



# D.S.S. News

Disability Services for Students \* Division of Student Affairs \* Bowling Green State University \* Spring 2002

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## Disability Services for Students

The Office of Disability Services for Students helps provide equal access and reasonable accommodations to Bowling Green State University students with disabilities, and serves as a resource for faculty and staff. Over 500 BGSU students have self-disclosed as having a physical, visual, hearing, speech, learning, or psychiatric disability. Located in 413 South Hall, the office has the following mission:

1. Increase and improve the level of awareness regarding issues associated with the accommodation and development of students with disabilities.
2. Improve upon the process of providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.
3. Improve the transition process from high school to BGSU for students with disabilities.
4. Enhance staff professional and personal development.
5. Collaborate with the Department of Human Resources on a model of managing employment of persons with disabilities.
6. Collaborate with other areas of the University to ensure institutional compliance with federal laws and regulations regarding disability.

*Staff members include:*

Rob Cunningham, C.R.C., Director,  
[rcunnin@bgsu.edu](mailto:rcunnin@bgsu.edu)

Peggy Dennis, C.R.C., Coordinator,  
[fayed@bgsu.edu](mailto:fayed@bgsu.edu)

Stella Meyers, Secretary,  
[smeyers@bgsu.edu](mailto:smeyers@bgsu.edu)

Lea Anne Kessler, Graduate Assistant,  
[lkessle@bgsu.edu](mailto:lkessle@bgsu.edu)

The Disability Services Office staff members are willing to present to classes and organizations on a variety of disability-related topics. Please contact the office to schedule a presentation. Additionally, the office has a collection of videos and other resources that are available for faculty, staff, and student use.

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*According to the United States Census Bureau, about 1 in 5 Americans have some kind of disability, and 1 in 10 have a severe disability.*

## Campus Physical Accessibility

The Office of Design and Construction is currently finishing Phase 2 of ADA Upgrades. This is part of an ongoing effort to make the University accessible to all persons with disabilities (as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990). Phase 2 projects include an incline lift in Anderson Arena, upgrades in Shatzel Hall, and elevator upgrades in the Health Center and West Hall.

In addition, the University is currently starting Phase 3 of ADA Upgrades. Some of these projects include entrance and basement accessibility, door openers, and restroom upgrades in the Police Station; first floor entrance and restroom accessibility in Moseley Hall; compliant seating and signage in Perry Stadium; and a ramp upgrade for University Hall. If you have questions or concerns regarding campus physical accessibility, please contact Disability Services for Students at (419) 372-8495.

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## Faculty Information

It is important that faculty members are aware of the policies and procedures for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. In order for students to receive protection from discrimination under the law and to receive reasonable accommodations, students must present documentation to the Disability Services for Students office. A student is not entitled to accommodations by virtue of being a person with a disability, but he/she is entitled to equal access. There has to be evidence within his/her documentation that establishes there is a need for a specific accommodation.

Once the student is registered with the Disability Services Office, he or she will receive a form letter to share with each instructor. The form letter will explain the specific accommodations that a student is eligible for during the semester.

It is the student's responsibility to present his/her professor with this letter at the start of each semester. Due to many legal and ethical concerns, faculty members should not provide accommodations for students until they have received a letter from the Disability Services for Students office.

It is also important for faculty to understand what is and what is not discriminatory. It is not discriminatory to:

- ◆ Apply the same essential standards of performance or achievement, timeliness, and rules regarding conduct to students with disabilities as applied to everyone else.
- ◆ Not make a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum in order to accommodate a student.

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## Syllabus Statement

It is vital that students with disabilities be aware of the BGSU Disability Services for Students office. In order to reach more students we encourage faculty to include the following information on each class syllabi:

**DISABILITY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**  
413 South Hall

The goal of the Disability Services for Students Office is to help provide equal access and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities attending BGSU and to act as a resource to faculty and staff. Students wishing to discuss their eligibility for such accommodations are encouraged to contact the office.

**Phone:** (419) 372-8495, **Fax:** (419) 372-8496, **TTY:** (419) 372-8497

### IMPORTANT!!!

All faculty members should have a copy of *Students with Disabilities: A Faculty Resource Guide*. This publication includes information regarding the policies and procedures for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. Faculty members who have not received a copy of the faculty guide are strongly encouraged to request a copy today! Please call the Disability Services for Students Office at (419) 372-8495.

*The majority of students with disabilities at BGSU have hidden or "invisible" disabilities such as learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, traumatic brain injury, or mental illnesses.*

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## Student Feature – Nikki Petrisko

Hi! My name is Nikki Petrisko and I am the Vice President of C.A.R.E. The reason I have decided to join this organization is to educate my fellow students about disabilities and how they can interact with other students without thinking of their disability and to start looking at the person for who they are.

If you were to talk to me you would not even know that I have a hearing impairment. I became deaf in my right ear when I was seven years old and had many operations in my left ear. By the time I was 16, I had bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. I have severe to profound hearing loss in my left ear. With the help of a hearing aid, I can hear pretty well, but not like a normal hearing person would hear. I can hear things around me, but sometimes cannot make out words that people are saying without seeing their face. Reading lips helps me figure out what words the person is saying. In class I have the help of a FM system. The teacher wears a microphone while I wear a neck loop that works along with my hearing aid. This FM system blocks off surrounding noise and projects the teacher's voice more so I can hear them better. A classmate takes notes for me while I concentrate on the lesson the teacher is lecturing about. I could take my own notes, but it is very hard to read lips and write at the same time. Even though I have this hearing impairment, I think of myself as "normal." I like it when people in my class ask me what the FM system is or just ask questions about my hearing in general. I feel that if people ask questions in a nice and polite manner, people will see the person for who they are if they have a positive spirit and they will learn more about disabilities as well. My doctor who performed the surgeries thinks that I have succeeded tremendously throughout the years.

Now I am graduating from Bowling Green State University with a BA in Child and Family Community Services. Then I will be off to Grad School to get my MA in Child Life. Therefore, I truly feel that people with disabilities can encourage other students to do anything they put their mind to and succeed. My advice is not to be afraid of anyone with a disability, you never know who your next best friend may be!

*A person with a disability is any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.*

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require colleges and universities to allow students with disabilities the same access to programs, activities, and services as non-disabled students.*

## Technology Update

The office of Disability Services for Students has an adaptive computer lab available for student use. This lab allows students with varying disabling conditions access to all aspects of technology. Lab hours are 8:00am-5:00pm Mondays – Fridays.

*The D.S.S. lab includes:*

Four computer work stations (2 IBM, 2 Macintosh)	Scanner
Height adjustable work station	Large print monitors
Closed-circuit television/VCR	Braille machine
Voice input/output software	Compu-Lenz

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## New Student Organization – C.A.R.E.

by Nikki Petrisko, C.A.R.E. Vice-President

*According to the United States Census Bureau, almost 19% of people ages 15 to 64 years have a disability.*

Right now, you are probably thinking what is C.A.R.E and as a student how does this organization concern me? C.A.R.E stands for Concerns, Awareness, Representation and Education for disability issues. Our main goal is to strive to represent the needs and concerns of students with disabilities and to increase awareness of students with disabilities on this campus. C.A.R.E consists of students with and without disabilities. We meet and discuss concerns pertaining to students with disabilities on the BGSU campus. We also resolve any problems in a respectful manner and collaborate amongst ourselves on how to increase University awareness as a whole about disabilities in general and people living with disabilities. As for how C.A.R.E. concerns the students and how to become a member, come to our meetings every Wednesday night at 7:00pm in BA 1003 to discuss how you feel you can help the campus meet the needs of disabled students. Helping us get ramps and elevators in the buildings and having people learn more about different disabilities are just some ways that you can help this organization grow. Increasing awareness and learning about disabilities can make this campus stronger and will result in a friendlier atmosphere! For more information on how to join C.A.R.E., contact Lea Anne Kessler, C.A.R.E. Advisor, at (419) 372-9496 or [lkessle@bgnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:lkessle@bgnet.bgsu.edu).

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**If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format (e.g. large print, cassette, or in Braille) please contact Disability Services for Students at (419) 372-8495 or TTY (419) 372-8497.**

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