



Office Updates 2010

Over the last few semesters The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) has seen several transitions in our services, programs, and staff that serve the UTC campus. In 2005, we were a Disability Services office seeking our niche in the state to provide classroom accommodations for registered students. Five years later, UTC's disability office is recognized as a model office for Tennessee's state schools. As the UTC population expands, so do the numbers of students with needs and we currently provide services for over 650 students.

Although our main focus is on accommodations for students in the classroom and residential life, we have adapted a more holistic approach. The OSD offers student programs such as peer mentoring; committee work within UTC departments; attendance at national and state conferences; creating living learning communities for students with disabilities; leadership within The Student Empowerment Association; and study abroad trips to research accessibility for persons with disabilities.

We have had much success over the years increasing the expertise amongst our OSD staff. This past fall semester, we welcomed new staff member, Steve Kinane as Student Services Coordinator, assisting faculty and students with testing accommodations. Steve joins us from Connecticut with his Master's Degree in Student Development in Higher Education. His experience working with individuals on the Autism Spectrum serves the office well in our ever improving services for students. Leslie Harms is now Assistant Director and will continue to work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing to provide sign language interpreters and C-Print captionists for classrooms. Additionally, we received funding to create an open-captioned DVD program for films shown in the classroom. We are one of

the few campuses in the nation to provide in-house captioning services for electronic media. Leslie also works with Michelle Rigler, Director, to continue development and implement new programs for the campus community. One such program is the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to travel abroad.

In her research to find ways to increase the marketability for students with disabilities in a competitive job market, Michelle implemented an innovative program, Project Access where students are taught to conduct qualitative research while studying abroad. The inaugural trip took place in June, 2009 when students and staff traveled to the South Pacific, conducted research, wrote a journal article, and created a documentary that illustrates the attitudinal changes across the world in regards to persons with disabilities. Project Access is an ongoing research project and this summer will bring 33 students to experience countries that are physically the least accessible in Britannia.



Another new development for the UTC campus is thanks to our Adaptive Technology Coordinator, Bryon Kluesner. Two magnesium tactile maps are now available throughout the campus for incoming students and visitors to orient themselves to the area. Portable maps are available for check-out.

Coming in and Going Out

By: Jean Marie Lawrence



When I arrived as a freshman at UTC I had no real idea what it meant to be a student with a disability. I was very aware that I had a disability and accepted myself for who I was: an amazing person who just happened to use a wheelchair. But when writing papers for classes my freshman year I used derogatory terms such as "wheelchair bound" and "handicapped" without fully understanding the negativity associated from those words.

Since then, I learned more about myself and who I want to be in life. Now as I approach graduation I have come to understand (sometimes) what being an adult with a disability is and how to adapt to many situations in a world where people with disabilities are still expected to be cared for. Graduate school is just months away and I am confident as I leave my undergraduate years behind that I will succeed and that there is much more to learn.



Transitioning as Alumnus to the Workforce

By: Holly Zuckerman

If I had a nickel for every time I heard about how school prepares you for the real world, I could have just quit school and retired. But what does that preparation really consist of? Knowledge is not everything, and that was a lesson learned in my preparation for the transition from college into the workforce.

It seems like a perilous leap

from the moment you don the cap and gown and are officially deemed a graduate, to getting out there and landing that job you've been working toward for the past four to ten years or so (hey, nobody's counting as long as you get it done and do it well). It's a tough transition, and as I've earned, it only goes smoothly in the best of times. But it's not as tricky as it seems, especially with the right guidance both pre and post-real world

Transitioning from High School to College

Anonymous

In High School, students take the SAT or ACT, and are expected to be prepared for college. College is on the other end of the educational spectrum because a student takes on many new responsibilities. We choose our own course load, live away from home, and begin the experience of the Real World. My transition from high school to college was a challenging and daunting test since high school did not prepare me for the social aspect of college.

In my senior year of high school several college students visited and described college life. They said college is going to be the best time of my life and I will be involved in several activities, courses, and parties. Then I was told by my teachers that college was hard work, demanding, and intensive.

As move-in date for college neared I realized this would be the first time that I would leave the house and live on my own. My meals had always been prepared for me, my clothes washed, and I had a bedroom all to myself. Now I faced living with three roommates, cooking my own meals, practicing time management skills, and no longer hearing my mother remind me that I need to start my homework.

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leap. So long as you're properly prepared for whatever might come next, then you'll be able to take it in stride and keep moving forward in pursuit of your goals.

The Office for Students with Disabilities has been more than a study aid in the pursuit of my career. As well as being a registered student, I was a student worker in the office, and continue to work there today as a Captionist and perform other office duties. The best type of "real life" work experiences I got from school came from this position at the office. Beyond the trained skills in how to perform certain jobs, it teaches me personal skills such as versatility, problem solving, patience, and being personable. It gives me the confidence to know that where ever life might take me, I will have the skills necessary to learn and adapt, and those are the qualities you really need to

be able to make it out there.

Even after six years of college and graduating with my degree in Education, I have yet to decide what I want to be when I grow up. This office has given me insight into such great career opportunities that broadened my interests beyond what I intended to do with my degree, and now I have aspirations to continue my education. With what, I do not know. The real trick to making the transition is knowing that your options are always open, and the security of knowing that you have the tools to find your way.



(I still go home on the weekends and mother graciously does my laundry.)

As classes began I sat in the front row with my legs shaking vigorously. Upon reading the syllabus, my anxiety level increased and it seemed the professors were throwing all the material and expectations at me at once. There were sleepless nights where tomorrow would only bring another day full of anxiety.

College is nothing like high school -- no more spoon-fed information; and not that many parties, activities, or new adventures. I had textbooks and notes I gathered rapidly in class, and a possible tutor. I found myself in my dorm room all the time studying and completing assignments. It seemed the rest of the campus was having fun without me. I felt as though I was on the outside looking in at the "fun" college experience.

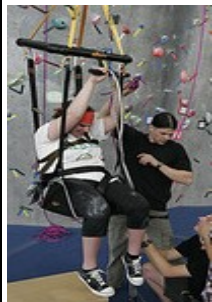
I wish my high school teachers had better prepared me for these personal upheavals. I discovered that I was not the only one experiencing these awful emotional swings. Many college students have a hard time transitioning from high school and it is a drastic change in everyone's life. This is the first time that some are away from home for an extended period of time. Do not be afraid of transition to college and get ready for new academic and social aspects of college!

Springtime brings a diverse array of ways to PLAY! Start right here in the Scenic City. The Therapeutic Recreation Division of Chattanooga Parks & Rec has new programs for all abilities.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ADAPTIVE CYCLING: Inclusive cycling program for all abilities including visual impairment. Weekly rides start at the Riverpark on Amnicola Highway near Chattanooga State beginning at the end of March. Adaptive gear such as hand cycles and tandem bikes will be supplied as well as extra traditional bikes.

PICKUP WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL GAMES: Everybody plays in chairs whether disabled or not. The fun is playing with ace players without disabilities who may not be as adept at playing in a wheelchair. Age is typically young adults and adults. Usually held at Washington Hills Rec. Center off Hwy. 58 from 10 am – 12 pm every Saturday.



CLIMB HIGHER: Adaptive Rock Climbing: In partnership with Rock Creek and Outdoor Chattanooga in the new Urban Rocks Climbing Gym (off of Amnicola Hwy.) In April there are 3 teaching sessions for physical disabilities: April 6, 13, 20. Then all abilities can participate in rock climbing independently in your leisure time. Space is limited.

CHATTANOOGA SKY EMERGERS: A newly-formed Meetup.com group that brings social networking for persons with or without disabilities to life. Programs are event-driven and provide social outlets and opportunities for adults ages 20-40 who can function independently.

<http://www.meetup.com/Chattanooga-Sky-Emergers/>

For more information, contact Elaine Adams, *Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator*, (423) 697-1345 adams-E@mail.chattanooga.gov

The Rhythmic Arts Project (TRAP) is an international educational program for people with disabilities that integrates drums and percussion instruments as creative learning tools. The Chattanooga TRAP director is Bob Stagner, founding partner of the world renown **Shaking Ray Levi Society** and master drummer.

As part of Shaking Ray's community outreach, TRAP is one of several programs for the deserving and underserved. The teaching environment is fun and noticeably improves confidence and self-esteem. The lessons enhance life skills such as maintaining focus, developing leadership, and following instructions. "Some kids can't say their name and in a couple of months they are counting and talking. We aren't music therapists but work right alongside them." At Signal Center they work with pre-K kids and adults at the same time. "A lot of acceptance is going on from both age realms." One of Bob's most enthusiastic students is 93 years old.

Bob relies on volunteers and says "I may see four UTC nursing students there amazed at how well TRAP works." Volunteers and artists from all disciplines are needed to work at Signal Center, Orange Grove and TC Thompson Childrens' Hospital (very close to UTC). Someone remotely interested in serving the public through music and art programs and outside-of-the-norm thinking would benefit by volunteering."

For more information about TRAP and to volunteer, call Shaking Ray Levi Society at

423-267-6688 or go to www.traponline.com.

Adaptive Technology Corner The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) can assist

By: Bryon Kluesner students as they transition from high school into college. "What is transition?" According to Dictionary.com, transition is a "movement or change from one position, subject, or concept to another.

So, how can assistive technology help a student with successful transition? With the assistance of Brooke Stovall, a former graduate student who worked at OSD, we have developed a simple Assistive Technology Evaluation. Schedule a time to meet with me, the Adaptive Technology Coordinator so we can discuss what technology available in the OSD would best suit your

needs. The evaluation is your opportunity to comment on technology you may have already used in middle and high school. Or this may be an opportunity for UTC staff and students to learn about technology you would like to "try out." Learn the latest in "AT" such as Books in Audio and Adaptive keyboards: Large keys, Braille key labels, Lighted keys, a keyboard you can type with your feet, an indestructible keyboard. The options are endless.

If you would like to learn more about what we have available, please contact me at 423-425-4006 to schedule some time we can meet.

Legal Corner: The transition from the ADA to the ADAAA: It's more than just another A



Nearly 20 years ago, July 26, 1990, the United States passed a civil rights legislation to protect people with disabilities from discrimination: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Since its passing, many Supreme Court decision-makers have attempted to narrow Congress' initial intention for this law by limiting the definition of what qualifies as a disability and making it extremely difficult for the person with a disability to obtain protection from discrimination.

As a result, Congress passed a major amendment to the ADA that focuses on bringing the law back to its original intention of being a Civil Rights Law. On January 1, 2009 the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAAA) came into effect. This major legal change reminds all of us why the initial law was passed. Some aspects of this amendment that may affect a college campus are:

Major Life Activity: This aspect of the definition of a disability originally included activities such as seeing, hearing, breathing, walking, etc. Under the new ADAAA, other activities, such as reading, learning, communicating, and major body functions have been included in the definition.

Mitigating Measures: Originally, disability claims were excluded if the impact of the disability could be alleviated by mitigating measures. Under the ADAAA, these mitigating measures cannot be included in determining disability qualification.

Episodic Conditions: Conditions that can be disabling when active, such as epilepsy or cancer, initially were not covered under the ADA. Under the ADAAA, these

conditions are covered whether active or not. If during an episodic flare, there is an impact on a life activity, the condition is considered disabling, so the person with the disability is now protected.

Given the increase in the number of people who qualify under the new ADAAA guidelines, we will likely see a significant increase in the number of college students requesting accommodations in higher education. For further information on the changes of this major Civil Rights Law and how these changes may impact higher education, read *The 2008 Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act: Implications for Student Affairs Practitioners* published in *The Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*.

Burke, L. A., Friedl, J., & Rigler, M. (2010). The 2008 Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act: Implications for Student Affairs Practitioners. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 47 (1), 1-15. <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/vol47/iss1/>

Disclosing to an Employer:

This is a very personal decision. WorkSupport.com suggests that employees consider whether accommodations will be needed on the job whether a disability is visible or hidden. If you chose to disclose follow these steps:
Determine NEED for Disclosure
Decide WHEN to Disclose
Choose HOW to Disclose

2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 30 **Student Empowerment Association**
Guest Speaker, Dr. Badger "Job Search"
UC- Multicultural Center
- Late March **Adaptive Cycling and Rock Climbing**
programs begin (see page 3)
- April 7 **ADAAA Workshop**
By Michelle Rigler, 2:00 UC Lkt. Mtn. Room
- April 15-16 **TN-AHEAD State Conference**,
Fall Creek Falls, TN
Presentation by OSD staff & students
- April 26-28 **Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion,
and Disability Annual Conference**,

- June 3-4 **Tennessee Disability Mega-conference**,
Nashville, TN
- June 13-16 **NASPA Region 3 Conference**,
Ponte Vedra, FL
Reflections on our Practices
- June 22-25 **Postsecondary Disability Training Institute**,
Saratoga Springs, NY
- July 12-17 **AHEAD Annual Conference**, Denver, CO
- July 12-25 **Project Access: Disability Access & Culture
Research Trip**
Ireland, Scotland & London
- July 25-27 **National Summit on Disability Policy**
Washington, DC