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Student Disability Services Campus Newsletter, April 2013

University of Northern Iowa. Office of Student Disability Services.

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It is hard to believe that graduation and the end of another academic year is only just a few weeks away!

This has definitely been an exciting year within SDS and I wanted to take a moment to highlight some of SDS’s accomplishments from this year.

To date, SDS has 312 students registered with the office and eligible for academic accommodations for this academic year.

An additional 95 students were requested and were approved for accommodations in the residence halls.

175 individual book requests were processed for students eligible for the accommodation.

39 students participated in our Weekly Mentoring Program.

These accomplishments could not have been done without the help and dedication from our staff. I especially want to thank our undergraduate and graduate staff that play such an important role in helping us serve students!

I wish everyone the best of luck as you prepare for finals and congratulations to those graduating this semester!

Ashley Brickley
Coordinator, Student Disability Services

Getting to Know Accommodations: Books in Alternate Format

Books in Alternate Format is an academic accommodation offered by our office. Last year, we had over 134 requests for books to be converted!

Students eligible for this accommodation have some difficulty accessing printed material due to a disability. These disabilities may include learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, or having low vision/blindness.

Students are required to purchase the texts for their classes and turn in their receipts in order for our office to be able to process the conversion. This ensures that we are following copyright laws.

Sometimes, publishers have texts available in alternate formats, which enables us to turn over requests quickly. Other times, we need to use the actual textbook and convert it into an electronic format by removing the binding and scanning the pages.

Students can receive the book in either a PDF or a Word document. Student workers in Student Disability Services assist Brittany Warren, our alternative texts specialist, in order to make the turnover happen as quickly as possible!

Faculty members can assist in the provision of this accommodation by determining what books will be required for their classes and making this information available online through the Student Information System. Students receiving this accommodation can assist by making sure that they have requested their accommodations well before the start of the semester.

To learn more about Books in Alternate Format and how to get registered with our office, contact us at 319-273-2677.
About a Disability: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 3-5% of children have ADHD. Probable causes are due to heredity, chemical imbalances in the brain, brain changes, poor nutrition/infections/substance abuse during pregnancy, exposure to toxins (lead, PCB), or an injury to the brain or a brain disorder. In order to diagnose ADHD, symptoms such as problems paying attention or concentrating, inability to follow directions, easily bored or frustrated with tasks, and constant or impulsive movement must be observed. While these symptoms are particularly found in children, they can also be present in adults. Adults may also show symptoms that include difficulty with time management, organization skills, goal setting, employment, relationships, self-esteem, and addictions. ADHD is not an adult-onset disorder, so when adults display symptoms of ADHD psychiatrists generally interview them about their childhood to see if perhaps it was not previously diagnosed.

In order to properly diagnose an individual with ADHD, they must first see a physician who will review their medical history as well as conduct a physical. If it appears that there is not a physical disorder causing the symptoms, the individual will then make an appointment with a psychiatrist.

There are no cures for ADHD. However, it can be treated with a combination of medicine as well as psychosocial therapy. The type of medication used is called a “stimulant,” which helps the individual control their activity level and attention span. There are five different types of psychosocial therapy that an individual can use as well.

The first is special education, which consists of a highly structured educational environment tailored to the individual. It is effective because it allows individuals to get used to a routine and structure, which helps with time management, organization skills, and goal setting.

The second is behavior modification. This may include mentoring programs that work with individuals to learn problem-solving, self-development, organizational, and relationship skills to utilize in social and professional situations.

The third is psychotherapy, better known as counseling. Counseling works with individuals with ADHD to handle their emotional needs in a productive manner, ultimately working towards improving their self-esteem. Sometimes family, friends, or significant others of individuals with ADHD attend counseling in order to better understand the nature of ADHD and how it affects their loved one.

The fourth is social skills training. This allows the individual with ADHD to practice social behavior as society expects, such as respectful communication.

The fifth is support groups. On college campuses, this can take the form of student groups whose members consist of individuals with disabilities and their allies. Off campus (as well as on), these groups provide an opportunity for individuals to increase their knowledge of ADHD as well as any updated treatment options while providing a social and supportive environment.

Construction Corner: Updates from UNI Facilities Management

The pedestrian walkway between Bartlett and the entrance to the 23rd street Market will be closed starting Monday, April 15, 2013. Fences and signs will be placed at the cul-de-sac. This closure includes the west ramp and sidewalk.

The entrance to the 23rd street market and the doors to the stairs on the east side of Commons WILL NOT BE BLOCKED. Access to the 23rd St. Market will be from the east. Both the west ramp, sidewalk and the path through the arch will re-open after the work is done and the sidewalk is replaced.
Universal Design in Homes

Universal design “is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Mace 1998). Oftentimes, when individuals hear the phrase “universal design,” they make the assumption that it is associated with elderly individuals or individuals with mobility disabilities. However, according to Sandra McGowan, Universal Design Alliance CFO, “universal design is just good design. The designs-- until you really need them-- just make things more convenient.” Universal design began to be applied in housing in the early 1990s. At times, it can mean that facilities meet ADA standards for several different types of disabilities, but the goal is for everyone to be able to use the products or buildings to the greatest extent possible (Mace 1998).

In homes, this might mean avoiding placing stairs at entrances, eliminating curbs in showers, or utilizing pulls instead of knobs on cabinets, which are easier to grasp. In the kitchen, using many different levels of surfaces (accessible to those in wheelchairs, small children, or tall adults) makes mealtime preparation easier. In the bathroom, designers have been installing vanities of different heights, as well as creating what is called a “wet room”-- a boundless area for the shower in order to avoid potential falls, significant amount of space for mobility, and decorative yet functional grab bars.

References:

News You Can Use: Form Updates

Student Disability Services has updated many of our forms, which will be released soon! Forms that have been updated include: Request for Services Form-Academics, Request for Services Form-Residence Halls, and the Evaluator Form.

What's different?

Evaluator Form:
- Clarity -- We have added checkboxes for some of the questions, so healthcare providers can accurately provide the information we are seeking.
- Accommodation Suggestions -- We have added checkboxes so healthcare providers can see what we have been able to offer in the past, compared with what they have found effective for their clients.
- Impacts -- More questions to allow healthcare providers to describe the impact of the accommodations on the individual.

Request for Services Forms:
- Two forms -- We have split the academic accommodations and residence hall accommodations into two separate forms, since they often address very different needs.
- More information -- Both forms have more of an “introductory” section, with information about the procedure for receiving accommodations.
- Streamline -- All new forms reflect our recent change in documentation guidelines, featured in the December 2012 newsletter.

The updated forms will be released soon, stay tuned!
Faculty Resources: Working Toward Student Success

Have you ever wondered if there may be more that you could be doing to help a student in your classroom?

Unless a student discloses a disability to you, do not assume that the student has a disability. If you think that a student may need some accommodations to do their best academically, consider consulting the Student Disability Services Coordinator, Ashley Brickley, for more information about the services that SDS offers. Be sure to make a general announcement to your classes, letting them know the SDS resources and also refer to your syllabus with a statement about the resources for students with disabilities.

The information concerning a student’s disability is completely confidential. Students registered with the SDS office may qualify for accommodations in the classroom and after receiving paperwork about the student’s accommodations, the professor must help that student in receiving their accommodations in a confidential and respectful manner. For additional questions, don’t hesitate to contact the SDS office at 319-273-2677.