Compliance with Federal Disability Laws
Regarding Service Animals

Texas Southern University faculty and staff must be able to determine when and from whom to request assistance when asked to accommodate students who use a service animal to make the university more accessible. There are several laws that govern the permitted use of animals for students with physical and/or mental disabilities. Navigating the current state of the law can be confusing and each request requires a thoughtful review of the governing laws to determine when and where certain animals must be allowed on campus as a reasonable accommodation.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is applicable to Texas Southern University, and the University and its employees must comply with policies set forth by the ADA.
- In addition, Texas has state disability laws that require a public facility to admit and accommodate service animals. State law may have requirements that federal law does not.

Service Animals:

Service Animal (as defined by the American with Disabilities Act). “Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability”

The animal must be a dog. The function of the animal should be in direct correlation to the disability. The animal (dog) cannot be solely for the purpose of comfort, or emotional support.

The Fair Housing Act:
The Fair Housing Act applies to on-campus dormitories. Under these guidelines there are several other types of animals that would qualify as a service animal.

Individuals who have a legitimate objection to the presence of service animals, must make their concerns known so that a decision can be made regarding the presence of animals in residence halls, classrooms and other areas on a case by case basis. The key will be accommodating the needs of students with disabilities, while recognizing the health, safety and educational goals of others in the campus community.

Direct all questions regarding access and accommodation of service animals to Keisha David, Associate Director, Office of Human Resources, david_kl@tsu.edu.