WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!  We hope you had an enjoyable summer…rainy and cloudy, yes…but hopefully enjoyable. In this edition of the DSS Student Newsletter, you will be sure to find ALL THINGS NEW! From our new DSS home, to new processes and services being offered, to a newly added position to our staff, the summer for DSS has definitely been productive and has paved the way for a very exciting fall semester.

Also in this edition, be sure to pay close attention to the articles and valuable resource information below…all provided with you in mind:

Instructions on Utilizing the New DSS Student Portal, Additional DSS Student Services, an opportunity to meet the DSS Staff, info highlighting the UAB University Academic Success Center, and the Disability Support Services Staff Recognition Award winner.

DSS is dedicated to ensuring that all students have equal opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all UAB has to offer. If you have any suggestions for upcoming editions of this newsletter, please contact DSS Graduate Assistant, Cara Blakes to provide your input. Have a wonderful fall semester, and we hope you enjoy reading this issue of the DSS Student Newsletter!

NEW DSS STUDENT WEB PORTAL

There is a new process for requesting Accommodation Letters and Test Proctoring at DSS. Instead of requesting your letters through DSS, you will log in to a portal where you will choose which courses you would like an Accommodation Letter for. The letter will automatically be sent in an electronic format to your instructor. You may choose to receive an electronic copy of the letter. Any paperwork that you would normally receive and / or complete upon picking up your Accommodation Letters at DSS (i.e. Absence Accommodation Contract, Test Proctoring Checklist, Peer Notetaker Announcement) will be available through the portal.

For testing accommodations at DSS, you will also be able to send the Proctor Approval Request Form to your instructors via the portal.

When you are ready to request Accommodation Letters and / or Test Proctoring at DSS, please follow the instructions linked below (Note: Instructions are also available on our website at www.uab.edu/dss). If you experience any problems using the portal, please contact DSS at 205-934-4205 or dss@uab.edu.

Instructions for Accommodation Letters [Text Only]

Instructions for Test Proctoring [Text Only]

To access the portal, please go to the following link and sign in using your Blazer ID and password:

DSS Student Portal

***Electronic Accommodation Letters are not a substitute for communicating with your instructors. It is still your responsibility to discuss your accommodations with your instructors.***
Boxes...Packing Tape...Moving...OH MY!

On June 10th, the DSS office relocated to the 9th Ave Office Building. The physical address of our new location is 1701 9th Avenue South. Should you need to find our new office, a picture of the front entrance along with a detailed map have been provided for your convenience.

DSS Welcomes Carter Naftel as our new Assistive Technology (AT) Specialist

Please join our staff in welcoming Mr. Carter Naftel to the DSS office! Carter joined the DSS team in August 2013 as the Assistive Technology (AT) Specialist. This is a brand new position added to the DSS office and we are so excited to have Carter as part of the DSS staff! A portion of Carter’s duties will include researching existing and emerging assistive technology trends, conducting assistive technology evaluations and books in alternative format conferences, and providing training in the areas of electronic access/resources utilized within the institution. Find out more about Carter in a staff bio included below.

Effective immediately, students eligible for books in alternative format, please send your requests and questions related to alternative format materials to Carter at naftecg@uab.edu.
ADDITIONAL DSS SERVICES

To ensure you are getting the full support you need, our office provides Academic Coaching and Individual Counseling to DSS students on an ongoing basis. Starting this fall, we have added Semester Prep Sessions to our menu of supplemental services that DSS offers in order to help you get organized for a successful semester and reach your full academic potential.

Semester Prep Sessions will allow you to utilize your syllabus and a planner to map out assignment due dates and exam dates. From there, you will work one-on-one with a DSS staff member to create a study plan, develop time management skills, and establish strategies to effectively execute your study plan.

Academic Coaching sessions are tailored to your particular needs and allow for improvements in the following areas:

- Effective Reading and Writing
- Exam Preparation and Study Skills
- Note Taking
- Memory and Concentration
- Goal Setting and Time Management
- Anxiety and Stress Management

Individual Counseling is provided for students who wish to work through any interpersonal issues in a comfortable, private, and non-judgmental setting. From these sessions, you can achieve your greatest wellness by exploring your goals and addressing your concerns.

Participation in all services is completely optional for students. If you feel you may benefit from either of these additional services, please contact DSS today to make an appointment or to ask any questions you may have.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Aug 26 Classes Begin
Sep 2 Labor Day Holiday
Sep 3 Last Day to Submit Undergraduate Application for Degree

50% of account balance due from students registering for the first time or for classes added from August 16 through September 3; accounts with balances greater than 50% will be assessed a $50 deferment fee.

Sept 4

Oct 7 Account balance due; failure to meet payment deadline results in late fee charges of up to $250.

Oct 25 Last Day to Withdraw
Nov 25-29 Fall/Thanksgiving Break
Dec 6 Last Day of Class
Dec 7-8 Undergraduate Reading Days
Dec 9-13 Final Examinations
Dec 14 Commencement
Dec 16 Grades Due (by midnight)

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UAB will no longer hold a Fall Break in October. Instead, Thanksgiving Break has been extended to a full week.
ALLISON SOLOMON, DIRECTOR
Allison Solomon has served as the Director of UAB’s Disability Support Services since July 2010. She began her career at UAB in the Disability Support Services office as a Disability Specialist in June of 2002. Allison earned both of her degrees from Auburn University, a Bachelor’s degree in Communication Disorders (2000) and a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (2002). She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and currently serves on the board of Alabama AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability). Allison was most recently named UAB’s 2011-2012 Employee of the Year and she serves on numerous committees within UAB as well as external agencies.

VALERIE DUBOSE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Valerie joined the DSS staff in November 2010 after serving as Coordinator of Disability Support Services at the University of Montevallo. She earned her undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation Services (2006) and her Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (2008) from Auburn University. Valerie is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and currently serves on the board of Alabama AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability).

BRITTANY GREGG, COUNSELOR
Brittany joined DSS in September 2012 and provides counseling and coaching to students registered with DSS. She earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Samford University (2007) and her Master’s degree in Counseling from UAB (2012). Brittany is an Associate Licensed Counselor and also serves as Past-President of the Alabama chapter of Association for Psychological Type International.

CARTER NAFTEL, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST
Carter is the newest addition to DSS as of this August. He attended Auburn University, where he received a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management. After completing this degree, Carter began working on his Master’s in Business Administration at UAB. Once he completes the MBA program, Carter plans to obtain a Master’s in Public Health as well. Carter’s experience in the Assistive Technology field began in 2011, and he volunteers throughout the year with multiple support groups for visually impaired children.

CARA BLAKES, GRADUATE ASSISTANT
Cara has been the Graduate Assistant in the Disability Support Services for the past year. She received her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Montevallo in History, with a minor in Pre-Law (2003). Cara is currently a graduate student in the Counselor Education Program at UAB from which she will receive her Master’s degree in Community/Agency Counseling this fall. Cara is a member of UAB’s Zeta chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, an international counseling honor society, where she has previously served as the Hospitality Chair and new student Mentor.
NEW CAMPUS RESOURCE

The University Academic Success Center (UASC) provides students with a host of resources to support their transition to university learning, strengthen their academic endeavors, and develop essential skills that lead to academic success.

Their programming includes academic coaching, peer mentoring, study skills workshops, tutoring services, and courses designed to help students develop strategies for academic success. The UASC coordinates with academic units to offer Supplemental Instruction, and partners with the University Writing Center and Math Lab. Contact information for the UASC is as follows:

uasc@uab.edu
901 13th Street South
Education Building 242
205-934-8184
Mon-Thu 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  Fri 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Disability Support Services Staff Recognition Award is presented during the Fall and Spring semesters to a UAB faculty or staff member who is dedicated to providing equal access and opportunity to students with disabilities. DSS staff members nominate individuals who have demonstrated that they enjoy working with all students and value diversity.

Congratulations to Heather Land, and thank you for all you do for DSS, students, and the university!!