We hope each of you are experiencing a wonderful start to the 2012-2013 academic year. In this Fall edition of our Semester Report, DSS has some exciting announcements and new updates that we’d like faculty and staff to be aware of.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has one of the state’s most comprehensive departments for students with disabilities. The Disability Support Services staff provides a variety of accommodations and services for individuals with disabilities. With over 370 individuals registered for services, we encourage students to overcome challenges and attain personal and academic success. Through active involvement with all areas of the University, DSS is able to offer support to ensure that our campus is accessible and contributes positively to each student’s quality of life.

We hope to provide support to faculty and staff, in addition to our students. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns and questions! We are excited to work with you and your students this Fall.

**Academic Coaching and Counseling**

In addition to the accommodations offered by the Disability Support Services office, we also offer a supplemental academic enhancement program for students who are registered with DSS. In order to ensure students are getting the full support they need, DSS provides Academic Coaching and Individual Counseling to students registered with DSS. Participation in these programs is completely optional, but DSS encourages students to contact our office at any time if they feel they could benefit from Academic Coaching or Individual Counseling. Appointments are on a first-come, first-serve basis and are based on the availability of the part-time counselor and part-time Graduate Assistant.

Academic Coaching is a service program that provides one-on-one weekly appointments with an academic counselor. During these regularly scheduled appointments, students will learn study skills, time management strategies, note-taking tips, and more.

Individual Counseling is provided to students who wish to work through any interpersonal issues. Individual counseling helps students to achieve their greatest wellness by exploring their goals and concerns in a comfortable, private, and non-judgmental setting.

If you feel one of your students may benefit from these additional services, please contact DSS to discuss referrals and ways to approach this conversation.
Important Online Test Proctoring Forms & Procedures Information

In an attempt to make the test-proctoring process more convenient for students and faculty, DSS has moved to online test proctoring forms. The new process will work as follows:

DSS Testing Policy currently states the following responsibilities:

1. **Students**: If a student needs to test in DSS, they are to:
   a. Submit the Electronic Testing Proctoring Form to their instructor

   ***Link to Proctor Approval Request Form:***
   [Proctor Approval Request Form]

   b. Contact DSS to schedule their test 2 working days in advance
   c. Remind the instructor prior to every test that they will be testing in DSS

2. **Instructor**: If your student will be taking your test in DSS, you are to:
   a. Complete the Electronic Testing Proctoring Form sent to you by the student
   b. Send the test to DSS 2 working days in advance OR notify DSS to let us know when the test will arrive
   c. Ensure your test is submitted to DSS in a timely manner so the student can start his/her exam on time

DSS staff has recently provided reminders and follow-up emails/phone calls to students and faculty to ensure all tests scheduled in our office will start on time. Our staff can no longer provide this additional service as it is taking up time which needs to be directed at providing accommodations.

So, going forward, **the DSS staff will not be providing reminders to students who have tests scheduled in DSS. DSS staff will not contact instructors or departments to “track down” tests or to remind instructors to send tests.** If a student arrives to test in DSS and we have not received the exam, we will then allow the student to contact the instructor or department or we will assist the student with contacting the necessary contact person to locate the test.

**If you have any questions about this new procedure, please notify DSS!**
New DSS Staff

Disability Support Services is very happy to welcome three new members to the DSS Staff. Many of you may work frequently with our new Office Manager, Jannette Rainey, as she is in charge of test proctoring. Additionally, our new Graduate Assistant, Cara Blakes, and our new Counselor, Brittany Gregg, will be working closely with faculty and students to ensure faculty and students’ needs are met. Below you will find a little information to help you get to know the new staff members.

Jannette Rainey
DSS Office Manager
Jannette began working in the Disability Support Services office in the Summer of 2012, and she has been at UAB for 15 years. Before coming to DSS, Jannette worked in Intramural Sports/Campus Recreation for approximately 14 ½ years. Jannette enjoys learning new things and being part of the DSS team and the important services it offers to students at UAB.

Cara Blakes
DSS Graduate Assistant
Cara recently joined Disability Support Services this August. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Montevallo in History with a minor in Pre-Law. She is currently a graduate student in the Counselor Education Program at UAB. Cara is the Hospitality Chair of UAB’s Zeta chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, an international counseling honor society, where she also serves as a new student Mentor.

Brittany Gregg
DSS Counselor
Brittany received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Samford University in 2007. She recently completed her master’s degree in Counseling from UAB, and is in the process of becoming an Associate Licensed Counselor. Brittany has experience working with crisis intervention, eating disorders, women’s issues, and LGBT clients. She is the current President of the Alabama chapter of the Association for Psychological Type International.

Campus Recreation

The UAB Campus Recreation Center is pleased to announce they will be offering Adaptive Yoga Classes this Fall on the following Tuesdays from 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM:

October 16th, 23rd, 30th, and November 6th

These classes will be adapted to be accessible for all students. We hope to see a great turn out so that more adaptive programs can be planned for the future. If you have any additional questions, please contact Ray Picone at rpicone@uab.edu or Sara Andreski at sandres@uab.edu, or call Campus Recreation at 205-934-8224.

Legal Roundup

The Office of Civil Rights determined that the University of Notre Dame did not discriminate on the basis of disability when they dismissed a graduate student for not maintaining the minimum GPA. The student claimed she was denied reasonable accommodations, although she informed the DSS office that she did not need any accommodations. OCR ruled that the student was not denied academic adjustments. This is impactful for universities because it means that universities are not required to seek out students with disabilities. Additionally, universities may adopt reasonable procedures and require students who request accommodations to provide documentation of their disability.
DSS Outstanding Faculty Award

Each semester we ask DSS students to nominate a faculty member for the Outstanding Faculty Award. This should be a professor they believe promotes an inclusive classroom, values diverse learning styles and abilities, and believes in supporting and challenging all students. This year’s two professors were chosen to receive this award due to the exceptional nomination letters received from students on their behalf. The Spring 2012 Outstanding Faculty Awards go to Dr. Mary Whall and Dr. Christopher Robinson.

Dr. Whall is a professor in the Philosophy Department. Dr. Whall was described by her nominator as a professor who makes students look forward to going to class. She was described as being compassionate towards students and respectful of their privacy. It is no question that Dr. Whall has an enormous impact on the students she teaches. Congratulations Dr. Whall and thank you for your service to DSS students!

Dr. Christopher Robinson, a professor in the Psychology Department, was described by his nominator as having an easy-going and open-minded teaching style that allows students to express their thoughts and opinions in a safe environment. Dr. Robinson’s enthusiasm for learning new things is contagious, and his nominator credits him for helping her to believe she can accomplish whatever she wants to do in life, no matter what the obstacle is. We are excited for Dr. Robinson to receive this award. Congratulations!

Student Spotlight

Disability Support Services has added a new reoccurring column to our newsletter. The Student Spotlight article aims to highlight our students for their creativity, excellence, and leadership both in school and their personal lives.

Katie McGinley was awarded the Artie Manning Scholarship. Katie is working towards her Ed.S degree in the School of Education at UAB. Her concentration for her program is Autism and she has been teaching special education in Birmingham for 5 years. She hopes to work with families and schools around the state to implement successful strategies for working with children on the Autism Spectrum.

Lauren McCartney, a recent UAB graduate with a degree in Psychology, is now attending New York University for graduate school. Lauren will be pursuing a degree in Mental Health Counseling. After receiving offers from several institutions, Lauren chose NYU and is excited about all the opportunities and adventures that await her as she conquers a new city. Lauren hopes that she is able to inspire other students to have the courage to go after their dreams regardless of impairment.

John Paul Montgomery is finishing up his senior year at UAB and is on track to graduate with Honors in December. Last year, John Paul was appointed by the President’s cabinet to sit on the UAB ADA Committee. This is a very big honor, and one that comes with a lot of responsibility. John Paul is the student representative, so he is charged with making sure students have a voice that influences decisions made by the ADA Committee. John Paul has taken his responsibility seriously and is a wonderful representation of DSS students.

Desiree Baird, a summer 2012 graduate in Art, wrote and directed a short film was featured in the Above The Line film festival hosted by UAB’s Theatre Department on September 29th. Her film went on to receive the Founder’s Award on “Best Film.” Desiree’s plan after graduation is to become a professional photographer and artist. Some of her photography artwork will be found in the Incubate Gallery in Avondale next month. She is also busy planning for her upcoming December wedding. Another notable accomplishment of Desiree’s is that she is a former Miss Deaf Alabama (2005-2007).

DSS is very proud of each of our students and we are excited to see all the great things they will do as they graduate from UAB and begin their careers. Congratulations to Katie, Lauren, John Paul, and Desiree! Thank you for allowing us to share your accomplishments!