

# THE DASS INSIDER

A NEWSLETTER FOR SMU FACULTY

INFORMATION ON DISABILITY SERVICES AND ACCESS ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR STUDENTS AND CLASSES



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## Accommodations Require Shared Responsibilities

The legislation governing disability accommodations in postsecondary schools is different from high school. Whereas high school students are *entitled to many accommodations*, college students have a *right to "reasonable accommodations."*

Accommodations require shared responsibilities between students, faculty and staff, and the institution.

### Student Responsibilities:

At SMU, students are *actively involved* in the accommodation process; they must:

- \*Identify themselves as having a disability and schedule an intake appointment;
- \*Provide documentation of their disability;
- \*Request accommodations **EACH** semester;
- \*Take responsibility for following DASS policies and procedures associated with the accommodations they receive;
- \*Request and advocate for accommodations from faculty, staff or administration in a timely manner;
- \*Comply with student conduct guidelines in the University catalog.

### Faculty & Staff Responsibilities:

Each member of the SMU community shares in the responsibility to create an environment in which individuals are able to ask for access and raise concerns without fear of retaliation. Each faculty and staff member provides access to SMU by:

- \*Maintaining admission and academic standards;

- \*Providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities upon request;
- \*Conveying one's willingness to ensure equal access and opportunities;
- \*Referring students with disabilities and suspected disabilities to DASS;
- \*Refraining from retaliation against individuals advocating for accessibility;
- \*Maintaining confidentiality of records and student status related to disabilities;
- \*Following policies and procedures required to implement approved accommodations.

### Institutional Responsibilities:

SMU provides access by:

- \*Providing appropriate, reasonable educational accommodations to qualified students in a timely manner following university policies and procedures;
- \*Prohibiting unlawful discrimination against qualified people with disabilities;
- \*Complying with the legal requirements for access;
- \*Prohibiting retaliation against individuals who advocate for accessibility.

DASS' role in these shared responsibilities centers on bridging multiple needs while upholding university procedures, meeting legal obligations, allocating resources efficiently, and supporting student learning and self-advocacy. We welcome the opportunity to partner with students, faculty and staff in meeting these goals.

## DASS Staff Updates: Retirement for Rebecca Marin

It is with regret, but excitement for her, that we announce the retirement of Rebecca Marin, Accommodations Coordinator at DASS. She will be with us through June, but then plans to pursue other interests. She'll likely continue to volunteer at a local elementary school, do music, and take classes at SMU.

Becca earned master's degrees in Special Education and Social Work at Columbia University. She taught in Georgia, and worked in Easter Seals and mental health centers along the way. She came to the University more than 20 years ago, serving first as an academic adviser. She was later appointed the first director of the office of Services for Students with

Disabilities. Becca was a one-woman band who handled responsibilities now undertaken by several people. Few people now remember the pioneer days of disability services, Becca reports, when there was no designated testing space, and tests were unproctored and untimed. She is rightly proud to have helped the office evolve so that it now provides such services as proctored testing, captioning, and academic coaching.

Becca is a true advocate for students who deal with a variety of conditions, and her gentle nature has endeared her to many a student and their families. She has also established great relationships with our faculty members and staff, collaborating with

them to implement appropriate accommodations. She deeply appreciates the efforts of faculty members to make an SMU education accessible to all our students. We hope that you will take the time to say goodbye and thank her for all her efforts on behalf of SMU students. She works part-time on M-W-F, so drop by the LEC before July to wish her well, or email her at [rmarin@smu.edu](mailto:rmarin@smu.edu).



Happy Retirement, Becca!

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### Welcome to the DASS Insider.

To help us identify topics of interest for faculty, please let us know of questions or issues you would like addressed in this newsletter. Send your suggestions to [dass@smu.edu](mailto:dass@smu.edu).

Please share this newsletter with your TAs and talk with them about questions they have regarding students with disabilities.

You are not expected to be an expert in disabilities.

Remember, we are available to talk through any questions or concerns.

## Final Exams and Students with Accommodations

In order for students to get their accommodations during finals, they need to consult with professors to plan how the accommodations will be handled. Now is the time to have such discussions, so please invite all students who are eligible for accommodations to meet with you. See what you can arrange through your departments. For example, work out where and when finals will be taken by students who are eligible for

extended time or testing in a location with reduced distractions. If you cannot provide the authorized accommodations, DASS may be able to provide an alternative testing setting. But DASS has only limited seating available, and students will be scheduled on a first-come first-serve basis. To schedule testing through DASS, students must call the DASS office *before April 23<sup>rd</sup>* to reserve a spot. Please note that

DASS is not able to proctor exams that are to be taken on a computer, unless the student has been authorized to use a word processor as an accommodation on writing-intensive tests. Additional procedural instructions will be provided to faculty whose students schedule themselves to test through DASS. Do contact DASS now if you have some preliminary questions or concerns about how the accommodation process works.



DASS Room 217—test proctoring area

**The deadline for students to arrange DASS test proctoring for Spring final exams is APRIL 23.**

### May Term and Summer Sessions

The LEC will not have student employees during May Term to provide tutor assistance. However, the professional staff will be available when needed during regular business hours.

Proctored testing will not be available during May Term. May Term instructors will need to provide this service.

Limited tutoring and test proctoring will be available during Summer I and II at the LEC. As always, instructors are asked to use DASS only if all other options are not feasible.

## DASS Staff Honored: President's Service Awards

Alexa Taylor, DASS's Team Leader, was recently given the 2013 President's Continuing Excellence Award.

One of five President's Staff Recognition Awards, this award highlights the University employee who has (1) had a significant impact on the University through demonstration of competence, dedication, outstanding performance, problem solving, customer service and ingenuity;

(2) contributed and demonstrated commitment to the University's core purpose and values; (3) shown exceptional ability to foster collaboration, communication, and cooperation among colleagues and University constituents; and (4) performed at a level above and beyond job requirements.

DASS and the SMU community are so lucky to have Alexa's extraordinary leadership, and we are very pleased she was given this recognition.



## Faculty Focus: Dr. John Wise Shares Advice

Dr. John Wise, research associate professor in Biological Sciences, took the time to join some SMU students to discuss how faculty interact with those who learn differently. Students for New Learning, SMU's chartered organization for students with learning differences, hosted Dr. Wise in February. At the meeting, they discussed ways to better communicate with faculty when a student has an accommodation, as well as what faculty members need and want to know from students who may have some learning challenges. Dr. Wise gave sage advice to the students in attendance, such as "Don't hesitate to use your accommodations. Don't be aggressive about it, but be assertive." He encouraged students to utilize their accommodations and not be intimidated by their professors, who often just want to help their students learn more effectively. Dr. Wise shared some very positive experiences with many students who excelled in his courses and also had disabilities. He wants all faculty members never to expect less from these students; they may be among the most hard-working, brightest students in the class! Dr. Wise also received SNL's Extra Mile Award last year, and noted that this was one of the most important teaching awards he has ever received. He appreciated the acknowledgment of his efforts to teach to ALL learners.

## Confidentiality: Best Practices

Faculty often ask questions concerning best practices to maintain confidentiality for students with disabilities. As part of a continuing series, the scenarios in this column will provide common situations you may encounter with your students and ways to best handle them.

**Scenario 1:** As part of the interactive process of disability accommodation, DASS instructs students to submit their accommodation letters to faculty members in person and outside of class, preferably during office hours or by appointment. Not only does this allow for a meaningful dialogue about how students' disabilities affect them academically and how their accommodations can best be implemented, but it also ensures students' right to privacy.

**Best practices:** Be welcoming to students with disabilities in your class. Provide a syllabus statement that invites them to come to your office hours or to make an appointment, so that you can discuss their disability-related accommodations individually. If a student approaches you with the DASS accommodation letter in a public setting before or after class, request instead that they speak to you in private.

DASS students are advised about the importance of building rapport with their professors through office hours, and responsibly managing their accommodation requests.

### Simple Teaching Strategies for students with ADHD

There are various strategies instructors can use in the classroom to help students stay on task and take better notes. These include:

\*start each class by displaying a general outline of the topics of the day and key points.

\*pause at various times during class to allow students to re-focus and catch up on note-taking

\*take a few minutes at end of class to restate key points.

*From: Disability Compliance for Higher Education, Vol 17, Issue 12*

## Disability Spotlight: Understanding ADHD by Dr. Michael McLane, Psy.D.

### The Diagnosis

One of the most common diagnoses of children and adolescents, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is estimated to affect over 4 million individuals between the ages of 4 and 17 years in the United States. It is a neurobiological disorder characterized by persistent problems with inattention, disorganization, forgetfulness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity.

In the vast majority of cases, ADHD interferes with the person's ability to use his/her executive functions, which are multifaceted skills important for executing sequences of actions to reach goals. If their executive functioning has not fully developed, young adults with ADHD often have trouble making the transition to college. With less oversight from their parents and increased demands for independence, these students are at risk for having difficulty managing time, finishing papers and projects, taking notes during lectures, balancing schoolwork responsibilities with participation in leisure activities, remembering due dates, managing finances, and inhibiting impulses to engage in risk-taking behaviors.

There are a number of comorbid conditions that are associated with ADHD that may serve as barriers to reaching educational and vocational goals, such as anxiety, depression, conduct problems, and substance abuse. Some of these students overcompensate for their attention problems by becoming perfectionistic, spending an excessive amount of time reviewing their answers. For other students with ADHD, the externalizing behaviors such as being impulsive in their relationships or actions, driving recklessly, or drinking excessively become increasingly problematic.

### Treatment

There is no cure for ADHD, but a combination of medication and psychosocial treatments is usually best for managing its symptoms. For instance, college students with ADHD can work with a learning support specialist or psychologist using an active, pragmatic approach to treatment so that specific behaviors are targeted for intervention. Additionally, classroom accommodations can be designed and implemented to address the specific needs of the student. For students who are uncertain about their career path, vocational counseling may help identify jobs that are well-suited to their interests and strengths. Lastly, students with ADHD need to feel their learning support specialists, counselors, and professors provide a network of support and convey optimism that help them reach their goals.

*For additional information, contact Dr. McLane (972-620-1225 or DfwPedNeuropsych.com).*

## Faculty Corner

### Communication—The Key to Success

DASS strives to maintain a professional, calm environment for students who test with us. You can assist our efforts by:

- \*sending tests 24 hours in advance
- \*replying promptly to our requests for information
- \*providing a completed Proctor Form with each test you send to us
- \*listing a contact phone number on the Proctor Form in case questions arise during or after testing
- \*clearly noting instructions regarding what students may use for the test (notes, books, type of calculators, etc.) and how you want the test returned to you.

With increased testing over the next few weeks, please assist DASS by adhering to these policies. We appreciate your help.

### Faculty Recognition: The Extra Mile Award

Students for New Learning is proud to announce the 2013 Extra Mile Award recipients:

#### **Joci Caldwell-Ryan (Dedman) and Tony Pederson (Meadows).**

These two faculty members will be recognized for having gone the extra mile in the way they teach and work with students who learn differently. Their sensitivity and awareness are much appreciated by students. SNL will present them their awards at the Awards Extravaganza on April 15th at 7:30 in the Hughes-Trigg Ballroom.

DASS appreciates the work of all faculty members who effectively teach DASS students. Please join us in congratulating these two colleagues on their awards!

### Resources for Faculty

**Counseling and Psychiatric Services** (CAPS) at the Memorial Health Center. Staff psychologists may be able to help you respond to a student in distress.

**President's Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities** (PACNPD). Meets 2-3 times/semester to create a more inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Contact Alexa Taylor at [alexat@smu.edu](mailto:alexat@smu.edu) if interested in serving on this committee.

**DASS office** - 214-768-1470

**Frequently Asked Questions** at <http://smu.edu/alec/dassfacultyfaq.asp> on such topics as allowing use of laptops, recording devices, flexible attendance and accommodation procedures.

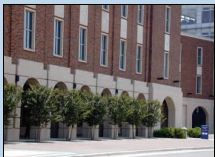
*One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity. ~Albert Schweitzer*

## VISIT US AT DASS

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

5800 Ownby Drive—Suite 202  
2nd Floor - Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center  
Entrance just north of Gate 3 of Ford Stadium

Phone: 214-768-1470  
Email: [dass@smu.edu](mailto:dass@smu.edu)  
Fax: 214-768-1255



Visit us online at

[www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp](http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp)

**Please include this statement in your syllabus:**

***Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit [www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp](http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp) to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.***

## Looking Beyond Labels

**Did you know that** Ikea is actually an acronym of founder Ingvar Kamprad's initials, Elmtaryd, the farm where he grew up, and the nearby village of Agunnyard? He picked Swedish-sounding names for all the products so that he wouldn't have to remember strings of letters and numbers. **Most of the leaders listed below dropped out of school. Could a leader like one of these be in your classroom?**

*Richard Branson, Virgin Airways—dyslexia*  
*John Chambers, Cisco—dyslexia*  
*David Neeleman, Jet Blue—ADHD*  
*Tommy Hilfiger, TH Clothing—dyslexia*  
*Charles Schwab—dyslexia*  
*Paul Orfalea, Kinko's—dyslexia/ADHD*  
*Ingvar Kamprad, IKEA—dyslexia*  
*Steve Jobs, Apple, Inc.—dyslexia*  
*Henry Ford—dyslexia*  
*Ted Turner—LD*

*Albert Einstein—possibly Asperger's Syndrome*  
*Benjamin Franklin—mild autism*  
*Nelson Rockefeller—dyslexia*  
*George Barnard Shaw—ADHD*  
*Woodrow Wilson—dyslexia*  
*Agatha Christie—dysgraphia*

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/ceo-learning-disabilities-2011-5?op=1#ixzz2NuJjaCg6> and [http://www.vmi.edu/uploadedFiles/Academics/Academic\\_Support/Disabilities\\_Services/Famous%20People%20with%20Learning%20Disabilities%20-%20updated.pdf](http://www.vmi.edu/uploadedFiles/Academics/Academic_Support/Disabilities_Services/Famous%20People%20with%20Learning%20Disabilities%20-%20updated.pdf)

**DASS IS MORE THAN ACCOMMODATIONS.**