



D.S.S. News

Disability Services for Students * Division of Student Affairs * Bowling Green State University * Spring 2004



D.S.S. Outstanding Faculty Award

Disability Services for Students would like to congratulate Dr. Jeannie Ludlow, Department of Women's Studies, as the Spring 2004 recipient of the D.S.S. Outstanding Faculty Award.

This award is given once a semester to a deserving faculty member at BGSU who is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to students with disabilities. Registered D.S.S. students are eligible to nominate professors for this award. Students are encouraged to nominate professors who promote inclusive classrooms, value diverse learning styles and abilities, challenge and support students with disabilities, and believe in and enjoy working with all students.

The nominating student's comments included, "I strongly believe that Dr. Jeannie Ludlow deserves the D.S.S. Outstanding Faculty Award because she advocates the embracing of differences between one another, including those with disabilities. Jeannie has a phenomenal way of connecting with her students... Jeannie has helped me feel comfortable with my learning disability and has accommodated me with my needs such as extended time on quizzes..."

The winner was chosen randomly from a pool of nominees who met the award criteria. As winner, Dr. Ludlow received a \$25 gift certificate to the Bowen-Thompson Student Union Bookstore and a framed certificate. The nominating student also received a \$25 gift certificate to the Bookstore. Other nominees for the award included: Dr. Ruben Viramontez Anguiano, Family/Consumer Sciences; Dr. William Rolli, Mathematics and Statistics; and Dr. L. Fleming Fallon, Public and Allied Health. All award nominees will receive a Disability Services appreciation gift in the near future.

Campus Physical Accessibility

The Office of Design and Construction is currently working on Phase 3 of ADA renovations. 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).

Scheduled projects include: accessible seating in the Stadium, handicapped parking upgrades, unisex restroom in Moseley Hall, replacement ramp in front of University Hall, ramp between Moseley Hall and University Hall (in the breezeway), new ramp on the west side of South Hall, and signage in the Health Center.

The University is currently accepting suggestions for Phase 4 renovations. If you would like to recommend a campus renovation or have questions or concerns regarding campus physical accessibility, please contact Disability Services for Students at (419) 372-8495.

Transition from High School to College

The transition from high school to college can be difficult for many students and their parents, and especially so for students with disabilities. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the laws which mandate service provision at the high school and post-secondary levels are very different. This can lead to miscommunication between college and high school staff who may have studied only the statutes applicable to their settings.

Post-secondary institutions must adhere to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Under these laws, individuals are guaranteed protection from discrimination solely on the basis of disability. To avoid discrimination and provide equal educational access, reasonable accommodations may be necessary.

In order to be eligible for accommodations students must provide an institution with documentation of disability from an appropriate professional. The documentation must verify that the disability “substantially limits a major life activity,” and also address the issue of severity of impact. Therefore, students with an IEP or 504 plan do not automatically qualify for services at the post-secondary level. The transition process can also be difficult because in college, students are expected to take a more active role for self-advocacy and independent planning. It is important that students and their families become aware of these and other differences so that they may begin preparing for this major transition.

At the post-secondary level students have a responsibility to:

- Self-identify or disclose their disability to the appropriate office
- Provide verifying documentation of disability that is comprehensive and current, includes a specific diagnosis, provides actual test scores (if relevant), and is conducted by a qualified professional
- Act as independent adults
- Arrange their own weekly schedules
- Arrange for and access personal care attendants and private tutors
- Contact instructors to implement reasonable accommodations for each class

Our office maintains a process whereby staff members meet with qualifying students at the beginning of each semester. A letter is completed regarding which accommodations are necessary, and students are asked to meet with their instructors to share the letter and discuss issues of concern.

Website Accessibility

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, students with disabilities must have full access to programs, including distance and Web-based information access. The criteria for web-based technology and information are based on access guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (www.w3.org).

Each BGSU department/office is legally mandated and responsible for ensuring that their website complies with the mandates for access and compliance. BGSU’s website accessibility requirements can be found at www.bgsu.edu/offices/execvp/wag/access.html.

Our office collaborates with a website accessibility advisor, who is available for department/office presentations. Please contact us to schedule a presentation.

Would you like to check your site for accessibility? Try Bobby (<http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>) and see how your web site measures up.

Tips for Communicating with People with Disabilities

From Section 504 Compliance Handbook, March 2004

Etiquette considered appropriate when interacting with people with disabilities is based primarily on respect and courtesy. It is important to always use person-first, affirmative phrases such as person with a disability, person who uses a wheelchair, person who is deaf, person with a physical disability, etc. Do not use negative phrases such as retarded, disabled, confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound, crippled, handicapped, etc. Outlined below are additional tips to follow when communicating with persons with disabilities.

General tips for communicating with people with disabilities:

- When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands.
- If offering assistance, wait until the offer is accepted, then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Relax. Do not be embarrassed when using common expressions such as “See you later,” or “Did you hear about that?” that seem to relate to a person’s disability.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do.

Tips for communicating with individuals who are blind or have visual impairments:

- Speak to the individual when you approach him or her.
- State clearly who you are; speak in a normal tone of voice.
- When in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.
- Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking the owner.
- Tell the individual when you are leaving.
- Be descriptive when giving directions. Verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to individuals who can see (ex. when approaching steps, describe how many there are).

Tips for communicating with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Gain the person’s attention before starting a conversation (i.e., tap the person gently on the arm).
- Look directly at the individual, face the light, speak clearly in a normal tone of voice, and keep your hands away from your face. Use short, simple sentences. Avoid smoking or chewing gum.
- If the individual uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.

Tips for communicating with individuals who use wheelchairs:

- If possible, sit at the wheelchair user’s eye level.
- Do not lean on a wheelchair or any other assistive device.
- Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
- Do not assume the individual wants to be pushed – ask first.

Tips for communicating with individuals who have cognitive disabilities:

- If in a public area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or private location.
- Be prepared to repeat what you say, orally or in writing.
- Offer assistance completing forms or understanding written instructions and provide extra time for decision-making.

Tips for communicating with individuals who have speech impairments:

- If you do not understand something that the individual says, do not pretend that you do. Ask the individual to repeat what he or she said then repeat it back.
- Be patient. Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish her or his sentences.
- Consider writing as an alternative means of communicating, but first ask the individual if this is acceptable.

Remember to relax; treat the individual with dignity, respect, and courtesy; listen to the individual; and offer assistance but do not insist or be offended if the offer is not accepted.

DSS Hosts Teleconference

Written by Abby Dawes, Graduate Assistant

On Thursday February 18th the Bowling Green State University Disability Services for Students Office hosted a teleconference for local disability service providers. The title of the teleconference was “Emerging Legal Trends: Impact on Services for Postsecondary Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.” The teleconference was facilitated by nationally recognized disability rights attorney, Jeanne Kincaid. Ms. Kincaid also presented information about recent case rulings relevant to higher education. Other members of the panel outlined current legal issues facing disability service providers at the college level. Participants learned about pressing issues such as, working with students who have cochlear implants, partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, and finding creative ways to utilize interpreter and translator services.

Collaboration with Academic Affairs

Written by Rob Cunningham, Ph.D., Director

Due to the increasing demand for exam proctoring services, DSS is collaborating with the office of Student Academic Success to address this demand. To continue to ensure the academic integrity of this process, specific procedures have been worked out and will be in place prior to this semester's final exam week. Faculty will be made aware of these in the very near future.



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) 372-0582.

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