Welcome to another Spring semester! This will be one that goes down in history. Why? DSS student numbers are at record highs and the interpretations and expectations of the law are impacting programs across the university. The DSS staff is working hard to ensure we meet the unique and varied needs of our students, as well as the faculty and staff at UAB. In this issue you will find referral sources for your students, updates on relevant case law, instructions for our new online proctoring form, YouTube captioning information, and more.

Remember, while our office provides services and accommodations to students, we are also here to support UAB’s faculty and staff. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you have!

Spring semester is a time when many of our students are thinking of graduation and planning a life outside the walls of UAB. Without the support of the UAB faculty, many of our DSS students would not have gotten to this point. We thank you for your hard work and dedication to your students and for supporting DSS as we enter a new semester!

Faculty and Staff Training

As many of you know, the DSS staff had a busy fall semester. In an effort to ensure university-wide compliance, DSS conducted over 35 separate faculty and staff trainings. First and foremost, we want to thank each faculty and staff member who attended these trainings. Your attendance, attention, and questions were appreciated!

Over 890 UAB staff and faculty members went through the training. It is the hope of the DSS staff that attendees left with important information regarding ways to ensure accessibility, the do’s and don’ts of providing accommodations, and most importantly, knowing DSS is a resource available for both students and faculty. Our door is always open to answer questions, and we hope this was communicated through our trainings.

In the future, DSS hopes to move to online trainings so faculty and staff can get updated information from DSS as conveniently as possible. A special thank you goes to Tam Lee for filming the trainings and making this a possibility. Again, we thank UAB’s faculty and staff for your attendance at these trainings. Please visit our website to access many important resources referenced in the trainings.
Online Test Proctoring Forms

In 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:

1.) The student will turn in an Accommodation Letter and meet with the course instructor to review accommodations, including testing accommodations, if applicable.

2.) If the instructor decides to have the test(s) proctored at DSS, the student will log in to the DSS website and request that a test proctoring approval form be sent to the instructor.

3.) The course instructor will receive an e-mail, informing them of the pending proctor approval request. The e-mail will contain instructions for how to log in and fill out and submit this form.

4.) If the instructor has additional proctoring form approval requests from other students, this will be indicated on the instructor page, in order to allow the instructor to conveniently submit the approval forms.

5.) The form(s) will be submitted electronically to DSS, and will be valid for the entire semester. If the instructions for the test(s) change, please notify DSS.

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

You can click on the link below to go to the Proctor Approval Form - Instructor Page

Proctor Approval Form

DSS Services: Coaching and Counseling

DSS is pleased to announce we are offering counseling and academic coaching as additional services to our students. These services are offered through the DSS office as available (based on the availability of the part-time Counselor and Graduate Assistant). Counseling and coaching are not considered accommodations, but separate support services available to all students registered with DSS.

Counseling focuses on personal issues that may or may not be directly related to school performance. It is a collaborative process through which the student and counselor work together to identify root causes of psychological and emotional issues and create plans to work through and resolve them. The counselor can also work to determine appropriate referral sources with students, when needed.

Academic Coaching is another service offered to help DSS students maximize their success at UAB. Coaching is tailored to fit each individual student. Areas worked on can include time management, study skills, note-taking, test-taking skills, and more, depending on what the student hopes to accomplish. Academic Coaching can help students learn new habits and skills.

If you are aware of any DSS students who may benefit from these services, please encourage them to make an appointment with a DSS counselor. While we inform students of these additional services, many times a suggestion from a professor is the encouragement they need in order to set up an appointment.
A YouTube How-To: Captioning

If you attended a DSS Faculty Training in the Fall, you are aware of the new interpretations of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act regarding accessibility. One easy (and free!) way to ensure your course materials and resources are accessible is to caption any YouTube videos you show in your class.

Showing YouTube videos is a common practice among college faculty and for good reason. The videos posted to this website can help bring to life almost any lecture topic. While the educational benefits of YouTube are endless, there can also be downsides, one of these being the lack of accessibility of many of the videos. However, there is a solution to YouTube accessibility problems that is relatively simple and not too time-consuming. CaptionTube is a do-it-yourself captioning program for videos posted on YouTube. You can caption your own videos or videos posted by others. Best of all, it’s FREE! CaptionTube is easy to use. The author of the tutorial provided by DSS had no previous video-captioning experience, which demonstrates the program’s ease of use. Please click on the following link to go straight to the CaptionTube website: CaptionTube. In addition, if you’d like a copy of the DSS tutorial, please e-mail malmckee@uab.edu. This tutorial will also be posted on the DSS website soon.

DSS Student Named Governor’s Committee Student of the Year

Disability Support Services is thrilled to congratulate Lauren McCartney on being selected as Student of the Year by the Alabama Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. This award is presented annually to a student with a disability who has demonstrated exemplary efforts in pursuit of their education and in overcoming limitations related to their disability in doing so. It is safe to say, Lauren has not only overcome limitations, but truly excelled in her studies and extracurricular activities at UAB.

Lauren is a senior in the Department of Psychology. She not only shines in her classes, but in her extracurricular activities as well. Lauren is an intern at UAB’s Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation. She is also a rape-response advocate at the Birmingham Crisis Center and works in UAB’s Youth Safety Laboratory. In addition to all that, Lauren was chosen to present her research on undergraduates’ cell phone use while driving at the annual American Psychological Association convention in Washington, D.C.

Lauren was initially selected as the local Student of the Year by the Birmingham Area Governor’s Committee. Each local winner across the state was automatically nominated for the same award at the state level. Lauren was chosen as the statewide winner of the Student of the Year award. This is truly an accomplishment. Whatever path Lauren takes after graduation, DSS is certain she will continue to overcome any obstacles in her path and stand out as a professional in her chosen field.
Legal Round-Up

- A Tacoma Community College student was suspended for violating the institution’s conduct code by engaging in threatening and disorderly conduct toward other students. The student complained the school violated her rights under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The court ruled that the student failed to demonstrate that she was suspended for anything other than her conduct. Colleges and universities can discipline students with disabilities for behavior that violates the code of conduct.

- A graduate student at Kent State University was dismissed from his program for poor academic performance. The student filed suit against KSU stating they refused to accommodate him and dismissed him based on a learning disability. The student never made any request for accommodations and could provide no documentation stating he had a learning disability. The court held that the university was not required to provide accommodations absent any evidence of a disability or that he even requested accommodations.

DSS Participating in UAB Community Week 2012

DSS is pleased to announce we will be hosting an event for UAB Community Week 2012. Community week celebrates UAB’s unique student body and workforce by encouraging unity, dialogue and learning. DSS will be showing the movie “Laughing at our Differences”, a stand-up comedy movie about diversity and disability awareness. Josh Sundquist, the comedian staring in the movie, is very involved in research on disability in the higher education setting, making this movie especially relevant for college students and faculty.

After the movie, several DSS students will be sharing their experiences about being a student at UAB with a disability. This portion of the event will be especially touching, as this will be the first time some of these students have had the chance to talk publically about their disability and how it affects them.

The DSS Community Week event will be held on January 26th from 2:30 to 3:30. Please make plans to attend and encourage your students to do the same!

DSS Staff Recognition Award and Outstanding Faculty Award

The DSS Staff Recognition Award is given to a faculty or staff member who is nominated by the DSS staff for their outstanding work with students and support of the DSS mission. The Fall 2011 DSS Staff Recognition award was given to Jason Womack, who began his new position as System Analyst Sr for the TUCC Application Development Group in December. Jason's dedication to the DSS office has been beyond measure. He tirelessly worked on creating and implementing the DSS Database and online test proctoring forms, two projects that improved the DSS office procedures, and the ease in which students and faculty work with DSS. It is without question that Jason has tremendously impacted the DSS office and we appreciate his enthusiasm and commitment to helping DSS serve students with disabilities.

Congratulations, Jason!

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 Fall 2011 Outstanding Faculty Award goes to Dr. David Morrow, professor in the Department of Philosophy. According to his nominator, Dr. Morrow goes out of his way to use different teaching methods in effort to reach all learning styles and makes his students feel like they are capable of anything. It is because of professors like Dr. Morrow that DSS is able to support students with disabilities and help them achieve their goals. Congratulations, Dr. Morrow!