



The Bark | October 31, 2022

The VPSL Column: Special Guest Edition



Guest columnist: Aimée Milne, *Director, Office of Student Accessibility*
and Jessica Carron, *Director of student rights and responsibilities*

Happy Halloween!

Today's VPSL guest column is coming to you from Aimée Milne, the director of the student accessibility office, and Jessica Carron, the director of student rights and responsibilities. We are here to talk to everyone about service and assistance animals. As our community of furry friends on campus continues to increase, so do the questions our students, staff, and faculty have about them. Therefore, we figured a newsletter named The Bark was the perfect place to talk about what qualifies for service or assistance animals, what expectations are for them on campus, and what you can do if you see one on campus.

Service animals are defined by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability”. In Oregon, these dogs can include those who are currently in training to learn to perform a task, and there are no restrictions on breed, size, or age. You may see these dogs labeled as service animals and wearing vests, but it is not required that they be in uniform. These dogs may come and go with their handler to any space on campus. It is important to remember that service animals are working hard to support their handlers and therefore it is not appropriate to approach the animals unless their handler has given you permission.

On the other hand, an assistance animal includes comfort, companion, therapy, or emotional support animals. Some assistance animals are dogs, but that's not required—they can be any species. These animals are prescribed to a person with a disability by a licensed mental health or healthcare provider because the animal alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the person's disability. They are not required to be trained to perform a specific job or task. However, these animals are only permitted to be in their owner's residence hall room or outdoors; they may not enter other buildings on campus.

Regardless if an animal is a service animal or an assistance animal, it is important to be aware of the expectations of owners and animals on campus. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

Owners need to be in full control of their animal at all times.

When not in a private residential room, animals need to be on leash unless a service animal must be off leash to perform a particular function of its job.

The animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals and the learning, living, and working environment.

If you are concerned about the behavior of a service or assistance animal on campus, we recommend you try talking to the animal's owner about your concerns, just as you would do with other student concerns, like noise or other disruptive behavior. If you are a staff member on campus and you need to determine if a dog is a service animal, you may ask the following questions:

Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?

What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Finally, anyone in the community has the right to file a report about the concerning behavior by going to [this link](#) or emailing srr@lclark.edu.

Service and assistance animals can be powerful supports for students. If you feel you need accommodations for one of these animals, please reach out to the Office of Student Accessibility by emailing access@lclark.edu. To review the details of our policies on animals on campus, check out our [Service and Assistance Animal Policy](#) and our [Animal Control Policy](#).

We hope the rest of your semester isn't too 'ruff'!

Aimée and Jess