What is a Learning Disability?
A learning disability (LD) is a disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with average or above-average intelligence, take in, retain or express information. It is not a form of mental retardation or an emotional disorder.

Why should LD students attend a university?
Many individuals with learning disabilities have high intellectual ability and creative talents. Development of intellect and talent is as important to our society as it is to the well-being of the individual. Often the learning disabled student is cognitively superior, but differs markedly in learning style from non-disabled students. A learning disabled individual can become a successful student with motivation and compensatory skills.

What does the Stephen Benson Program do?
The Stephen Benson Program (SBP) provides an integrated network of counseling, academic support and diagnostic services to meet the needs of students found to be learning disabled.

Do you or someone you know have a LD?
Here are some clues:
- Skill levels that don’t match potential
- Significant discrepancy between oral and written work
- Extreme difficulty with written expression
- Inability to perform on tests
- Problems with immediate memory recall
- Difficulty in following oral instructions
- Slow processing of information
- Short attention span, easily distracted

The Stephen Benson Program for Students with Learning Disabilities is a component of Disabled Student Services. The program was created to serve the special needs of students with learning disabilities at California State University, Long Beach. Learning disabilities can interfere with the assimilation of oral and/or written material, but these disabilities do not necessarily prevent a student from learning college-level material. Many students with learning disabilities have the potential to earn a four-year college degree, granted they receive the appropriate support services. Providing these support services is the primary goal of the Stephen Benson Program.

OUR ASSESSMENT PROCESS
A referral to the Stephen Benson Program can be made by faculty, staff or by an individual student. Students then report directly to the SBP office to complete an intake packet. Later, an appointment is set up to review the intake paperwork. This initial interview results in a) a referral for testing, b) a referral to another campus support service or c) a referral to an outside agency. If recommended for testing, the student will need to make three two-hour appointments in order to complete a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment. After the testing process is complete, the student will meet with a Learning Disability Specialist for a results review. At this time, the student will be admitted to the program, recommended for further assessment or referred elsewhere for support services.

Counseling
Of all the services we offer, this is perhaps the most important, especially for the new college freshman or transfer student. Through confidential individual sessions, the following areas are explored: disability awareness, reasonable accommodation, goal setting, independence building, stress management and the promotion and development of social skills, time management skills and self-advocacy skills.

Accommodations
To determine appropriate accommodations, the counselor and student work together to develop academic modifications which will make learning more accessible. For example, students with reading comprehension problems may choose to have textbooks made available on audiotapes in order to improve learning and comprehension. Other support services include, but are not limited to, notetakers, tutoring, extended time for exams, alternative location for exams, etc.

Assessment
Assessment involves identifying the type and degree of a student’s learning disability. This is accomplished through the use of both formal and informal testing measures. The assessment process seeks to utilize the student’s own knowledge and skills in designing the most beneficial accommodation plan.