DSS welcomes you to the beginning of a new semester! If you have not already sent electronic accommodation notices to your instructors, please do so NOW! It’s important to send accommodation notices at the beginning of each semester so you can access your accommodations. Please remember to schedule a meeting with your instructors to discuss your accommodations—instructors are waiting to hear from you!

You can access the DSS Student Portal via the direct link (https://sa.uab.edu/dss/) or the DSS website (www.uab.edu/dss).

Welcome back!
August 2015

We are expanding our testing hours!
The DSS Testing Center is now operating from 8am to 4:45pm Monday through Friday in an effort to provide excellent service to Faculty, Staff and Students.

Meet Our New Staff:
Andrew Sparks, Counseling and Services Coordinator

Andrew joined DSS this summer as our Counseling and Services Coordinator. He has been a Therapist for many years working in a variety of settings. Andrew’s role at DSS is to facilitate meetings with students to complete the registration process, provide counseling and academic coaching, and provide support to UAB faculty and staff with regard to working with students with disabilities. He is excited to be in higher education and a part of UAB! Please feel free to contact him anytime you may have questions or concerns.

Jenny Hayes, Office Manager

Jenny is excited to have recently joined the DSS team as the Office Manager. She has been with UAB for three years, previously as the Education Coordinator for the Alys Stephens Center’s ArtPlay. Prior to her employment with UAB, Jenny worked with several local non-profits in different capacities. She is also a student in UAB’s Social Work program and plans to pursue graduate degrees in both Social Work and Public Health. Jenny proudly serves on UAB’s Benevolent Fund Council as Co-Chair of the Awareness Committee. She is married and the mother of two daughters. Her youngest daughter is an upcoming senior in high school and plans to attend UAB. Jenny’s oldest is in her third year at UAB and is working on a degree in Public Health.
Technology To Try

Wunderlist is a useful organization tool that is great for academic and personal use. The app is free and available on most platforms (Mac, Android, Microsoft, web, etc). You can organize lists and share with others, allowing multiple people to participate in getting stuff done! Highlights include:

- Grouping related lists into folders
- Hosts all communication in one place
- Share lists with classmates, friends, family
- Add a reminder to make sure things get done
- Set due dates so that no deadline is missed
- Turn emails into actions by simply forwarding them to Wunderlist
- Use hashtags to add more to your to do

Check out more you can do with Wunderlist on www.wunderlist.com

DSS Services Reminder

Did you know that DSS offers counseling and academic coaching to students? As a student registered with DSS, you have access to free counseling to address life stressors, interpersonal conflict, and any major life issues causing you concern. Also, academic coaching is also available through DSS. Coaching helps students with academic challenges they have struggled to overcome such as time management, study skills, organization, and stress management. If you are interested in either of these services...Please call or email our office to find out more! You can reach out by emailing dss@uab.edu or calling 934-4205.

Important Updates

The student experience at UAB will be improving thanks to the return of the Division of Student Affairs! DSS will be one of the many departments now guided by Dr. John Jones. Dr. Jones comes to us from UNC-Pembroke where he was Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. Under his leadership, Student Affairs will work for a common goal of making the UAB experience diverse, accessible, and exceptional! We are excited to be a part of this great change. Check out Dr. Jones letter to students on Kaleidoscope.
The Americans with Disabilities Act turns 25!

On July 26, 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since that day, America has expanded upon and evolved a better understanding of accessibility and civil rights. There have been celebrations throughout the country to commemorate this milestone. The ADA Legacy Project also was established and has toured the US marking significant milestones to equal rights.

“Thanks to the ADA, the places that comprise our shared American life -- schools, workplaces, movie theaters, courthouses, buses, baseball stadiums, national parks -- they truly belong to everyone.”

— President Obama

ADA National Network has opened its website for the public to “recommit to the full implementation of the ADA”. The proclamation states The ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers and changing perceptions, and increasing full participation in community life. However, the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if we remain committed to continue our efforts to fully implement the ADA.

On the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I/we celebrate and recognize the progress that has been made by reaffirming the principles of equality and inclusion and recommitting our efforts to reach full ADA compliance.

NOW THEREFORE, I/we do hereby reaffirm to continue to work toward full ADA compliance

If you would like to sign the proclamation you can go to http://adaanniversary.org/pledge

Join us for a Disability Awareness Event!

DSS on the Green
Thursday, October 1st
10am till Noon

Learn more about what we do and who we serve

Come by for Food, Drinks, And Free Stuff

Check your email for more information
DSS Spring 2015 Outstanding Faculty and Staff Awards

Each semester, we ask students who are registered with DSS to nominate a faculty member who promotes an inclusive classroom, values diverse learning styles and abilities, and believes in supporting and challenging all students. The DSS Spring 2015 Outstanding Faculty Award is presented to Dr. Karolina Mukhtar, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology. Congratulations to Dr. Mukhtar!

Each semester, DSS also recognizes a faculty or staff member who has exceeded all requirements and expectations in helping students remove any barriers which would prevent them from being successful at UAB. The DSS Summer 2015 Outstanding Staff Award is presented to Dr. Winston Lancaster in the Department of Biology. Congratulations, and thank you for all you do to make courses accessible for students!

Spring 2015 DSS Student Survey

In April, DSS conducted a survey seeking the input of students currently registered with DSS regarding their impression of services provided to students with disabilities at UAB. The survey assessed students' level of satisfaction regarding: experiences with DSS and UAB faculty, accessibility of facilities and programs, delivery of accommodations, and additional DSS services. Below is a summary of results from the survey.

Students were also given the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences. A summary of the concerns, along with a response from DSS, is outlined below:

- **DSS website not available on mobile devices:** DSS has worked with UAB Web-Based Services to ensure that the DSS website is now compatible with mobile devices
- **Request for social events specifically for students with disabilities:** DSS is in support of this suggestion and is in communication with several students about starting up a student group
- **Concerns regarding faculty’s understanding of confidentiality:** DSS will continue to offer faculty and staff training opportunities. We strongly encourage you to contact DSS immediately if you have any confidentiality concerns
- **Difficulty obtaining notetakers:** DSS is continuing the partnership with the University Academic Success

DSS Working with DSS Staff and UAB Faculty

88% of respondents rated their overall experience with DSS as “excellent or good”. Majority of respondents Strongly Agree that overall experience with faculty has been positive

Accessibility of Campus Facilities and Programs

Majority of respondents Strongly Agree that UAB offers a welcoming environment for students with disabilities and that they’ve been able to participate in events on campus

Delivery of Accommodations

70% of respondents “Strongly Agree” that their accommodations have contributed to an improvement in academic performance

Refer fellow students to DSS

100% of respondents indicated that they would recommend DSS services to fellow UAB students with disabilities

DSS would like to sincerely thank those students who took the time to complete our annual survey! We’re encouraged to hear that overall, students who responded are satisfied with the services and facilities available to students with disabilities at UAB. Please continue to share your feedback with our staff. You may also complete our abbreviated survey at any time through our website (www.uab.edu/dss).