Academic Support Office (General Information)

Q: Does LA provide daily 1:1 support to individual students?
A: No, not through the skills coaching or the ASO. However, LA is a very supportive environment for many students to learn and grow. Each student has an advisor and smaller classes. Often students develop close relationships with their teachers and advisors and find that support just as helpful and necessary as that of a skills coach.

Q: Are students able to meet with the DAS?
A: All new students with a Learning Profile are required to meet with the director of academic support once a week until the mid-term. Students with documented learning disabilities are able (and sometimes required) to schedule time once a week in the Academic Support Office to check in and receive support. (This is not necessarily 1:1 support; often there are 2-5 students in the office.)

Q: Does the ASO evaluate students for or diagnose students with learning disabilities?
A: No. The DAS does keep a list of evaluators in the area.

Q: Does the ASO track the HW in every course offered at LA
A: No

Q: Will the DAS assist families with understanding the process of qualifying for accommodations at LA?
A: Yes

Q: Will the DAS assist families with understanding the process of applying for accommodations on college entrance standardized tests?
A: Yes

Q: Does the DAS hold yearly “team meetings” with teachers to review a student’s progress or discuss evaluation results?
A: No. However, when necessary, an advisor may pull together a meeting with a student’s teachers and/or the director of studies and/or academic support.

Q: Does LA provide assistive technology for students?
A: Students who have an accommodation to use a speech-to-text program or audio program to listen to text are allowed to use the Kurzweil program (text-to-speech) which is installed on computers at LA. Students may scan documents or books anytime. Once the student is taught how to use the technology, it becomes his/her responsibility to access it. The ASO also has examples of other assistive technologies like Dragon Naturally Speaking (text-to-speech) and the Livescribe Pen. Students are encouraged to try them out; families are encouraged to learn about them and then purchase their own copy of specific software or hardware for use at home or independently at school.

Q: Is there “drop-in” help in the ASO during the school day?
A: No. However there are several extra help blocks during the week when students can meet with their teachers. Students who work 1 block a week in the ASO, have been scheduled to do so by the DAS for a variety of reasons.

**Learning Disabilities**

Q: Does LA recognize that some students learn differently and may even have a diagnosed learning disability?
A: Yes

Q: Does LA follow the IDEA or 504 Rehabilitation act?
A: No. LA, because it is private institution, does not follow either of these laws.

Q: Does LA use or follow IEPs or 504 Plans written by school districts?
A: No

Q: Is documentation of a learning disability required for students to have classroom accommodations?
A: Yes
Q: What constitutes a disability and a need for an accommodation?
A: According to the ADA (American’s with Disabilities Act) individuals with disabilities have certain protections and the right to reasonable accommodations and equal access to programs and services. To access these rights an individual is required to furnish documentation that the disability substantially limits a major life activity when compared to most people, such as learning.

Q: What can be used for documentation of a disability and the need for accommodations? (See our full Documentation Policy)
A: A full neuropsychological or psychological/educational evaluation report which contains specific tests to support a diagnosis in a specific area and is current (within 3 years for most tests and 5 years for others). A doctor’s note is not enough documentation for a learning disability. (For example, ADHD can be medically diagnosed, however a medical doctor’s note is not documentation of how it affects a person’s ability to learn, nor does it support the need for accommodations.)

Accommodations

Q: What accommodations are available for LA students who qualify?
A:
- 50% extended time for quizzes, tests, and exams
- Small group setting for tests or exams
- Use of a calculator (math department has a policy on use)
- No penalty for spelling when spell check cannot be used
- Use of a computer for written expression
- Use of audio books/digital text and/or text-to-speech software (i.e. Kurzweil)
- Language waiver (after careful consideration and consultation with the DAS)

Accommodations for physical disabilities are carefully reviewed and approved on an individual basis in collaboration with our Health Services team. (i.e. cerebral palsy or hearing loss)

Q: What if my child’s evaluation lists other accommodations?
A: Evaluations will often list several other accommodations, modifications and recommendations for students which are not compatible with LA’s educational program.
Q: How is information about a student’s disability and need for accommodations communicated with faculty and staff working with the student?
A1: A Learning Profile is written for students with documented and diagnosed learning disabilities. Teachers have access to a digital copy. All evaluations are kept in a file in the Academic Support Office. Faculty, coaches and staff who need or want more information may view additional student information with the DAS’s approval. No photocopies or print outs of either Learning Profiles or evaluations are disseminated.
A2: Students, with approved accommodations, are required to advocate for themselves by having all of their teachers sign an Accommodation Agreement Form at the beginning of the year/term. It is otherwise known as the “blue sheet.”

Q: Who is responsible to provide the accommodations?
A: Accommodations are provided by the classroom teacher; however it is important for a student to communicate with his/her teachers regarding the best way to use an accommodation such as a computer or quiet setting. When necessary, the ASO will assist teachers and students with the provisions of accommodations.

**Academics/Curriculum**

Q: Does LA provide related services (speech and language, OT, and etc.) or write learning goals for students with learning disabilities?
A: No

Q: Does LA offer specialized, paced or remedial English, reading or math courses or intense reading instruction using a specific program (Wilson, OG, or etc.)?
A: No

Q: Does LA modify the curriculum, assignments or assessments (test, quizzes, and final exams)?
A: No

Q: Is there assistance within the classroom for students with learning disabilities, such as team teaching, 1:1 assistance or small group/pull-out instruction.
A: No
**Academic Skills Coaching**

Q: Does LA have tutors?
A: Yes, but we call them skills coaches or just coaches.

Q: What is the purpose of coaching at LA?
A: The purpose of coaching is to support those students who experience difficulty with their academic performance due to learning disabilities or learning style differences. In addition, students who have gaps in basic academic skills and/or those who significantly struggle with self-management skills, such as active study skills, time management, organization, and task completion/planning, may benefit from the support of an academic skills coach. LA’s coaching is meant to be transitional, not remedial. We expect students will eventually not need a skills coach. (See the Coaching Description for more information.)

Q: How many times a week may a student see a coach and how long are the sessions?
A: on average 1 or 2 times a week; sessions are 50 minutes long

Q: When are the sessions scheduled?
A: During a student’s free block; once it is scheduled it is considered a commitment, not a free block any longer. (On occasion we will schedule an early evening session between 6 and 8, if this schedule works best for the coach and student.)

Q: Is the coaching one to one or small group?
A: One to one

Q: Is there an additional cost for coaching at LA?
A: Yes. See the Coaching Registration form.

Q: Does LA require students to see a coach?
A: Yes. Sometimes during the admission process or as the school year progresses, it will be determined by the DAS, an admissions representative, a teacher, an advisor and/or the Director Studies that skills coaching is necessary. A student’s learning differences, need to review basic skills, or need to learn specific strategies to access information and demonstrate his/her learning may be such that coaching will be required for a specific time frame.
Q: What if my child needs more than 2 sessions a week?
A: LA’s coaching is meant to be transitional, not remedial. We expect students will eventually not need a coach. If a student needs more than 2 sessions a week, LA may not be an appropriate placement.

Q: Are LA coaching sessions for enrichment or grade enhancement or subject specific?
A: No. See the question regarding the purpose of coaching.
(The exception is math. We do have some math sessions available for students with significant needs in that area, but no foreign language tutors. Our coaches have strengths in certain areas (i.e. writing vs. science) and we attempt to match the coach’s strengths with the student’s needs.)

Q: What are the qualifications of the contracted coaches?
A: Most of the contracted coaches are certified teachers. Many have several years of experience working with high school students and have specific skill sets in the areas of learning disabilities, ESL (English as a Second Language), math, writing, reading or self-management/executive functions.

Q: How do you match a student with a coach?
A: The student’s learning needs and style and the coach’s strengths are considered the priority when creating the match. However, the logistics of schedule will also dictate who a student is eventually placed with. On the rare occasion of a “wrong” match, the DAS works with the student, parents and coach to determine the next course of action.

Q: Does LA have a Peer Tutoring program?
A: Yes. It is student-led and supported by both the Studies and ASO.

**Study Hall**

Q: Is there a scheduled structured study hall during the school day for students?
A: No

Q: What is Supervised Study Hall?
A: It is a very supervised and structured study space provided for boarding students only who meet the requirements to be in such a study hall. (GPA is lower than 2.0 and/or received a grade below C- at the end of the marking term.)