

THE ODA CONNECTION

Fall 2009: Vol. 1, Issue 1



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Harvey Spears, President of the Student Veteran's Association, poses in front of the Student Veterans Center in the University Union.

Resources for Veterans at UNT

Campus, Community and State Services for Veterans

The Office of Disability Accommodation is eager to assist veterans in their transition back to civilian life as they pursue higher education. Like all students registered with our office, wounded warriors need to supply appropriate documentation from an accredited professional to receive services. The ODA provides individualized classroom accommodations based on each student's documentation. In addition to ODA services, all veteran students can utilize the following resources:

▪ **UNT Student Veteran's Association** assists veterans, active duty, reserve, National Guard, Coast Guard and dependents to make an easier transition into the academic community. Visit www.geocities.com/svaofunt/ or contact Harvey Spears (president) at spearshf@pwhome.com or George Niebling (advisor) at niebling@unt.edu.

▪ **The Student Veterans Center** helps student veterans navigate university resources for academic success. Programs are designed with consideration for the particular needs and interests of student veterans and their transition from service to college. The Student Veterans Center is also the home of the **Student Veterans of America chapter at UNT**, a student organization serving to support and improve the welfare of student veterans and their families. For information, call 940-565-2648 or visit Suite 320 in the University Union.

▪ **Military Benefits** regarding the Concurrent Admissions Program and financial aid information can be found at <http://www.unt.edu/pais/insert/umili.htm>

▪ **Denton County Veterans Service Office** is located at 1505 E. McKinney St., Denton, TX 76209, or call 940-349-2950 . Online at <http://dentoncounty.com/dept/main.asp?Dept=58>

▪ **American Legion** of Denton is located at 2501 Spencer Rd, Denton, TX 76205 -7305 , or call 940-382-7315

▪ **Veterans of Foreign Wars** of Denton is located at 909 Sunset St, Denton, TX 76201, or call 940-387-2205

▪ **The Substance Abuse Resource Center at UNT** provides counseling, assessment, and education for both mandated and self referred UNT students. If you have concerns regarding alcohol or other drug use, please make an appointment for a free, confidential, and supportive assessment at 940-565-2787.

Honor Society Seeks Students with Disabilities

Delta Alpha Pi calls on students to establish chapter at UNT

Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society was founded in 2004 at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. The three Greek letters stand for disability, achievement and pride. Members display pride in their academic accomplishments as honor students with disabilities. Delta Alpha Pi members strive to change the negative perception that students with disabilities cannot achieve academically. Through public recognition, leadership and visible participation in educational activities, Honor Society members counteract such prejudice. Students who meet the criteria receive a letter of invitation to participate in Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society through the established initiation process. All invited students must present a documented disability, work with one of the staff in the university's ODA, and demonstrate an interest in disability issues. Undergraduate students must have completed a minimum of 24 credits and attained a cumulative GPA of 3.10 (on a 4.0 scale). Graduate students must have completed a minimum of 18 credits and earned a cumulative GPA of 3.30.

Delta Alpha Pi has not yet been established at UNT. Chapter establishment requires that at least 10 students who meet the membership criteria express an interest in developing a chapter. If you have an interest in becoming a member of Delta Alpha Pi and starting a chapter at UNT, please contact Randy Batiste at the ODA at 940-565-4323.



Support the *One Book, One Community* initiative. Come meet author Jeff Goodell

on October 6, 2009 for his free public forum at 8 PM in the Gateway Ballroom.

Students who are blind or dyslexic may download a digital copy of the book at

<http://www.rfbd.org/promotions.htm>.



Notes from the Director

By now, everyone is settling into the new semester and you may already know about some of the exciting changes to the ODA for the Fall of 2009. We've listened to your feedback from our surveys, and we want to respond by offering you more than just accommodations. It's been challenging in the past for students with disabilities to connect with others who may be dealing with similar obstacles in college, especially when you can't see the disability. So, we've attempted to create additional opportunities to encourage a sense of connectedness for students who wish to engage with others.

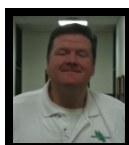
First, new students registering with our office will be given the choice to attend a group orientation, during which they'll have an opportunity to interact with others. We've already held three (3) of these orientations, which were well attended and received positive feedback. Of course, students who wish to meet with a counselor alone may still do so for all their meetings but the advantages of the group format are worth considering, not to mention we provide food!

Another opportunity to connect more with our office, will be the planned construction of a student lounge/waiting area at the front of the ODA office suite. We will be renovating the foyer area to allow for space where students can just hang out a bit after a stressful test, have some coffee or snacks and chat with others. The renovations are tentatively scheduled to begin during the winter holiday break.

We've also surveyed students to see if they would like additional skill building workshops and have found that there is an interest in more information on dealing with ADD/ADHD, Dyslexia other learning disabilities and adaptive technologies. We will offer three (3) sessions this Fall on these and possibly other topics all in a group format. Lastly, students have expressed a desire to come back to the ODA and discuss accommodation matters after meeting with professors. Therefore, we are also going to host three (3) ODA "Open Forums." These will give you an opportunity to ask questions about your services and receive a "refresher" on some of the procedures which can sometimes be confusing.

We are extremely excited about these new opportunities and hope that in the end it will give those of you who wish to utilize these offerings a way to connect more with your peers, our office and our campus!

Ron Venable, M.A.
Director, Office of Disability Accommodation
University of North Texas

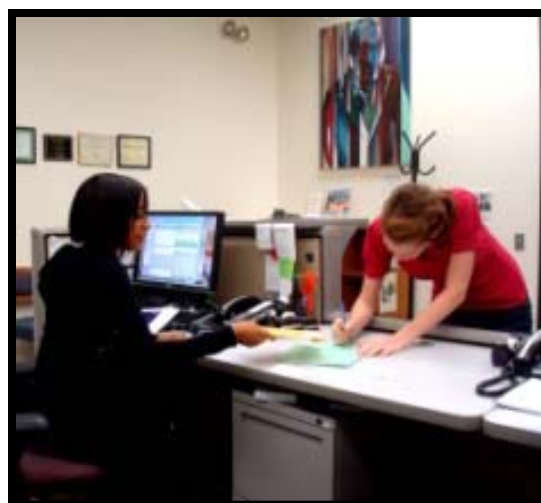


Testing with the ODA

What you need to know

The ODA functions as a testing center for some students. We can provide students with a wide array of testing accommodations such as additional time, a distraction-reduced environment, and even assistive technology. However, be aware that not all ODA-registered students are allowed to test here. If you are unsure if you are approved to test at the ODA, please discuss that with your counselor.

If you are officially approved to take exams at the ODA, please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with some of our instructions. Doing so ensures that your testing experience is as comfortable and stress-free as possible. You must schedule your exams at least five (5) business days - or one week - in advance of the exam date. Exams are scheduled using the Alternative Test Request Forms. Come to our office and pick up the forms, and we will be happy to explain the scheduling procedures in detail. Turn in all of your forms for Fall 2009 by Monday, November 23. That deadline pertains to all final exams that you want to take at the ODA as well as any quizzes or exams in the last weeks of the semester. Check with the ODA each semester for specific deadlines. Have a great semester and please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about testing at the ODA.



Student Worker Clarissa Hodges manages the ODA front desk. Student workers are essential to the ODA staff and ensure that all forms are properly filled out before they are formally submitted to the office.

Financial Aid and \$cholarships for students with disabilities

College students everywhere are familiar with the emotions of collegiate life. All would agree that the excitement of meeting new people and a change in scenery are important components of the college experience; the same group would agree that college could hardly exist without a fair share of obstacles.

Many students this school year will discover that college affordability is perhaps the largest obstacle in achieving their academic goals. Often unanticipated, a shortage of funds for college enrollment translates into worse consequences for some more than others. Some students may succeed in alleviating the problem of affordability through obtaining financial aid and scholarships, while others continue to struggle.

It is important for students with disabilities to know that there are many financial aid and scholarship opportunities available exclusively to students who have been diagnosed with a disability. The Office of Disability Accommodation at UNT provides students with non-financial aspects of accommodation, and strongly encourages students with disabilities to apply for available financial aid and scholarships for which they may be eligible. A notebook of various scholarship info for students with disabilities is available in the front waiting area.

A great number of financial resources exist for students with disabilities, ranging from financial aid for those with learning disabilities, to scholarships for wounded veterans, to grants for students with vision and hearing loss.

Examples of other available scholarships include:

1. The Cancer Survivors' Fund scholarship, available to those students attending any public 2 or 4-year accredited university that are currently diagnosed with or have overcome cancer;
2. Alexander Graham Bell College scholarship awards provided by the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
3. Various scholarships for military veterans, including the Sergeant Major Douglas R. Drum Memorial Scholarship the Admiral Mike Boorda Scholarship;
4. The CCLVI Fred Scheigert Scholarship for students with low vision.
5. Also an excellent resource for students with disabilities, HEATH is a web-based collection of resources for post-secondary education. This includes "information on financial assistance, scholarships, and materials that help students with disabilities transition into college, university, career-technical schools, or other post-secondary programs." – www.heath.gwu.edu.

An even more comprehensive guide to scholarships for students with disabilities can be found at the web based community, "Disaboom." Interested students should visit <http://www.disaboom.com/Resources/DisabilityScholarships/Default.aspx>.

Although obstacles exist that may crowd the path to academic success, having a disability does not have to be one of them.



Student Services

Your guide to assistance on campus

Student Services offered by the University of North Texas are available for you to ensure your success while pursuing your academic goals. These services are covered in the student fees you pay each semester; therefore, you are encouraged to use them.

Student Money Management (Chestnut Hall 3rd floor)- will help you create a budget and stay on it as well as providing information for emergency loans and scholarships.

Counseling and Testing (Chestnut Hall 3rd floor) – provides counseling for various situations from personal to academic including counseling for test anxiety. Testing services are for the GRE, GMAT, MCAT, LSAT and any other standardized test you are interested in taking.

Career Center (Chestnut Hall 1st Floor) – Assistance in finding employment on or off campus, full or part time. They can also help you refine your resume along with preparing you for future job interviews and full time employment after you graduate.

Psychology Clinic (Terrell Hall) – Provides Therapy/counseling services to students at a reduced rate. They also provide educational evaluations to determine Learning Disabilities.



Student Legal Services (University Union 3rd floor) – Provides legal counsel for UNT students from help with apartment leases to insurance as well as any legal questions students might have.

The Learning Center (University Union 3rd floor) – This office provides tutoring in most courses, but it also provides a Reading and Study Skills Lab (RASSL) that will help you improve your performance as a student and will provide you with skills to take into different areas of your life in the future.

Office of Disability Accommodation (University Union 3rd floor) – Students registered with ODA are given accommodations to give them equal footing with the rest of the students in each of their classes. Accommodations are determined on a case by case basis and each student is accommodated based on individual need.

TRIO Discovery program (Wooten Hall 3rd floor) – A program provided to qualifying students that provides one on one services such as tutoring and academic and career counseling.

Please take advantage of each of these offices. Their main goal is your success as a student.

Research Opportunity for Students with Learning Disabilities

Two Texas universities team up to research mathematical learning disabilities

Researchers at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and The University of Texas at Austin are currently examining the neuropsychological aspects of young adults with mathematics learning disabilities.

Researchers are seeking ten (10) college students who have identified mathematics learning disabilities but who have typical reading abilities and are not taking medication for attention deficits. All volunteers must be right-handed. Volunteers will undergo an MRI at Children's Medical Center, which is part of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. The MRI will acquire image data using diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) that evaluates the composition of the white matter of the brain.

Researchers will share the results of the DTI and the data will become part of a database. All participant names will be held in strict confidence in accordance with the policies of the Institutional Review Boards of the three participating institutions.

This will be a fascinating experience for all parties involved. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Diane Bryant, Professor in Education, The University of Texas at Austin at 512-784-7346 or email dpbryant@mail.utexas.edu.



The ODA recently bought three new closed-circuit television devices (CCTV). This technology allows students with low vision to navigate text in larger fonts.

Technology for Students with Disabilities

New gadgets tailor to students with disabilities



The Pulse Smart Pen

How many times have you missed something the professor was saying because you were trying to write down the sentence previously? Have you ever looked back through your notes and realized that you didn't write down an important piece of information? No need to worry; that is about to change! New technology has hit the market that will make note taking a piece of cake! The new Pulse Smartpen by Livescribe has many remarkable features that make sure you get the information you need and improve your understanding of material said in class, the office, etc.

Some examples of the features on the Smartpen are: recording exactly what you write down in the Livescribe notebook, recording anything spoken aloud, and reading your notes back to you.

You might think that with all of these gadgets, the Smartpen would be a huge and awkward pen that is uncomfortable to hold and use on a daily basis. This is not the case. It fits comfortably in your hand and looks almost like any other pen. The only obvious piece is the headphone you can plug into the top of it.

The Smartpen features might look a little terrifying with all of the different buttons and options, but it comes with a useful and extremely helpful user guide. It gives simple and easy to follow instructions on how to set up your Smartpen, use the navigation buttons in your notebook, and useful hints to make your experience that much easier. Also, there are step-by-step instructions on the recording and writing options. If you are still having difficulties understanding the user guide, there is a support number available that is very accommodating!

This amazing piece of technology has proven to be very handy and versatile. It is helpful in many ways; if you ever get distracted in class or your boss is talking too fast at a staff meeting, you will always have a back up with the Smartpen. It increases your chances of learning the material because you can listen to it as many times as you want. With everyday advances in technology, people with disabilities can become more independent and more effectively use their creativity and talents. The Smartpen is the new and latest technology for today; what will it be tomorrow?



Announcements

❖ The final day to submit test request forms for Fall final exams is Monday, November 23.

❖ UNT students, faculty and staff will be able to rent an eco-friendly car with the new Connect by Hertz program sponsored by Transportation Services. Rental cars are available for as little as \$8 per hour and a variable annual fee, which is waived for participants who sign up before Oct. 31. Learn how to register: [UNT Connect By Hertz.pdf \(135.58 KB\)](#)

❖ A silent auction will be held on 11/02/2009 at 9:00 am on the 1st Floor of the Union. All proceeds benefit the Multicultural and Women's Center student programming.

❖ Disability scholarship guide at www.disaboom.com



❖ Kudos to Dan Burns for his first place win in the 2008 Mayborn Conference Manuscript Contest, which included a book contract with the UNT Press and a \$3,000 cash prize, for his book, [Saving Ben: A Father's Story of Autism](#). UNT faculty, staff, students and alumni can receive a 25 % discount off the retail price of the book by calling UNT Press at 940-565-2142 or by visiting the UNT Press office in Stovall Hall, Room 174.

❖ Many students prefer to have their documents read aloud. Adobe PDF's can be read aloud using the features that are already built into Adobe 8. Go to the Adobe web site at: http://help.adobe.com/en_US/Acrobat/8.0/Standard/help.html?content=WS58a04a822e3e50102bd615109794195ff-7d15.html. These features are available to anyone using Adobe 8.



...and more...

ODA forges relationship with one-stop agency

The ODA has forged a relationship with the *North Central Texas Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)*. The ADRC is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that serves as a one-stop shop for social services for individuals with disabilities to contact professionals in a much more efficient, streamlined process. *The North Texas ADRC* in Denton county is a great resource for federal, state, and local services at no charge and can be accessed at 1-877-229-9084.



UNT Allies seek new members



THE UNT ALLY RESPECTS ALL PEOPLE regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or veteran status.

Our goal is to achieve a campus culture where every person can study and/or work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. If you are located on the University of North Texas campus, you can be part of this important work.

Interested students, faculty, staff, allies, potential allies and members of the community may attend Ally Training, which is open to everyone. Visit <http://ally.unt.edu/content/ally-training> for more information.

Workshops

ODA Open Forums & Refresher Sessions

Ponder Room

These group meetings will provide an opportunity to ask the ODA staff questions about your accommodations or the campus in general. We'll also make announcements and explain some of the most common ODA procedures.

9/24/2009 Noon-1pm
10/22/2009 Noon-1pm
12/3/2009 Noon-1pm

1PM-2PM 9/24/2009

Ponder Room, Union 3rd Floor

ODA Skill Building Workshop

ADD/ADHD Self Accommodation Strategies



3 PM 10/22/2009

1 O'Clock Lounge, Union 1st Floor

Café Diversity discussion

We know a little bit about the G and the L... Who are the B and the T? Café Diversity is an ongoing dialogue



6 PM 10/22/09

Union Lyceum

When Reality Hits, Will You Be Ready?

Nancy Barry, author of [When Reality Hits: What Employers Want Recent College Graduates to Know](#) will address issues affecting students after they graduate from college and enter the workforce

1PM-2PM 10/22/2009

Ponder Room, Union 3rd Floor

ODA Skill Building Workshop

Tools to Defeat Dyslexia

1PM-2PM 12/3/2009

Ponder Room, Union 3rd Floor

ODA Skill Building Workshop

Disability and

Employment, Should you Disclose your Disability?

Have an idea for an article you would like to see in *The ODA Connection*? Want to write an article on your experience with our office? We would love to visit with you! Stop by our office, Suite 321 in the University Union.

The Faculty Forum

For years a short section in my syllabus has invited students to see me with their letter of accommodation if they need changes to their classroom or testing experience. I have never had any irresolvable problems. UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation makes it easy to work with students in my classes. The students present their letters to me before they need something. The most frequent requests are for a student note-taker or for extended time on their exams at the testing center. Usually someone volunteers when I announce that there is a student who needs a note-taker. In a couple cases where I had no volunteer, I privately asked a student who had been successful in a previous class I taught. By framing this as a request with no pressure, the students I have asked so far have expressed that they feel proud that I think they will do a good job and have agreed to help. On a rare occasion in a large survey course, I asked a TA to provide notes because I did not want an undergraduate, who did not know me, to feel pressured. It is helpful if the student who needs a note-taker tells me whether s/he is willing to work directly with the note-taker. I need to preserve the student's anonymity if they want that, but if they do not care, it is simpler for the student to get notes directly from the note-taker, and the two students forge an in-class relationship that can be useful to both of them.

Testing accommodations simply require that I send a copy of the exam by email attachment ahead of time. I typically need to have copies printed for the whole class by that deadline anyway, so accommodating testing at the ODA's testing center has never put any pressure on me.

I have gotten more interested in teaching to varied learning styles over the years, but I remember many years ago I had a visually-impaired student. My lectures have visual components like pictures and graphs in addition to an outline. I did make some effort to verbally describe these images, but looking back I think I did not verbally stress points as much as I would today. The ODA facilitates thinking about accommodations that are outside my own experience by hosting educational presentations on working with people with different kinds of disabilities.

I have been my department's ODA representative since I started working here, and it has been an easy job with opportunities to learn. One colleague did talk with me about whether she had to make extra accommodations a student suggested, but usually students and faculty members work with each other directly. The ODA staff members have been very clear, flexible, and knowledgeable, so they are a great resource when questions arise.

Clark A. Pomerleau, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
History Department
University of North Texas
Denton, TX



Our Mission

The Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) exists to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability as mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended. This is accomplished by determining eligibility for qualified students by reviewing disability-related medical and psychological documentation along with the student's individual experiences, to determine appropriate, reasonable accommodations which are recommended to the campus. As part of this process, our office strives to facilitate the development of students through independence and autonomy. UNT is a student centered research institution; our office compliments this mission by providing leadership in the areas of equal access and advocacy for students with disabilities. In turn, our campus diversity will be richer and UNT will be more accessible to everyone.

Please visit our website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda/>