Welcome back!

DSS welcomes you to the beginning of a new semester! We are excited to share some important updates with you, including improvements to the newsletter. The DSS Faculty & Staff Newsletter is issued each Fall and Spring semester. We like to provide new information about our office, tips for working with students, and items to consider regarding accessibility at UAB. We welcome any feedback or suggestion to keep this newsletter helpful to you. You may contact the editor, Andrew Sparks, acsparks@uab.edu. Have a great fall semester!

Announcements

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.
The interpretation and implementation of disability legislation are evolving, and it is important for UAB’s faculty and staff to understand our legal and educational requirements. We are committed to providing all of our students with the best learning experience possible. Captioning and transcription are an essential part of ensuring access to audio/visual materials. The following Guidance and Best Practices is being provided to assist faculty, staff and students with meeting compliance obligations. Everyone must incorporate these principles into their processes:

Disability Support Services (205.934-4205 dss@uab.edu) is your resource in using captions and transcripts. Contact DSS for assistance in:

- Recognizing when materials must be captioned or transcribed
- Locating captioned media
- Creating captioned media
- Arranging for captions to be added by an outside vendor

Materials That Require Captioning and/or a transcript:

The University is legally obligated to caption or provide a transcript of the following materials:

- Audio/video content that is mandatory for all students (Example: orientation videos)
- Online/hybrid courses or educational programs, when a student who uses captioning as a reasonable accommodation is registered in the course
- Audio/video content that is shown as part of a face-to-face or live course or educational program, unless an interpreter or CART writer is present, when a student who uses captioning as a reasonable accommodation is registered in the course
- Audio/video content that is mandatory for all employees, such as employee training videos (Example: UAB HR Open Enrollment video)
- Audio/video content that is job-related for UAB employees who use captioning as a reasonable accommodation
- Audio/video content that is accessed by the general public and which is hosted on or embedded in an official UAB website, must have synchronized captions
- Audio/video material requested to be accessible by a disabled individual as a reasonable accommodation

When posting audio/video content that is not already captioned or accompanied by a transcript, the following statement must be posted in close proximity: “To request a transcript or a captioned version of this material as a disability-related accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services at dss@uab.edu or 205.934.4205.”

Best Practices Regarding Audio/Video Material:

Adding captions or creating a transcript for audio/visual media is always good practice. Captions benefit deaf and hearing impaired individuals, non-English or ESL speakers, those with learning disabilities, visual learners and all users in a noisy environment.

Captions and transcripts make audio material searchable.

Captioning materials at time of production is more efficient than having to edit the materials for accessibility post-production.

Departments should purchase only audio/video materials that include captioning. University personnel should work with the vendor and seek DSS support as needed.

University departments that create audio/video content should include plans for captioning as a part of the original production. Projects that are created using a script can be captioned inexpensively. It is generally less expensive to add captions from the onset rather than adding them after the fact when a request is received.

Audio/video content posted to University web pages should be captioned. The University community includes a number of individuals who require or benefit from captions, and it is preferable for captions and transcripts to be immediately available, rather than added retroactively when requested. (Examples: commencement, freshman book discussion)

All web designers, instructional technology personnel, instructional designers, and instructors must ensure mandatory content available electronically to University students is accessible and adheres to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
Disability Support Services is your primary resource when using or developing accessible audio/video materials: dss@uab.edu or 205.934.4205.

- Captioned versions of videos are often readily available through the publishers/owners of a video.
- Captions can be added to YouTube videos using a transcript and YouTube captioning tools. The captions should be proofread for accuracy. You may also need copyright permission from the owner of the material. Contact Disability Support Services for assistance.
- Numerous businesses specialize in creating captioned media and transcripts. Disability Support Services will assist you in connecting with these professionals to caption your project. If captions are required for your media, as listed above, University funding is available.
- Visit the DSS web page entitled “Creating an Accessible Course” at the following URL to learn more about captioning resources and tools. http://www.uab.edu/faculty/teaching/dss/creating-an-accessible-course

Faculty and staff should also be reminded that captioning alone may not address every audio/video accommodation request and that DSS should be consulted for additional resources, methods and accommodation requirements.

Legal Round-up

“Just as buildings without ramps bar people who use wheelchairs, online content without captions excludes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.” - Conclusion of the class action complaint filed against Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute for Technology

UAB has introduced its Commitment to Captioning and it is timely due to recent court findings. In the complaint the National Association of the Deaf asserts that Harvard and MIT make video and audio tracks available online but fail short of ADA compliance by not making them accessible to all via captioning. The bullet points below provide important applications to consider:

- Harvard and MIT were found to have violated Section 504, which provides that no qualified individual with a disability shall solely on the basis of disability be excluded.
- Both institutions receive federal funding which requires that all of the operations of …a college, university, or other post-secondary institution are subject to ADA compliance including public content such as online video
- Harvard and MIT violated the Rehabilitation Act by “failing to provide accurate captioning for its online content, thereby denying deaf and hard of hearing persons the benefits of that online content”.
- The case was sought to declare the violation and to require each university to provide “timely, effective communication through comprehensive and accurate captioning of the online content that it creates and/or produces.”

Again, we are excited about UAB’s commitment to accessibility. DSS values conversations with faculty about ensuring captioning services are available. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this important information at 934-4205 or dss@uab.edu.

The following summary is based on an article from Volume 20, Issue 12 of the Disability Compliance for Higher Education, written by Marc Charmatz, Esq

http://www.disabilitycomplianceforhighereducation.com/
The Americans with Disabilities Act turns 25!

On July 26, 2015, 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 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

Did You Know..................

UAB has returned to a Student Affairs Model under the leadership of Dr. John Jones. DSS will be part of a cohesive division aimed at student success and development. Dr. Jones joins UAB from UNC-Pembroke where he served as Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. We are excited to have Dr. Jones leading this transition and guiding the mission of Student Affairs.

Join us for a Disability Awareness Event!

DSS on the Green
Thursday, October 1st
10am to Noon
Learn more about what we do and who we serve
Come by for food, drinks and free stuff!
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 Faculty Survey

DSS conducted a survey seeking the input of UAB faculty members' impression of services and level of satisfaction regarding: experiences with DSS staff, coordinating/providing accommodations for students with disabilities, and guidance/training provided through DSS. The survey was available April 7-24, 2015. Of the 756 faculty who received the survey, 154 responded, for an overall response rate of 20%. To the right you will find a summary of results from the survey. DSS would like to thank the faculty who participated.

Overall, respondents report the following:

- **Interactions with staff**: 86% of respondents indicated their overall experiences with DSS staff have been Good or Excellent.
- **DSS training attendance**: 81% of respondents have attended a DSS training either in person or online.
- **DSS syllabus statement**: 88% of respondents provide a statement on their syllabus informing students about the process for requesting academic accommodations.
- **Resources and trainings available to faculty**: 76% of respondents either Strongly Agree or Agree they have been provided with the information/guidance needed to provide accommodations to students.

DSS also wanted to gauge faculty members’ level of understanding of their obligations toward working with students with disabilities. This section of the survey produced the most variance in responses, and results are shown to the left. These questions regarding faculty’s knowledge on such topics as confidentiality, legal obligations, and utilizing universal design have raised some concerns. DSS will continue to take steps to provide further guidance/education on these topics during faculty trainings, in the faculty newsletter, and on the DSS faculty website. DSS has also created an anonymous survey that faculty and staff may access at any time via our website: [www.uab.edu/dss](http://www.uab.edu/dss)