Disability Support Services is very excited to launch our bi-annual newsletter. This will be a bulletin sent out once a semester to inform faculty and staff about what is new with DSS, supply new legal information, and provide information about best practices so we can make sure all students with disabilities are provided with appropriate accommodations. Please contact DSS with any ideas you’d like to see included in our newsletter. We thank you for your ongoing support of our office. Your willingness to work with DSS makes a huge difference in the lives of students with disabilities on the UAB campus.

DSS Mission

Disability Support Services is committed to making UAB programs and services accessible to students with disabilities. To prevent discrimination based on disability in all UAB student programs and services, the primary goal of DSS is to ensure an accessible university environment by working with students, faculty, staff, and community agencies to provide appropriate accommodations.

Faculty and Staff Training

Disability Support Services would like to remind all faculty and staff to call our office and sign up for a time to attend a DSS training session. In an effort to ensure university-wide compliance, Dr. Linda Lucas, Interim Provost, has requested that all schools contact DSS to set up a school-wide training with DSS by the end of the Fall semester.

These sessions are offered at anytime throughout the semester in order to help faculty and staff work with students with disabilities most effectively. In these trainings, we will review your rights and responsibilities, as well as those of the student. Knowing your rights is imperative to providing the appropriate accommodations. If your department has not yet scheduled your training session, please call Allison Solomon ASAP to do so.

If your program or department does not schedule a training, or you cannot attend the scheduled training, DSS will be providing two open training sessions. The dates are scheduled for Tuesday, November 8th, at 10:00am, and Wednesday, December 7th, at 2:00pm. Both sessions will be held in the Hill University Center Alumni Auditorium.
Accessibility Standards

The US Department of Education has a new expectation that all videos used for a course, either as a requirement or a resource, must be captioned. This includes online lectures. While this new expectation is not yet UAB policy, the implications will eventually get to our campus. It is the hope of DSS that by letting faculty members know about the new expectations early, we can prevent the shock and urgency of having to caption videos “overnight” once this becomes UAB policy. If you plan to use videos as part of your course, DSS is happy to help with the captioning process. Please contact us immediately if videos are a requirement or resource in any of your courses.

In addition to videos, the Department of Education has recently announced new expectations for online course material and web design. All online course material and web design must be accessible with assistive technology. For example, all material posted online must be accessible with a screen reader. If you have questions about whether your online materials are accessible, please call DSS or visit the UAB Accessibility Website by Clicking Here.

Lastly, many courses are now using Blackboard as an essential part of the course. If you are having trouble making Blackboard accessible, please visit their website (www.blackboard.com/accessibility) to learn more. You can also Click Here to enroll in a free self-paced course on Universal Design and Accessibility for Online Learning. As more courses rely on online tools as part of the curriculum, it is imperative we make this an equal tool for all students. Please visit the Blackboard website to ensure your course is accessible.

Compliance resources are available through the following links:
- Disability, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology
- Association on Higher Education and Disability

Remember, if something is made available to students, it must be accessible to ALL students.

DSS Facts and Figures

Disability Support Services serves approximately 328 students, with 56 students in the process of registering. The breakdown by disability type is as follows:
- ADHD: 29.6%
- Psychiatric: 22.9%
- Mobility/Systemic: 21.9%
- Learning Disability: 16.3%
- Sensory Disabilities: 6.7%
- Traumatic Brain Injury: 2.2%

Syllabus Statement

Instructors are expected to include a syllabus statement in every syllabus instructing students with disabilities about receiving accommodations. Please visit page 10 of our Faculty Handbook by clicking on the link below to see an example of a DSS syllabus statement:

Syllabus Statement
Know your Rights!

As a staff or faculty member at UAB, you have rights when it comes to working with students with disabilities. Knowing your rights is a crucial step in making sure you are providing the appropriate accommodations. We have provided a list that is meant to serve as a general overview of your rights.

You have the right to:

- Request an official accommodation letter from DSS (or SOM Student Services, if working with medical school students) before providing accommodations
- Expect all students to adhere to the Code of Conduct
- Challenge accommodations that jeopardize the academic standards of the course
- Expect all students to follow agreements you have set up regarding how accommodations will be provided
- Expect students to self-identify

Please remember, this is not an all-encompassing list. We handle each situation on a case-by-case basis. Many problems can be fixed by a simple call to DSS, so please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns.

Disability Support Services Faculty Award Winners

Disability Support Services is pleased to announce our first bi-annual “Outstanding Faculty Award” and “DSS Staff Recognition Award”.

The first award is given to a faculty member who is recommended by their student(s). Each semester, DSS students are asked to nominate the faculty member they feel promotes an inclusive classroom, values diverse learning styles, challenges and supports students with disabilities and believes in working with all students. The Fall 2010 honor goes to Victoria Kennedy from the Department of English and the Spring 2011 award was given to Tracy Hamilton from the Department of Chemistry.

The DSS Staff Recognition Award is given to a faculty member who is nominated by the DSS staff for their outstanding work with students. The Fall 2010 DSS Staff Recognition award was given to Laura Stansell in the Math Department.

Congratulations to these exceptional faculty members. The staff at DSS appreciates everything you do for your students. You play a significant role in the success of your students with disabilities.