

D.S. News

Disability Services * Division of Student Affairs * Bowling Green State University * Spring 2009

Message from Director

Rob Cunningham, Ph.D., Director/ADA Compliance Manager

As more of an institution's course offerings and student services go online, it's critical that efforts are made to ensure equal access for students with disabilities. Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that students with disabilities have equal access to information and to the avenues of communication, including web sites operated by colleges, other internet resources, distance education programs, and the like. When the educational institution involved is a government entity, the ADA requires that students with disabilities are to be provided communication "as effective as" that provided to nondisabled students. "Communication" has been defined as the "transfer of information."

In construing the conditions under which communication is as effective as that provided to nondisabled persons, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has held that the three basic components of effectiveness are timeliness of delivery, accuracy of the translation, and provision in a manner and medium appropriate to the significance of the message and the abilities of the individual with the disability.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act provides a widely-used set of standards for Web accessibility. Utilizing these standards in designing/maintaining institutional Web pages will help ensure that information on the site is accessible. Aside from helping the institution avoid legal problems, using Section 508 standards makes Web sites easier to navigate for all people, whether or not they have disabilities. Compliance with the standards also makes Web sites faster, easier to maintain, and compatible with mobile devices. The following are some examples of the Section 508 standards:

- A text equivalent for every nontext element shall be provided.
- Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color.
- When electronic forms are designed to be completed online, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.

To view the full Section 508 regulations, go to www.access-board.gov/508.htm.

You may also refer to BGSU's web accessibility policy, contained at the bottom of every BGSU web page.



Need to contact Disability Services?

We are located in 413 South Hall and can be contacted through phone, 419-372-8495; fax, 419-372-8496; or email, dss@bgsu.edu.

2009-2010 Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

By Lea Anne Kessler, M.A., Coordinator



Congratulations to all of our scholarship winners for 2008-2009. The deserving winners received a total of \$4,930. Applications for 2009-2010 are available by stopping in the Disability Services Office or by emailing a request to dss@bgsu.edu. The deadline for submitting applications is May 8, 2009. Scholarship opportunities this year are as follows:

- ***Jerry Dale Conrad Scholarship*** – for students with physical or mental disabilities
- ***Julie and Richard Crossen Scholarship*** – for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- ***Lois Jean Steel Stiffler Scholarship*** – for students with learning disabilities
- ***Ohio Lions Foundation/Helen Keller Scholarship*** – for students with visual impairments

Please visit our website at www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/disability to view the detailed scholarship criteria. Our website also contains links to several outside, community scholarships.

For information on other scholarship opportunities at BGSU, please visit the Financial Aid Searchable Scholarship Guide at www.bgsu.edu/offices/sfa.

My Key to Success

Anonymous Student

A lot of kids would not admit to having a learning disability. Having a disability which prevents you from learning class materials can prevent you from having success in the class. I look at my disability as more of a challenge to work through so that I can achieve my goals that I set for myself. The Disability Service office has aided me greatly in my efforts to achieve my personal goals. The Disability Service office allows me to obtain the necessary resources to help me prevail with my school work. The hard working, always willing to help, workers at the Disability Service office go above and beyond to see their students succeed in their classes; and they always do so with a warm greeting and inviting approach.

Thanks to the help provided by the Disability Service office, I have managed to achieve a Dean's List GPA. I have also been offered many opportunities, including scholarships and programs that I would not be a part of, if it were not for the Disability Service office. As a freshman in college at Bowling Green State University the Disability Service office has helped me plant my feet and helped me find the right path for my college career. I look forward to continuing to receive the Disability Service office help and, through the addition of my hard work, I plan to continue achieving my goals which include maintaining a high GPA, exhibiting leadership abilities and completing college in three years. Although these are lofty goals I am committed to achieving them.



F.I.G.U.R.E.

Maggie Doremus, Vice-President of F.I.G.U.R.E.

FIGURE (Finding Intelligence Greatness Uniquely Residing in Everyone) is a disability awareness group at BGSU. We strive to not only bring awareness to campus but also to the surrounding communities. We do this by bringing speakers to campus, hosting events, and conducting service projects in the community.



This year was filled with many great events and opportunities. We had the honor of hosting Craig MacFarlen, who spoke on campus this February, and Gary Broadbent, who spoke on campus last fall. We also had the joy of conducting our 3rd annual movie night. This year we watched 'Music Within,' the hilarious, heart warming true story of Richard Pimentel. For our community outreach every month, we have cleaned a local daycare called Sensational Kids. Sensational Kids is a daycare in Holland that opened last June and caters to kids of all abilities. After our service, we hosted silent dinners at a local restaurant or on campus. We hope to continue helping Sensational Kids and hosting silent dinners through the end of the year. Next year we want to continue our mission and hopefully become more involved and known on campus!

F.I.G.U.R.E. has a few more general meetings scheduled this year, on April 7 and April 21 at 9:15 p.m. in BA 100. All who are interested are encouraged to join!

Outstanding Faculty Award Winner – Dr. Jeffrey Peake

By Heather Huffman, Graduate Assistant

Congratulations to Dr. Jeffrey Peake for winning Disability Services' Outstanding Faculty Award! Dr. Peake is an associate professor in the Political Science Department and has taught at BGSU since 1999. He teaches classes focused on American politics including classes on the presidency, media and politics, and Congress. The student who nominated him spoke of really enjoying Dr. Peake's classes and Dr. Peake's consideration and effort to help him access class materials.



Dr. Peake decided to go into teaching because he enjoys the culture and work of being a faculty member. He likes working on creating knowledge and working independently. One of his favorite parts is the interaction he gets with students. He enjoys discussing ideas with his students and dispelling the myths that exist about American politics. He finds it very rewarding when he can get students to reconsider their current thinking on a topic and consider other viewpoints.

Dr. Peake's philosophy for working with students with disabilities is that every student is different, and he strives to be as accommodating as possible for each student's individual needs. He tries to be accessible to his students, and uses multiple assessment techniques. His main recommendation to students with disabilities is to go to professors' office hours to talk with them one-on-one about their accommodations. This will work better than giving them the accommodation letter during class because it gives the professor the opportunity to ask questions about how he/she can best assist a student.

The Disability Services Outstanding Faculty Award is given once a semester to a faculty member who is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to students with disabilities. Students who are registered with Disability Services are encouraged to nominate professors who promote an inclusive classroom, value diverse learning styles and abilities, challenge and support students with disabilities, and believe in and enjoy working with all students.

Friends of DS Award Goes To... Math & Stats Tutoring, Study Skills, and Writing Centers

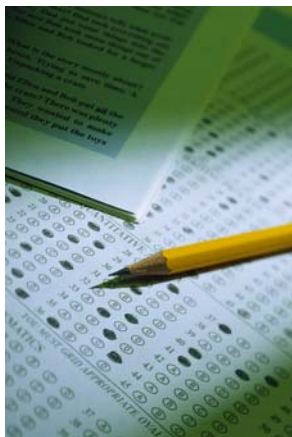
By Lea Anne Kessler, M.A., Coordinator

The Disability Services Office is pleased to honor the Math & Stats Tutoring, Study Skills, and Writing Centers as Friends of DS award recipients for spring 2009. The centers provide exceptional service to our BGSU students with disabilities.

- The *Math & Stats Tutoring Center* offers drop-in tutoring, study groups, and self-help resources such as *MyMathLab*. Please view their website at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/mastctr/index.html> for more information on how to register and use services.
- The *Study Skills Center* offers “How to Succeed in...” manuals, brochures on study tips, and individualized help in study skills and textbook reading. In addition, the Center provides mentor groups for many BG Perspective (general education) classes. Please visit the Study Skills Center website at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/studyskillsctr/> for more information.
- The *Writing Center* offers in-person and online writing consultations for any writing assignments. They provide consultations at their office in Moseley Hall, and they provide satellite hours at many of the residence halls. In addition, they provide handouts and style-guide information on their website at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/writingctr/index.html>.



The Math & Stats Tutoring, Study Skills, and Writing Centers have a long-standing commitment to student achievement and success. Their caring staff and comprehensive tutoring services have helped retain numerous BGSU students with and without disabilities. The centers are also a wonderful resource for faculty and staff. On behalf of the Disability Services Office, thank you to the centers for being our “friends.”



Making Exam Appointments – Important Reminders

Students who are eligible for extra time – Please remember to talk with your professor a week before any test to arrange how and when you will get your extra time.

Students who are eligible for a reader, scribe, separate testing room, or computer – Please remember to call (419-372-8495) or email (dss@bgsu.edu) at least 3 days in advance to make exam appointments. If you do not give the DSS office 3 days notice, we may not have the space or staff available to provide your exam accommodations. Please notify us when making your exam appointment of your specific needs.

Faculty Questions and Answers

Reprinted and adapted with permission from DO-IT. (2004). *The faculty room: Rights and responsibilities*. Retrieved March 5, 2009 from the University of Washington's website at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty/Rights/Faq/>

Q. CONFIDENTIALITY: Is the information regarding a student's disability and her need for academic accommodations confidential?



A. Privacy of student information, including that regarding student's disabilities or accommodation needs, should generally be handled according to guidelines of [FERPA, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#). Personal information of this nature should only be shared with those people within the institution who have an educational need-to-know.

Q. ANNOUNCEMENT: How can I encourage students with disabilities to talk with me about their accommodations?

A. Announce at the beginning of a course that you are available to discuss instructional methods and appropriate course modifications with students who have disabilities. In addition, include a note to this effect on your course syllabus. For example:

"To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services office (419-372-8495). If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need in this class."

Q. CONFIDENTIALITY: Is it acceptable to ask a student who is having obvious difficulties whether he has a disability or to refer the student to the Disability Services office?

A. No. It is not a good idea to ask directly about a possible disability for a couple of reasons. First, the Americans with Disabilities Act states that a public entity may not make unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability. These inquiries usually relate to hiring or pre-admission screening, but when talking with students such inquiries should also be avoided. A direct inquiry such as this could also be considered intrusive or insensitive. You may simply tell the student that you notice she is having academic difficulty and encourage her to come talk with you about gaining assistance, just as you would with any student.

Q. REFERRALS: How can I encourage students with disabilities to register with the Disability Services office?

A. You may make an announcement to your class and print a statement on your syllabus referring students with disabilities to the Disability Services office. You may also encourage students to meet with you to discuss their learning needs. For example, you could say to a student: "I noticed that you seemed to have difficulty organizing your paper. You might consider using some of the special support services we have on campus such as the Study Skills Center, the Writing Center, and Disability Services office."

Q. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS: How do I know what is a reasonable academic accommodation?

A. The Disability Services office determines which accommodations are reasonable. The student should provide you with a letter from this office, outlining appropriate accommodations. The student may also share with you accommodations that have proved successful for him in other classes. You can consult with the Disability Services office if his requests do not seem reasonable.

Q. DISAGREEMENTS: What if I do not agree with a recommended accommodation?

A. The institution is required by federal regulation to establish formal grievance procedures for providing prompt and equitable resolution of disagreements. When a dispute involves the conduct of a course or academic program, those procedures provide for consultation between the faculty member responsible for the course, the student, and a representative from the disabled student services office. Contact your Disability Services office to learn about the grievance procedures on your campus.

Q. EXAMINATIONS: Some students with disabilities are provided extended time on examinations. Is this fair to other students?

A. The Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states: "The results of an examination should accurately reflect an individual's aptitude or achievement level or whatever the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting an individual's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills." The courts have held repeatedly that a lengthening of the standard examination period is an appropriate accommodation for some students with disabilities. For example, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordered the State Board of Bar Examiners to allow double the standard time on the bar exam for an applicant with Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder. Similarly, the State District Court for the Western District of New York ruled that a State Bar applicant with a visual impairment must be allowed a four-day examination period rather than the standard two-day period.



Q. NOTICE: How are instructors informed that a student needs an academic accommodation?

A. Students who wish to exercise their right to disability-related accommodations must provide the Disability Services office with documentation of their disability. The Disability Services office will provide students with letters to share with their instructors detailing the specific accommodations that are necessary. Students are encouraged to request accommodations prior to the beginning of the academic term, however, the student may request accommodations at any time during the course.

Q. RESOURCES: What should I do if I have additional questions or are looking for a great faculty resource about working with students with disabilities?

A. Please contact the Disability Services office or check out the University of Washington's DO-IT Faculty Room at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty/>.
