

## Service and Comfort Animals on Campus

### **General Considerations**

The seminary enforces a pet policy with specific guidelines related to type and care of animals in specific pet-approved seminary-owned residence units. Exceptions are made under certain conditions for service or comfort animals. The seminary reserves the right to enforce all relevant rules for the use of service or comfort animals through the policies outlined in the Seminary Pet Policy and applicable local and state laws. The seminary also reserves the right to revoke permission granted for the campus presence of any service or comfort animal whose owner fails to follow the requirements set forth in this policy.

State and federal laws have no specific provisions for people to be accompanied by comfort animals in places of public accommodation that have a no-pet policy. Therefore, requests for comfort animals in seminary housing and campus facilities will be reviewed under the Seminary's policy. Requests that do not carry evidence of the necessity of the animal or will provide an undue financial burden on the Seminary will be denied.

### **Service Animals**

While the Seminary is exempt from the requirements of the American Disabilities Act, a reasonable accommodation for service animals will be considered under certain circumstances. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. It will only be granted in within the context of the full range of physical and other accommodations requested and whether they can be reasonably satisfied. The request for a service animal has some limitations which are addressed in part below:

- The service animal can only be a dog.
- The animal must be trained to provide a service consistent with the disability.
- Proof of training may be required.
- The animal must be certified annually by a licensed veterinarian to be in good health and have current vaccinations in accordance with local and state ordinances.
- The resident must provide medical documentation of disability if requested.

Approved service animals will be allowed to access all public spaces including classrooms. The animal must be leashed at all times when outside of the residence of the disabled person.

### **Comfort Animals**

A comfort animal (also commonly referred to as an emotional support animal or support animal) is an animal which is prescribed by a licensed mental health professional to an individual with a disability in order to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual's disability. A comfort

animal is not a service animal or a therapy animal. A comfort animal does not receive specialized training to perform their role. A comfort animal accommodation must be requested in accordance with the appropriate NOBTS guidelines outlined below. The Seminary will consider requests for a comfort animal. Such use is restricted to the residence and other areas designated as “pet-friendly” in the campus pet policy, and will not extend to public use spaces including classrooms. The comfort animal exists for the sole purpose of emotional support and stress reduction that directly, substantially enables the resident to function more effectively. Each request will be evaluated on a case by case basis. In general, a reasonable accommodation request will be considered when the following criteria are met:

- The resident must provide medical documentation of a disability from a specialist provider (e.g. medical doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or licensed counselor).
- The animal is necessary to afford the resident full use and enjoyment of the residence.
- There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the benefit the animal provides. The resident must provide whatever information is necessary to demonstrate this connection.
- The accommodation can be made without endangering the health and welfare of other residents, damaging the property of the seminary or others, or creating an undue financial or administrative burden to the Seminary.
- The animal must be in good health and vaccinated with an annual verification and annual New Orleans city license obtained from a licensed veterinarian and must be on an active flea preventative program.

Though service and emotional support animals are considered by the seminary separately from pets, the general provisions of the seminary pet policy and all applicable local and state ordinances will apply to the care and maintenance of the comfort animal where applicable. If a reasonable accommodation is granted, the resident will be responsible for the animal at all times. The owner is responsible for cleaning up after the animal, disposing of the animal waste, repairing any damage caused by the animal, and the behavior of the animal at all times. Dogs must not exceed 50 pounds when fully grown without prior approval from the housing office. Breeds traditionally used for fighting, guard, or security purposes are not allowed in NOBTS pet-friendly housing. These include, but are not limited to the following: Pit Bulls (or related/mixes), Wolf hybrids, Rottweilers, German Shepherds, Akitas, Staffordshire Terriers, Chows, Alaskan Malamutes, Doberman Pinschers, Siberian Huskies, Presa Canarios.

In the case of a fellow resident with a conflicting accommodation for a registered disability, The Housing Office will consider the needs of both persons in meeting its obligations to reasonably accommodate all students, as well as to provide for the health and safety of the community and its property, and resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. Relocation of students because of conflicting accommodations will be handled with care and consideration for the needs of all parties.

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