Faculty & Staff Newsletter

Note from the Interim Coordinator

Welcome back to another semester at UNI! I hope you had a relaxing winter break and are ready to begin your new classes.

It continues to be an exciting time here in the SDS office, and I am pleased to introduce three new staff members in our office that will be helping serve our students this semester.

This semester’s practicum student is Brittany Warren. Brittany is a graduate student in the Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs program here at UNI and will be assisting with the Weekly Mentoring Program in addition to creating the monthly Faculty/Staff Newsletters. Stasia Fetter, a student in UNI’s Social Work program, is serving as our intern. As Intern, she is responsible for creating the monthly Student Newsletters in addition to assisting with the Weekly Mentoring Program.

Last, but certainly not least, Trisha Carpenter will be serving as our Alternate Text Coordinator. Trisha is a student in the Communication Disorders program at UNI and has previously served as a book editor for our office. Please help me in welcoming these new staff members to our office, and have a great semester!

Ashley Lerch
Interim Coordinator, Student Disability Services

What is Asperger’s Syndrome?

Asperger’s Syndrome, first recognized by Austrian pediatrician Hans Asperger, is a neurological disorder that affects an individual’s ability to communicate and interact socially with others. Those with AS generally have what is considered to be a normal IQ for their age and do not exhibit any major delays in their language development. Individuals do, however, lack a strong ability to convey emotions. They also struggle connecting with peers and forming relationships. Quite often those with AS develop a strong interest in a particular area and, as a result, some even become experts in a subject. The most recent research shows that abnormalities in the brain may be the cause of AS and that it may be inherited through genetics.

(cont. on pg 2)
Test Your Knowledge!

1. How many people with disabilities are there within the nation?
   A) 27 million  
   B) 43 million  
   C) 53 million

2. Who is protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act?
   A) Anyone who claims they have a disability  
   B) Someone with a substantial limitation in a major life activity due to mental or physical impairment  
   C) Someone who had a disability in the past but has now recovered  
   D) Someone who others treat as if they have a disability  
   E) Someone who associates with people with disabilities

3. Does the ADA require academic standards to be lowered to accommodate students with disabilities?
   A) Yes  
   B) No  
   C) Sometimes


Asperger’s Syndrome (cont.)

Diagnosing AS is a difficult task. Some doctors consider AS to be its own disorder while others believe that it is a mild form of autism and refer to the disorder as HFA (high-functioning autism). There is not a cure for AS, but with various modes of treatment those who are affected by the illness find ways to cope with the condition and even go on to lead successful careers. Treatments differ from person to person. Medication may be used to control other illnesses that may occur in individuals with AS (i.e. depression or anxiety). Other treatments include occupational or physical therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, or social skills training. Again, it is important to remember that not all individuals with AS exhibit the same characteristics and utilize the same treatment services.

Information retrieved from the following websites:

FAQ about Learning Disabilities

Q. HANDOUTS AND TESTS: How can I adjust testing or handout materials to make them more "user-friendly" for students with a range of learning disabilities?
   A. When constructing test items, use a style consistent with that used during lectures and group related test questions together. This can help students retrieve information contained in their notes. Concise and well-organized handouts that highlight key points can also structure and reinforce content.

Q. LOW-TECH: What are some "low-tech" strategies that students with learning disabilities use to achieve academic success?
   A. Some simple accommodations do not require computers. Low-tech solutions such as post-it notes, daily organizers, and highlighter pens may be helpful organizers and learning tools for students with learning disabilities.

FAQs retrieved from http://www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty/Strategies/Disability/LD/Iq_faq.html

"Now I look beyond what I can't do and focus on what I CAN."
~ Robert M. Hansel
Stories Across the Nation

ASU Settles Discrimination Lawsuit
Earlier this month Arizona State University settled a lawsuit over the institution’s use of Amazon’s e-reader Kindle device. The two organizations that filed the case served as the voice for the blind students who found the device difficult to operate.

Making Dance Accessible to All
Axis dance company, located in Oakland, CA, is changing the way audiences view the possibilities of dance. Over half of the company members perform their dance routines through the use of their wheelchair. The company founder stated: “We look at the possibilities. There is a potential for movement that is radically expanded from what another dance company would have.”

Did You Know?
The numbers of students with disabilities in postsecondary education are steadily increasing.

Since 1990 there has been a 90% increase in the number of colleges and universities, technical institutions, community colleges and vocational technical centers offering opportunities for persons with disabilities to continue their education.

The Life of Ray Charles

- Born on September 23, 1930, to a poor family in Georgia
- At the young age of seven, Ray lost his vision completely
- He enrolled in the Saint Augustine School of the Blind and Deaf where he began to study piano, saxophone, and clarinet
- Ray lost both parents by the time he was 18 years old
- In 1954, he releases his first big hit “I Got a Woman”—creation of “soul” music
- Ray spent the next several decades releasing hit songs
- President Clinton awarded Ray the National Medal of Arts in 1992
- Ray died June 10, 2004

Information retrieved from http://www.washington.edu/dait/Faculty/Resources/Academic/dyk_index.html

“The only way to find the limits of the possible is by going beyond them to the impossible.”
~ Arthur C. Clarke

Picture from http://www.axisdance.org/index.php

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The Philosophy and Mission of UNI’s Student Disability Services

SDS Philosophy and Mission
Student Disability Services is a university resource that provides specialized services to enhance the overall academic, career, and personal development of each person with a disability.

Therefore, it is our philosophy and mission to provide services and promote an accessible environment which allows people with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in educational and other campus activities.

SDS is committed to providing opportunities and accommodations in higher education to all academically qualified students with disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student to seek available assistance at the university and to make his or her individual needs known.

SDS affirms that no qualified person shall be denied access to participation in, or the benefits of, any program, activity, or service operated by the University of Northern Iowa. Each qualified person shall receive appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, programs, activities, and services in an integrated setting.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge:
1. 53 million (according to the 2000 U.S. Census)
2. Letters B-E are all correct
3. No; The same academic standards for admission and achievement apply to all students with disabilities