Welcome back and we hope you had an enjoyable holiday break! The Disability Support Services 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, be sure to pay close attention to the Academic Coaching and Individual Counseling services our office provides for DSS students. In addition, you will find a Legal Roundup portion which summarizes relevant case law, reminders about what to do when providing accommodations, and a newly added section entitled Raising Awareness—Removing the Stigma. This new addition will provide factual information on a different disability every semester in efforts to increase knowledge and clear up any misconceptions. Also in this issue, you will find highlights about our Outstanding Faculty and Staff Award winners, a Student Spotlight section which will recognize DSS Student Assistants, and an article acknowledging DSS’s very own Director, Allison Solomon, for being named UAB’s 2011-2012 Employee of the Year!

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to your students and for supporting DSS as we enter a new semester. Without the support of the UAB faculty, many of our DSS students would not have gotten to this point. While our office provides services and accommodations to students, we are also here to support you. Have a great semester, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have!

Academic Coaching and Individual Counseling

To ensure students are getting the full support they need, DSS provides Academic Coaching and Individual Counseling to students registered with our office.

**Academic Coaching** sessions are tailored to each student’s 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, students can achieve their greatest wellness by exploring their goals and addressing their concerns.

Participation in these supplemental academic enhancement programs is completely optional. If you feel one of your students may benefit from these additional services, please contact DSS to discuss referrals and ways to approach recommendations.
WHEN A STUDENT REQUESTS ACCOMMODATIONS…

It is a student’s responsibility to self-identify and request accommodations. Faculty are not responsible for identifying students with disabilities.

1. Verify that the student is registered for services with Disability Support Services (DSS).

If the student is registered with DSS:
The student should provide you with an accommodation letter from DSS that lists his or her accommodations. If the student does not have this, ask the student to obtain it before providing the accommodation.

If the student is not registered with DSS:
Refer the student to DSS so that the disability can be documented and appropriate accommodations determined. Do not provide any disability-related accommodations until you have received a DSS accommodation letter from the student, even if it seems like an obvious disability. Contact DSS if you have questions or concerns.

2. Once the student provides you with the DSS accommodation letter…

• Talk with the student about how best to implement the accommodations. Remember it is essential to maintain the confidentiality of this student, so talk with him or her in private. We recommend that students schedule an appointment with faculty during office hours to discuss accommodations.
• Verify which accommodations the student intends to use.
• Complete and sign the 2nd page of the accommodation letter and return it to DSS.
• Please keep the top copy with the list of accommodations for your reference. Remember that this document contains confidential information (student name, SSN), so make sure it is kept in a secure area and please destroy it when you no longer need it.

3. If at any time you have questions regarding the accommodations, call DSS.

Continue to provide the accommodations to the student unless DSS instructs otherwise. This includes if you believe that providing a particular accommodation would substantially change any essential elements or requirements of the curriculum or academic program.

Legal Roundup

The U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, dismissed a certification exam candidate’s claims, holding they could find no evidence in the record that he notified the board of his disability or requested accommodations on Part II of the exam. The candidate sued the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, claiming that the board discriminated against him by failing to provide reasonable accommodations to best ensure that his test results would reflect his aptitude or achievement level, rather than his disability. The candidate passed Part I of the board certification exam after requesting accommodations for his second attempt. He failed Part II of the exam on two occasions; on neither occasion did he check the box on the billing statement which would have alerted the board to his need for accommodations, nor did he submit any documentation to the board substantiating any of his disabilities or explain what accommodations he needed for the Part II exam. The judge stated, “Although it could be argued that the Board was on notice that the candidate had a disability following his Part I request, it does not necessarily follow that a candidate who required certain accommodations on the written Part I exam would need the same, or any, accommodations for the live-patient portion of the exam.”
RAISING AWARENESS—REMOVING THE STIGMA

Not all disabilities are visible nor do all disabilities have the same impact on each individual. For this very reason, it is important to stay informed and remain relevant when it comes to working with students with disabilities. Read what Dr. Kristin Berthiaume from Grayson & Associates had to say about ADHD in a Q & A interview:

1) **Define ADHD and include some of the challenges it may cause.**
ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It is a psychiatric condition that is characterized by either significant inattention or over-activity/restlessness, or both. There are three subtypes: ADHD, Predominantly Inattentive Type, which is also called Attention Deficit Disorder or ADD; ADHD, Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive Type, which is mostly found in young children and does not include the symptom of inattention; and ADHD, Combined Type, which involves both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity. The ADHD subtype an individual has can actually change over the course of his or her lifetime with some symptoms becoming more or less problematic at different times. Many young adults with ADHD find themselves struggling to keep up in college, not only with the academic, but also with the scheduling and social demands. This can happen even for students who did fine in high school because they are expected to be more independent in college and do not have as much assistance with scheduling and organizing.

2) **What are some common stereotypes and myths about individuals with ADHD?**
Maybe the biggest myth is that adults with ADHD are lazy. In reality, ADHD symptoms can significantly interfere with motivation and make it very difficult for the individual to accomplish tasks, even if he or she very much wants to.

3) **What can one expect if being evaluated for ADHD?**
A thorough ADHD evaluation will usually include some academic testing to rule out learning and memory problems, a full background interview, in-depth questions about the specific symptoms the student is experiencing, and behavioral rating scales completed by both the student and a parent, friend, or instructor. Because so many other conditions like fatigue, depression, anxiety, and learning disabilities can have similar symptoms to ADHD, it is very important to rule out other problems before a diagnosis is made or any treatment is begun. It can actually be harmful to take medications used to treat ADHD symptoms if there is something else going on instead.

4) **What treatments are best for adults with ADHD, and are there any recommended timeframes for treatment?**
As with any psychiatric condition, the earlier it is diagnosed and treatment is begun, the better. There is no cure for ADHD but many individuals learn ways to compensate for the symptoms as they get older and about half of those diagnosed in childhood no longer meet criteria by adulthood. For those who continue to have problematic symptoms in adulthood, a combination of medication – usually stimulant medication but there are other options – and behavioral methods is recommended. For students, behavioral treatment may involve therapy to help cope with the frustrations that can go along with ADHD, as well as coaching to assist with organizational and time management skills. Many students with ADHD also benefit from interpersonal or social skills therapy aimed at helping to decrease the impact their symptoms have on their relationships with others. Some common social problems students with ADHD often have are difficulty listening in conversation, interrupting and intruding on others, and trouble understanding social cues.
In an article highlighting this esteemed honor, Tyler Greer from the UAB Reporter wrote the following:

The UAB Employee of the Month/Year Committee chose Solomon from the 11 Employee of the Month award winners named this past fiscal year.

“I was surprised to receive the Employee of the Month honor, but this is on a whole different level,” says Solomon, who was January’s Employee of the Month. “I’m very excited and thrilled, especially doing what I do. People who work in the counseling field for students with disabilities don’t do it for the acknowledgement. You do this because you have a passion for it and enjoy it.”

Solomon has been a positive and influential presence for co-workers, faculty and students. Her passion for educating others on the difficulties students with disabilities face is an integral factor in UAB achieving its goal of being a holistically diverse campus.

Solomon cites previous DSS director and mentor Angela Stowe as a major influence and says the support DSS has received from Suzanne Austin, Ph.D., vice provost for Student and Faculty Success, has enabled her department to provide this vital help to UAB students and educate faculty and staff.

To read the entire article, follow the link below.
DSS Spring 2013 Semester Report

Gabriel Tajeu works in the Health Care Organization and Policy department of the School of Public Health, and was described by his nominator as an individual whose sensitivity, willingness to work with students, and proactive nature in providing accommodations made him an exceptional candidate to be recognized. His nominator credits him for truly going above and beyond what was required and expected of him in making the class as accessible as possible and providing accommodations. Congratulations to Gabriel Tajeu for receiving the Fall 2012 Outstanding Faculty Award!

Trevar Simmons is the recipient of the Fall 2012 Outstanding Staff Award. Trevar works in UAB Housing and has consistently gone above and beyond with his interactions, assistance, and accommodations for DSS students. He has spent many days and evenings working with students to ensure their safety and to encourage self-advocacy for the best campus residential life experience.

DSS would like to express much appreciation and gratitude to Trevar for his outstanding efforts in helping DSS students and all campus residents of UAB Housing!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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Noelle Cheeks is majoring in Healthcare Management, and this is her senior year. She has worked at DSS for 2 years and enjoys baking and watching movies in her spare time. At DSS, Noelle considers it a pleasure to work with people who really care, and she enjoys the part she plays in helping a student have a successful semester.

Storey Hickman is a Pre-Nursing major, and she is a sophomore. This is Storey’s third semester working in the office, and when asked what she enjoys most about working at DSS, she accredited it to being the people she gets to work with. For hobbies, Storey likes going out to eat and watching funny shows on television.

Suzie Coco is a Psychology major, Sociology minor. She is a sophomore, and this is Suzie’s second semester working at DSS. The most enjoyable aspect about working at DSS for Suzie is that the office is always a very friendly and helpful environment. She enjoys crocheting, watching crime dramas, listening to audio books, and crafting.

Thank you Student Assistants for all you do for DSS, students, and the university!