

# THE DASS INSIDER

A NEWSLETTER FOR SMU FACULTY

INFORMATION ON DISABILITY SERVICES AND ACCESS ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR STUDENTS AND CLASSES



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## Start the New Semester with Targeted Resources

Free webinars for Spring semester-Join us!

We are thrilled to announce that SMU's President's Commission on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities (PCNPD) is hosting several webinars this semester in order to provide more training and education to our faculty and staff regarding disability-related issues. This is your chance to attend a topic-specific webinar that would better your teaching and your department. Please consider attending one of these that is relevant to you (like the March 23<sup>rd</sup> webinar), and invite others. Short of mandated formal trainings for everyone (which often is required after an official complaint), DASS wants to frequently offer opportunities for our community to improve their knowledge in this area.

These trainings provide relevant application of classroom inclusion highlighted in the Disability Exhibit on campus in October. Thank you to the many faculty and staff who pledged to be an Ally for Inclusion for our students with disabilities at SMU! Detailed information regarding the presenters can be found at <https://www.ahead.org/learn/virtual-learning/webinars-spring-17>. For questions, please contact [alexat@smu.edu](mailto:alexat@smu.edu).

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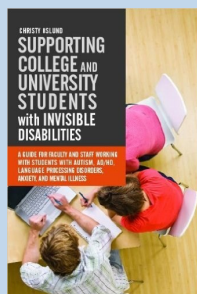
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2/16/17 2-3:30pm	Helicopters, Blackhawks and Snowplows: Parents of student with disabilities	Fondren Lib/ SIC Auditorium 364	Presenter: Jane Thierfield Brown, Ed.D. College Autism Spectrum
3/23/17 2-3:30pm	Extended Time: What Faculty Needs to Know	Fondren Lib/ SIC Auditorium 364	Presenter: Nicole Ofiesh, Ph.D., Sr. Research Scientist, CAST
4/6/17 2-3:30pm	Disability Studies 102: Next Steps in Building Practices Based on Disability Studies Theoretical Concepts	A-LEC/DASS 202 Loyd Center	Presenters: Susan Mann Dolce, Ph.D., University at Buffalo, and Karen Pettus, Ph.D., University of South Carolina
4/20/17 2-3:30pm	Title II and Title III Regulations to Implement ADA Amendments Act of 2008: What Should You Know?	Fondren Lib/ SIC Auditorium 364	Presenter: Paul D. Grossman, J.D.; Office of Civil Rights, Chief Regional Civil Rights Attorney S.F, retired

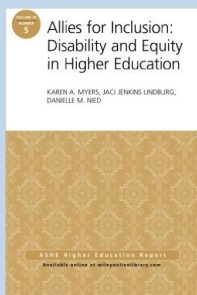
### Technology Webinars:

2/7/17 2-3pm	Math Text-to-speech Accessibility and Solutions for Students	Fondren Lib/ Room 323	Presenter: Steve Noble, University of Louisville, Faculty Member
2/28/17 2-3pm	Introducing Accessible Technology in IT and Engineering Courses	Fondren Lib/ Room 323	Presenters: Sheryl Burgstahler, DO-IT University of Washington; Kat Steele, Ph.D., University of Washington and Maya Cakmak, Ph.D., University of Washington
3/14/17 2-3pm	An Overview of Accessible PDF Documents	Fondren Lib/ Room 323	Presenter: Karen McCall, Karlen Communications
4/11/17 2-3pm	Procuring Accessible Information Technology	Fondren Lib/ Room 323	Presenter: Terrill Thompson, University of Washington

## BOOK CORNER



By **Christy Oslund** (Michigan Tech University)



By **Myers, Lindburg, and Neid** (St. Louis University)

*This is an effective follow-up resource from the Allies for Inclusion Exhibit held at SMU in October, 2016.*

## Appropriate Referrals to DASS

Sometimes professors, TAs, and staff members see a student struggling personally and/or academically, but they aren't sure how to address the student. One great thing about SMU is that you, and our students, have a lot of support!

So, the first thing to remember is that you're not alone - you don't have to figure out exactly what's going on with a struggling student or ask the student awkward questions like, "Do you have a disability?" Instead, point out what you've observed. A good way to put this is, "I've noticed that you're struggling more than other students in this class. Is there something I can do to help?"

Depending on what the student answers, you may

be able to resolve the issue yourself. In other cases, you should make an appropriate referral.

If a student shares that they suspect that they have a disability, that referral will be to us at DASS. Don't discount this. A majority of the students registered with DASS have ADHD, LD, and/or Psychological disabilities, which are all INVISIBLE disabilities. You shouldn't assume someone has a disability, but you also shouldn't assume that someone *doesn't* have a disability.

In addition, many students are not diagnosed with a disability until college, because they've found ways to cope until now, at SMU, where the workload and academic demand becomes more intense.

DASS can then make appropriate referrals to the health center, including counseling services, to the Office of Student Life, or to an outside professional.

If a struggling student discloses that they are registered with DASS, but they don't show you a current Letter of Accommodation from our office, refer them to us immediately. You are under no further obligation to make academic modifications unless you see the Letter of Accommodation and discuss its content with the student.

If a student has shown you their Letter of Accommodation, and they are still struggling, refer them to us, immediately. We can then assess the efficacy of the student's accommodations and other DASS services, as well.

### Diversity in Academe



As part of their recent special report, *Diversity in Academe: Disability on Campus*, The Chronicle of Higher Education highlighted the careers of four faculty members with disabilities.

The entire article can be found [HERE](#).

## In the News: Google Doodle honors leader of the disability rights movement

On January 23rd, Google Doodle paid tribute to Ed Roberts, an early leader of the disability rights movement and co-founder of the World Institute on Disability, on what would have been his 78th birthday.

After contracting Polio at age 14, the disease left Roberts paralyzed from the neck down. In spite of spending the rest of his life in a wheelchair and unable to breathe without a respirator, Roberts fought for his rights – starting in high school when he was told he wouldn't receive his diploma because he had failed to complete phys-ed and driver's ed requirements. Roberts petitioned his school and was awarded his diploma. He went on to be the first University of California Berkeley student with severe disabilities.

The Google Doodle Blog (<https://www.google.com/doodles/ed-roberts-78th-birthday>) on Roberts shared the following quote from Roberts' mother, Zona:

"I watched Ed as he grew from a sports-loving kid, through bleak days of hopelessness, into self-acceptance of his physical limitations as he learned what was possible for him to accomplish. His years at UCB were great ones as he both enjoyed his college status and got in touch with his leadership qualities. He took great pleasure in watching people with disabilities achieve greater acceptance."

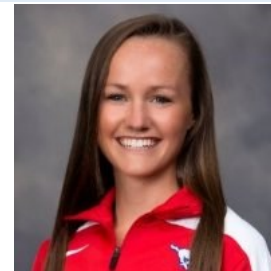
Among his accomplishments as a disabilities rights activist, Roberts created the Physically Disabled Students Program at his University. California Governor Jerry Brown named him Director of the California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1976. Seven years later, Roberts co-founded the World Institute on Disability – a nonprofit focused on disability rights policies, research and consulting.

By: Amy Gesenhues



## DASS Student Profile: Claire Trotter

As a May 2016 SMU graduate and campus leader, Claire Trotter contributed in many ways to our campus. Claire served as President of Students for New Learning (SNL), and as an intern with the Center for Global Health Impact. She supported global health efforts at SMU, working in a small group to help create and scale a mindfulness/success guide for young professionals to utilize their full selves and talents to impact the world. Claire was a student-athlete as well, a member of SMU's Cross Country Team, achieving Hon- or Roll status while on the team. DASS interviewed Claire before she graduated to gather her insights on successfully managing academics, activities and a disability.



What impacts from your learning differences have required the most energy to manage at SMU? Can you share how you managed these at different times in your academic history?

*My learning difference, dyslexia causes my processing speed to be drastically slower than many of my peers. This poses a great challenge when given large reading assignments. My brain has to work harder than someone without dyslexia, causing my brain to fatigue faster. When my brain fatigues it is very difficult for me to maintain my attention and complete the reading or whatever task is at hand. I have effectively managed this challenge by planning ahead and breaking up large reading assignments and by examining syllabi before enrolling in the class. I must verify the level of reading load before enrolling, in order to keep a balanced schedule.*

What advice would you give students on being a successful student at SMU with a learning disability?

*Take initiative for yourself. This applies to inside and outside of the classroom. Take initiative to introduce yourself to professors and explain to them how your learning difference may affect you in their particular class. Take the initiative outside the classroom to put in the work that is required. It may not always be fair that your roommate can do the reading assignment in thirty minutes that takes you four hours, but in the end you will be thankful you took the time. It is important to learn early on that comparison to peers is not an effective way to thrive in the SMU academic setting.*

How has being a student leader particularly affected how you manage the impacts from your learning differences?

*Being a student leader has opened my eyes to the variety of learning differences that exist at SMU. Learning differences come in all different forms, some are obvious, others are not. Some learning differences are debilitating and some allow individuals to better succeed in their field. The main things I have learned from my peers are 1) research classes before enrollment, 2) find other students to study with and 3) plan your semester out in the beginning to provide adequate studying time.*

How have accommodations and SMU support services helped you manage these impacts?

*Accommodations and SMU support services have first connected me with other peers that are experiencing my same challenges. When I first found out that I was dyslexic I refused to tell anyone and thought of myself as stupid. I have come a great distance since then, but still think some students with learning differences may continue to feel this way. DASS has connected me with peers that allow us all to realize that we are not alone. I also have the option of extended time. I am mostly affected in classes that have large amounts of reading on tests. Extended time has given me the opportunity to have a level ground with my peers when testing. I have been most greatly impacted by SMU support services assisting me to receive extended time on standardized testing, which will allow me to apply and attend graduate school.*

What advice would you give SMU faculty about working with students with disabilities?

*Never make any assumptions. There may be a student in your class that is trying their hardest, but his or her hardest is not translating into a good grade. For example, I greatly struggle with foreign language. During my time taking my Spanish requirement, I was petrified of speaking out loud in the class. It was near to impossible for me to move at the same pace the professor was moving. At the same time, I was seeing a Spanish tutor 2-3 times a week. Despite all my hard work I continued to struggle and felt uncomfortable in the class. However, I think taking Spanish was a beneficial experience to teach me the effort that is sometimes required to manage my learning difference.*

What are your plans after graduation?

*Currently, I am in the process of applying to graduate school to get a Master's in Biology with a concentration in Exercise Physiology. My ultimate plan is to work towards a Ph.D. and one-day conduct cardiovascular research and teach in a university setting.*

DASS is pleased to report that Claire's post-graduation plans are underway! She is currently a first year graduate student at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, working to earn a M.Sc. Biology with a concentration in Exercise Physiology. Claire works as a biology graduate teaching assistant and research assistant in an integrative physiology lab. After completing her Master's thesis, she hopes to earn a Ph.D. in integrative physiology.

## DASS Reminders for Spring Semester

It's me!

When you call the main number at DASS, you usually are speaking with me, Candy Brown. I have been the admin at DASS since 2012. I work with our students in many ways and also coordinate all the test proctoring for the department. Students order accommodation letters online and come to me to pick them up. We print over 2500 letters each semester (for around 600 students) so I do stay very busy stuffing envelopes the first few weeks of the semester. When giving their letters out, I also take the time to remind students to meet with their professors to discuss their accommodations (in office hours!). In this meeting, you can determine whether you're able to provide the necessary classroom accommodations, or need to explore alternatives. DASS can be an alternative, but be sure to check out our limitations on our website. Your department may have resources for you, as well, so be sure to talk to your department Chair person.



As you begin administering tests to your class, we, too, begin test proctoring. We serve as a back-up to faculty but your student *should* know they are responsible to schedule tests *at least 7 days* from the test date. If you don't inform your students about a test date with at least 7 days notice, that will really put them (and us...and you!) in a bind.

When your student schedules a test online, you will receive a test request by email, along with an attached proctor form from DASS usually 6-7 days out from the test date. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to complete and send the proctor form back to DASS! This is the time you contact me if the student has not accurately scheduled the time, date or if the test has changed, been cancelled or student has decided to test with you. Clear communication between our students, faculty and the DASS office will keep misunderstandings (and stress) to a minimum. Lastly, if you do need to drop off a test (and choose not to email it to [dass@smu.edu](mailto:dass@smu.edu)), there's a handy locked drop box right outside my office door for your convenience.

Please contact me with any questions about our policies and procedures or visit us at: <https://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS/DisabilityAccommodations/TestProctoring>.

## Uncommon diagnoses and their impact on the classroom—POTS

POTS, Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, is a relatively newly diagnosed disease often identified by a cardiologist or neurologist. POTS causes an increase in heart rate and light-headedness and fainting upon standing, exercise, fatigue, and a multitude of other symptoms. For some, POTS may be so severe that even everyday activities such as bathing or walking may be severely limited. This is an invisible syndrome where students may likely appear healthy, despite the fact that they may be plagued with debilitating fatigue, headaches, heart palpitations, brain fog and weakness.

Because this disability affects a student in so many different ways, there are a number of accommodations that may be helpful to these students. Likely accommodations are extended time, note taking accommodations, priority enrollment, breaks during class and, in some cases, flexible attendance. Since students are not required to disclose their disability, you may not know if you have a student with this syndrome. However, if a student discloses this illness to you and you would like to know more about it, some very good information can be found at <http://myheart.net/pots-syndrome/>.

Have a question about accommodations on campus? Remember to check the Faculty FAQ on the DASS website for common issues and solutions. Please reach out to DASS for assistance, too!

VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[WWW.SMU.EDU/ALEC/DASS.ASP](http://WWW.SMU.EDU/ALEC/DASS.ASP)

VISIT US AT DASS

**Please include this statement in your syllabus:**

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retro-active and require advance notice to implement.

5800 Ownby Drive—Suite 202 Loyd Center  
2nd Floor - Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center  
Entrance near Gate 3 of Ford Stadium  
Parking in the Meadows Garage

Phone: 214-768-1470

Email: [dass@smu.edu](mailto:dass@smu.edu)



**DASS IS MORE THAN ACCOMMODATIONS.**

For resources that may be helpful to faculty and staff, please visit:  
<http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS/Resources/ForFaculty>