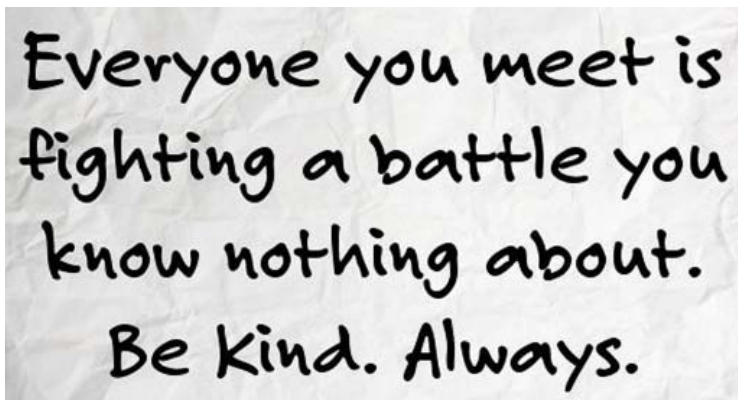
1. Make sure they have a table order submitted prior to the start of classes for each class enrolled.
2. Contact the DSS office immediately, even in real time, if their table and chair set-up is not where it is supposed to be (this happens constantly on a college campus).
3. Alert the DSS office if the chair and/or table are wobbly, in disrepair, or the identification stickers have been defaced or removed, so that the problems can be corrected that evening by the facilities workers.

In other words, for Students of Size being considered a population needing accommodations, the trade-off is that they must do what all other Students with Disabilities are told to do: take responsibility for their disability. The Students with Disabilities who communicate constantly with the DSS office are more successful than those students who do not communicate.

If there is a third lesson to be learned, it is for all parties involved in this situation:

1. Tolerance and courtesy can go a long way and prevent escalations over seating in the classroom.
2. The minute there is a question as to the number of adaptive tables and chairs placed in the room, or lack of seating, each one should consider notifying the DSS office before the accusations fly, and allow the professionals in the office to handle any discrepancy.

**“The highest result of education is tolerance.” - Helen Keller**



Everyone you meet is  
fighting a battle you  
know nothing about.  
Be kind. Always.

## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

Darlene H. had a positive experience when she returned to college later in life:

**“My initial experience with attending college was that of a normal classroom environment; rows of the type of desks you sat in while in high school with everyone facing forward. The seating was uncomfortable, at best, and difficult to ‘angle’ into and out of with a large body.**

**I didn’t complete my education in my early years but returned much later as a working adult. I chose to attend a private university extension that promoted itself as being for adult learners. The environment was created to engage adult students through the use of ‘cohort’ classes. The classes were smaller in their number of students, there were tables and rolling chairs instead of ‘student desks’ and they were arranged in a U-shape in the classroom to allow better interaction among the students. The cohort moved through a set curriculum together as a group, completing all coursework as a group. We were treated as adults and interacted with others in the group and the instructors freely--a true learning environment.”**





## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

### Classroom Teaching Essentials and Their Placement



In a college classroom, there are many more instructional tools than textbooks, flashdrives, and computers. This section will briefly discuss accommodation tips for placement of classroom tools used in lecture, lab or for examinations. Placement should not be an afterthought in a size-friendly classroom.

**Chalk/White Boards:** Most classrooms will have at least one board at the front of the room for lecture. However, in some academic subjects, like mathematics, it is very common to see the professor writing on boards attached to all four sides of the room. The best judgment for seat placement in order to effectively view the boards is in the hands of the student. Provided the student has a size-friendly chair and table and can turn the chair and their body around in the appropriate direction without blocking walking egress, then the charge of access is met. However, if students are to work at the board and the tablet desks, adaptive tables and chairs are so close together that the Student of Size cannot have reasonable access to the board, then the charge of accommodation is not met.

Sometimes it is difficult to see or access the board because, in a temporary classroom, the board may be an easel with a large pad of paper and pens. If this is the case, then it is incumbent upon the student to let the faculty member know their accommodation needs.

### Smart Classrooms and Overhead Projectors

Smart classrooms are those that have mixed media capability built-in with the other features incorporated into the room's construction. Usually a smart room will consist of a PC set-up, perhaps a DVD/CD/Blu-ray player and a media projector usually attached to the ceiling in the center of the room. Usually the center of the classroom must be free and clear of students' heads, books, laptops, etc., so the projector's lens can clearly access the screen or wall in the room where the media will be shown to the class. Many Students with Disabilities prefer front row of the room in the center for their seating placement, as assigned seating even at tablet desks is considered an accommodation under law. Adaptive tables and chairs are frequently placed in the center front row of the room. For a Student of Size, trying to move the set-up and get a good view without occupying another student's view and space can be difficult. If movies or other media are shown in a class using any type of projector, the professor should take a good look at the room in advance to determine the vantage point that would be best suited for the students to be comfortable, and move them accordingly.



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

### Science Lab Accommodations

Often it is not until a complaint or a request for accommodation is filed with an institution's administration that the needs of Students of Size in science laboratories are addressed. It is preferable to consider and address these needs before classes begin.

#### Laboratory Attire

Usually, the lab professor will tell students to wear non-synthetic, comfortable clothing: preferably jeans or slacks and a shorter sleeve (but not sleeveless) shirt. A pair of closed-toed shoes is suggested especially when dealing with bodily fluids from a cadaver or chemicals in an organic/inorganic chemistry class.

The lab coat is normally a white coat, worn over clothes. If the students are wearing synthetic fabrics (such as sweaters) and are working with chemicals that are flammable, they will be told to remove the flammable clothing. The problem with the lab coats is that they are not designed with Students of Size in mind. If the institution is supplying the lab coats and protective wear, its responsibility is to provide several that are plus-sized. "One size fits most" is not accurate. [allheart](#) is one business that sells lab coats in plus sizes.

Goggles are worn to protect the eyes from harmful fluids, solids or aerosols permeating the air in a lab. Standard size goggles may not be sufficient for the needs of a Student of Size and whether in a professional or educational laboratory, chemical safety goggles are recommended. Crews Verdict Indirect Vent Safety Goggles (2410) are good for medium to large faces and available from [FullSource](#).



## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

### Stations in a Science Lab

Lab stations assist students in conducting experiments involving chemicals, slides, cadavers, horticulture samples, geology specimens, etc. Pieces of tissue or smaller samples are presented for further examination under a microscope, usually provided directly at the station for students to study, experiment, write in lab books and provide descriptions. During a regular class period, it's common to have two students as partners to a station. There's not much room between stations and, for a Student of Size, this can create the following problems:



1. **Reach Radius** - The bigger the body size, the more difficult to reach across the station to retrieve items.
2. **Difficulties when taking examinations** - Students of Size may have difficulty viewing, or may block from view, specimens placed very close together at viewing stations.
3. **Seating at the stations** – Seating usually consists of lab stools. Some must be designed to support more weight, in order to elevate sufficiently to permit viewing for experiments and dissection.
4. **Too little room to write at a station for a Student of Size** - Lab protocols in a chemistry course are usually written out by students in their lab notebooks, which are graded. Room is limited for lab students to write in general but when a chemical reaction occurs in real time, it may need to be recorded (including the time), which can be difficult to do.
5. **Large specimen viewing** - When a large specimen such as a cadaver is placed in the lab, a dissection table is usually used for viewing while the professor is lecturing and instructing the students. It can be difficult for a Student of Size to ambulate around a large table and past the other students to get a good look.





## Inside the Classroom (cont'd.)

It can be very difficult for a Student of Size to navigate a crowded lab class. Here are some suggestions that the Disability Services Counselor can recommend:

1. Students of Size should try to pick lab sections either at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day. If there is extra time before the class or after the class, take advantage of this time to look at the stations with less of a crowd.
2. Students should make an appointment with their professor during office hours to give the professor the AAP form. They must discuss some of the following as applicable to the course: Lab coats, goggles, gloves and their size diversity needs. Students of Size need to know where the eyewash stations are in the lab and should try to secure lab stations with easy access to the eye washer in case of an accident. They need to ask questions and privately discuss any barriers to comfortable seating and access to all the lab materials for the class. If the student is apprehensive about talking to the professor, the Disability Services Counselor should send an email, letting the professor know that the student will be making an appointment to see them during their office hours to discuss their AAP.
3. Document everything. Just as with any student with a disability, it is important to document what was said or given to the student if a facility modification has been provided.
4. Students whose accommodations bother other students or faculty should alert the DSS office immediately to alleviate any discriminatory behavior. Students of Size should never have to hear: “You can’t see the cadaver? Well maybe if you lost weight you could get a better view...” Students of Size should never engage the nay-sayers. Allow the DSS professionals to do their job.
5. Courtesy and tolerance can go a long way. A syllabus statement that the lab is a discrimination-free zone and students need to be patient and tolerant will help everyone benefit from the learning experience.
6. Professors should assign lab partners, since unfortunately, the stereotypical notion of “fat and lazy” still prevails and the Student of Size may not get a willing partner, thereby experiencing prejudice, covert or overt, from the other students.

### Suggested Scenario – Discussion Questions

A 31-year-old mother of four decided to re-enter academia to create a better life for herself and her children. She was accepted as a student in a surgical technician program at her local Junior College. When she was informed that a decision was made to reject her admission to the program because there were no scrubs provided by the program in her size, the student offered to purchase her own scrubs to match those provided by the program. Faculty rejected this compromise claiming that the college maintains all the scrubs for the students. The woman offered to donate the scrubs to the program for maintenance purposes. Again, her solution to the problem was rejected and she was eliminated from the program.

1. Was this scenario an issue of size discrimination?
2. Should the student have been accommodated by accepting her suggestion of donating the scrubs and allowing her to remain in the program?

# Curriculum

by Lesleigh Owen, PhD

## Overview

Emphases: Educating yourself and including works about and by People of Size.

Considerations when constructing class:

- Step 1. Analyze your own biases toward fat.
- Step 2. Think critically about fat, fatness and yourself.
- Step 3. Read up on the subject of fat and fatness.
- Step 4. Include works and voices of People of Size.
- Step 5. Be aware of how you're framing and discussing fatness.
- Step 6. Be prepared for hostile and defensive reactions.



## Introduction

“[I’m] in my nursing class and my instructor just put on *Supersize Me*, somehow let’s all look at the fat girl in class.... Omg another documentary about how being fat is the most unhealthy thing you can be. I could have sworn there was more to nutrition than talking about fat people.” ~ANF in a Facebook post

Is it hurtful or discriminatory to discuss fatness in class? It depends on how you as a teacher do it. How you prepare for class, encourage students to prepare, and conduct the class itself can fundamentally shape the discussion you and a roomful of students have about fatness and fat persons.



This section of the Tool Kit addresses some basic ways you as an educator can prepare yourself and shape your class to address fatness as a course topic and make your curriculum friendlier to fatness and fat persons. This section first discusses some considerations for preparing for the class. Following that are some ideas for researching and implementing size-friendly resources in your syllabus. Finally, the section lays out some of the myths surrounding fatness and a smattering of resources that contain information that debunks them.

In the right context, and with the right preparation, discussions about fatness can change a student’s outlook and foster understanding and even the possibility for social change.

## Curriculum (cont'd.)

**"Not everything that is faced can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed until it is faced."  
- James Baldwin**

### Considerations When Constructing Your Class

You probably teach more than one class, and heaven knows your spare time is scant and precious. The idea of including more information in your class or setting out on an educational adventure to learn more about, say, the history of fatness just doesn't make your toes tingle.

Below lie a few quick ideas and links for educating yourself about fatness as an identity and a class of people; some simple thoughts on infusing your class with size-positive information; and some suggestions for preparing yourself for negative reactions to discussing fat. Our hope is to provide you with ideas for including information and experiences of People of Size when constructing your class and preparing yourself for the related, in-class discussions.

#### *Step 1. Analyze your own biases toward fat.*

Fat bodies and identities are topics fraught with morality, aesthetics, citizenship, notions of health, desire and desirability, and so on. The very first step in discussing fatness as a social issue in the classroom is thinking through how you know and have experienced fatness.

Sit with the idea of fat as personal experience and way of being. How do you understand the concept? What have been some of your experiences? Do you have a history of dieting or eating disordered behaviors? Do you judge fatness on others? Be honest with your experiences and feelings. Before you address fatness in a positive, or at least neutral, manner in your class, you must first acknowledge your own attitudes.

One way to test some of your implicit attitudes is the [Harvard Implicit Association Test](#). This test gauges automatic reactions, thereby recording test takers' first, and presumably most authentic, attitudes. This test may help instructors or students better understand their assumptions and biases pertaining to fat and fatness.

#### *Step 2. Think critically about fat, fatness and yourself.*

You've done some self-analysis; now it's time to turn the magnifying glass outward. Before starting to prepare for your course or for your class discussion, it behooves you to think through some of the ways Westerners conceptualize, define, and behave toward fatness and fat persons.



## Curriculum (cont'd.)

Some of the questions you may wish to think through – and eventually encourage your students to do the same – lie below:

- What meanings does the word “fat” hold for most people and how do we use it?
- Has fat always been seen as bad? Is fat seen as bad, ugly, or unhealthy in other parts of the world? What can we learn from looking historically or cross-culturally?
- How do we see fat people represented in the media, in movies, or on television? Does this have an impact on how we perceive fat people?
- Are our beliefs about fat people grounded in a robust knowledge of empirical evidence? Is there evidence that contradicts commonly held beliefs?
- In what ways might assumptions and stereotypes about fat people prevent them from engaging in healthy behaviors (ex. physical activity)?
- Why do we as a society focus on personal responsibility rather than the systemic inequality and stigma affecting fat people? For example, when we talk about fat people’s health, do we consider the evidence that fat people experience pervasive stigma and discrimination in the health care industry or how this negatively impacts their health and quality of care?

The bullet-pointed questions are excerpted from Michaela Null’s online article “The Sociology of Fatness: Critical Perspectives for Teaching Sociology (and Anthropology).” You can find the article [here](#).



*Step 3. Read up on the subject of fat and fatness.*

When researching for your class, consider exploring the histories, stories, and perspectives of People of Size. Did you know many scholars think Shakespeare’s Hamlet was fat? President Taft was a fat president and Supreme Court Chief Justice? The fat civil rights movement has been around at least since 1969? Likewise, some of the most influential performers in the United States have been larger than average: Ella Fitzgerald, Fatty Arbuckle, Dinah Washington, Hattie McDaniel, Lillian Russell, and The Notorious B.I.G., to cite a very few.

It might be fun and interesting to educate yourself on some of the fun, never-discussed histories, stories, and facts that address, include, or stem from People of Size.

Anthologies like *Shadow on a Tightrope* or *The Fat Studies Reader* highlight the varied experiences of Persons of Size; it might well benefit the classroom for teachers to read some of those articles.

## Curriculum (cont'd.)

### *Step 4. Include works and voices of People of Size.*

“In last semester’s Social Deviance class, I had my students study socially stigmatized groups and movements. One of them included the fat rights movement; in particular, I wanted to highlight the experiences of superfat persons. I chose to speak of my own experiences, albeit very briefly, and then used an audio recording from the Fat Activist Conference that addressed living as a superfat person in a world built to accommodate thinner bodies. My students were wide-eyed throughout the recording. They continue to reference that day’s discussion.”  
~Lesleigh O.



Olympian Chiara Rosa



As a slight variation on step three, consider including in your syllabus or in-class activities the works and voices of fat persons. This can include assigning readings that address fatness as lived experience but can also include bringing in guest speakers to talk about topics ranging from fathletes to the fat rights movement to living as an intersectional fat person<sup>6</sup>. Speakers politicized around their body sizes can challenge and fascinate students, many of whom have never heard fat discussed as anything but a negative condition or social problem.

### *Step 5. Be aware of how you’re framing and discussing fatness.*

When you address fatness in the classroom, do not discuss it as a social problem. Fatness is not a social problem; discrimination based on body size is. When you talk about fatness, be leery of using the word “obesity,” since it reinforces fatness as a medical issue rather than a social and personal one. Pay attention to persons and literature that unproblematically reference, for example, “The Obesity Epidemic” or “childhood obesity.” A great deal of literature exists on these topics that at least complicates or even debunks their veracity.

<sup>6</sup> Size diversity can intersect with the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

## Curriculum (cont'd.)

### Step 6. Be prepared for hostile and defensive reactions.

Be aware that you will likely have to fend off defensive, angry, and ignorant remarks about fatness. Educate yourself on answers to basic questions. You may not want to address such fundamental (and sometimes insulting) questions in the classroom, but it's good to know you can.

It's not entirely surprising how often the topic of "The Obesity Epidemic" oozes into seemingly benign discussions that have little or nothing to do with fatness. Representations of bodies in art, obsessive personalities, the U.S. healthcare system, coping with stress, disability rights, global life expectancies, literary tropes: Each of these topics and countless more have the capacity for turning into discussions of the "social problem" of fatness.

### red3.blogspot.com presents **FAT HATE BINGO**

Now the cliché repetition of anti-fat arguments is a fun game you can play at home.  
Get five fat-hate talking points in a row and you've got BINGO!



Credit: Brian Stuart, red3.blogspot.com

Unexpected attacks on fatness and fat persons occur often in the classroom. Below are some strategies for dealing with some of them:

- Educate yourself on many of the myths and misunderstandings that surround the topic of fatness. Be ready to quite likely be the only voice speaking quietly and scientifically in a flurry of "Obesity Epidemic" rhetoric. Below this section lie some of the most common myths and resources for debunking them.
- Create a file – PDF, Word document, Power-Point, or so on -- that addresses many of the myths surrounding fatness. Either print it for students or make it available digitally. When classroom discussions veer off into "The Obesity Epidemic," point students to this resource.
- Create the file discussed above and make it required reading prior to any classes that seem likelier to elicit such discussions.

Here are some of the very common arguments and knee-jerk responses that students, other faculty members, and even superiors may wield when you announce your intent to address fatness, fat persons, or anything pertaining to health in the Western world.

#### Fat persons:

- Are unhealthy. They have more heart attacks, strokes, knee and joint issues, asthma, sleep apnea, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on.
- Eat more.
- Eat fast food/unhealthy food.
- Don't exercise. They're lazy.
- Drive up the cost of healthcare.
- Hate themselves.
- Should/do diet, since dieting is healthy and desirable.
- Are pitiable at best, especially if they're doing the "right thing" and exercising and/or trying to diet away the fat. Those fat persons who don't do these things are selfish, morally suspect citizens.



## Curriculum (cont'd.)

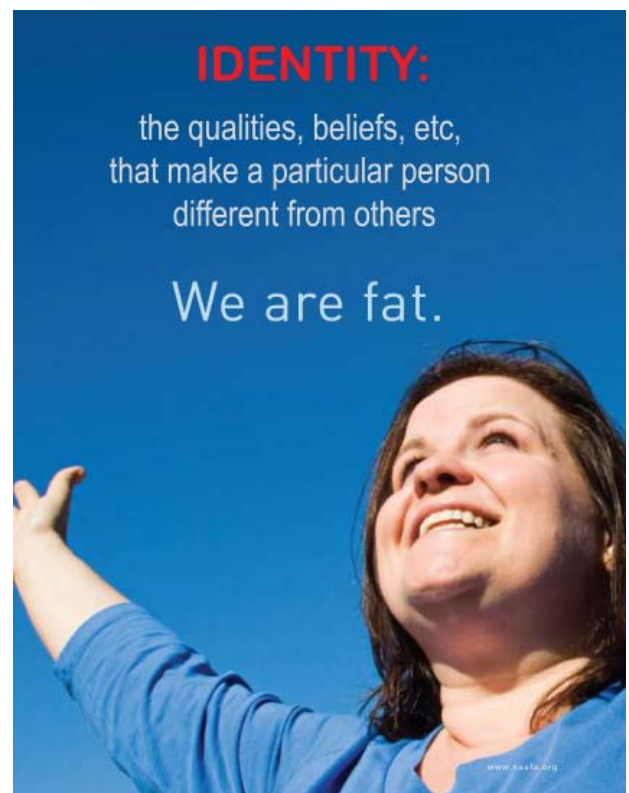
Some resources for challenging many of these myths include:

- The Association for Size Diversity and Health ([ASDAH](#)) website. More specifically, this site lists several [informational resources](#) in a variety of formats that debunk many of the myths listed.
- The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance ([NAAFA](#)) website. NAAFA is a civil rights organization working to end discrimination based on body size through education, advocacy and support. Equality at Every Size!
- [Dances with Fat Blog](#) - Ragen Chastain, famed professional dancer and fathlete, addresses fat issues and debunks junk science that targets and condemns fatness.
- [Junkfood Science Blog](#) - Although the author has since stopped writing posts, this blog addresses and debunks much of the “science” used to legitimize the moral panic over “The Obesity Epidemic.”
- Read any or all of the books on the history, definition, and effects of fatness. This [booklist](#) is taken from the NAAFA website.

### Conclusion

Fatness is emerging in the popular imagination as not just a personal bodily condition or even a social ill but as an identity worthy of exploration and nonjudgmental academic discussion. Your classroom can be a place where such conversations happen.

The key to discussing fatness as identity, as a social movement, as a source of solidarity and inequality, most potently includes educating oneself. Fat histories exist, fat persons have contributed to the art and culture of Western countries, and not every fat person despises and wishes to change their body. Myths and prejudice surround the entire subject of fatness. Excitingly, educators have the opportunity to seek out these alternative histories and voices and serve as the launching point for groundbreaking discussions on health, bodies, representations, science, and every other topic that assumes fatness, rather than sizeism, is a personal and social problem.



## School Policies

Most of the changes suggested in this Tool Kit require policy decisions at some level in order to implement. Policy-making should be inclusive. The first step toward inclusion can be achieved by involving employees and Students of Size at all levels of decision-making. This requires an active effort to recruit faculty, administrative and student participation from Persons of Size and Persons with Disabilities to serve on committees, join focus groups, conduct surveys and participate in other forms of involvement in the policy creation process. Once policies, procedures and environmental changes have been implemented, efforts to inform students, faculty, administrators and other stakeholders of these changes and ongoing efforts should be a top priority. Feedback from any Stakeholders of Size regarding the efficacy and need for improvement of all policies, procedures and environmental changes should be actively sought and considered.

## Appendices



### Glossary

**Fathlete** – Shortened version of “fat athlete”; fat people who are involved in fitness/sports/athletics at all levels.

**Fatness** - The state or quality of having a large amount of flesh; the quality of being physically substantial.

**Micro-aggressions** - A subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority or other nondominant group that is often unintentional or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype.

**Mobility Score** - A Mobility Score is a scoring system for use in estimating the ease of ambulation getting to and accessing campus facilities.

**Size Diversity** - The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, that every body is different, and recognizing our individual differences. Size diversity can intersect with the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

**Sizeism** - Discrimination against a person based largely or solely on a person’s weight, height or both. This type of discrimination can take a number of forms, ranging from refusing to hire someone because he or she is too short or too tall, to treating People of Size with disdain.

**Students of Size/People of Size** - Students/people with the quality of fatness; students/people that identify as fat.

## Appendices (cont'd.)

### Resources for Educators/Administrators

Exploring fat bias and debunking misinformation about fat people:

Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH) website: <https://sizediversityandhealth.org/>

Dances with Fat Blog: <https://danceswithfat.wordpress.com/>

Fat Hate Bingo 1:

<http://red3blog.tumblr.com/post/14230945875/fat-hate-bingo-1-revisited-so-i-know-my>

Fat Hate Bingo 2:

<http://red3blog.tumblr.com/post/16348208645/fat-hate-bingo-2-revisited-like-fat-hate-bingo>

Fat Hate Bingo 3: <http://red3.blogspot.com/2012/02/all-new-fat-hate-bingo-3.html>

Harvard Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Junkfood Science Blog: <http://junkfoodscience.blogspot.com/>

National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) website: <http://www.naafa.org>

*The Fat Pedagogy Reader: Challenging Weight-Based Oppression through Critical Education* available at: <https://www.peterlang.com/view/product/30790>

*The Sociology of Fatness: Critical Perspectives for Teaching Sociology (and Anthropology):*  
<https://conditionallyaccepted.com/2013/09/27/sociology-of-fatness/>

*the HAES Files: There Is No Social Justice Without Bodies:*

<https://healthateverysizeblog.org/2016/07/14/the-haes-files-there-is-no-social-justice-without-bodies/>

*Reflections on Thin Privilege and Responsibility:*

[http://lindabacon.org/HAESbook/pdf\\_files/HAES\\_Thin%20Privilege.pdf](http://lindabacon.org/HAESbook/pdf_files/HAES_Thin%20Privilege.pdf)

### Equipment resources:

Safco 500 lb. Heavy Duty Office Chair 3490 at Office Chairs Unlimited:

<http://www.officechairsunlimited.com/sa500lbheduo.html>

The SCH-2100 wheelchair accessible desk design from the Theradapt Company:

<http://www.theradapt.com/Store/ShowProduct.aspx?ID=3560>

Pedestal Base Computer Tables w/ Adjustable Height by Correll available at Worthington

Direct: <https://www.worthingtondirect.com/tables/pedestal-base-tables-by-correll.htm>

Plus-size Lab Coats from allheart: <http://www.allheart.com/plus-size-lab-coats/c/1253/D/>

Crews Verdict Indirect Vent Safety Goggles (2410) from FullSource:

<http://www.fullsource.com/crews-2410/>

## Appendices (cont'd.)

### Resources for Administrators (cont'd.):

ADA ONE: Higher Education: <http://ada-one.com/articles-tips/access-higher-ed/>

Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education - UDL on Campus:  
<http://udloncampus.cast.org/home#.V6kYqPkrK00>

### Resources for Students

A Guide to Disability Rights:

[http://www.uarts.edu/sites/default/files/downloadable-resources/guide\\_to\\_disability\\_laws.pdf](http://www.uarts.edu/sites/default/files/downloadable-resources/guide_to_disability_laws.pdf)

Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

**“The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil.”  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson**



Photo by: Kristi McMurry Woody



## Appendices (cont'd.)

### Acknowledgements

NAAFA's Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge and thank the individuals listed below for their contribution to the NAAFA Size Diversity in Higher Education Tool Kit. Without their efforts this Tool Kit would not exist.

Our intent is that the Tool Kit be used to help build a weight-neutral environment through education and awareness. We are committed to adding size diversity to the equation, ensuring that all people across the size spectrum are valued and respected. To read NAAFA's complete statement on diversity, please visit our website at [www.naafa.org](http://www.naafa.org).

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**We come in all sizes. . .**



Photo by: Dawn Jett



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