On Tuesday September 16th, SSD’s Students On the Spectrum, a support group for students with autism, held its first meeting of the semester. A group of UT students came together for an open discussion about their experiences as students with autism, to share ideas and resources, and to get to know one another. Attendance was up 150% from our last semester, and we anticipate further growth as the word continues to spread!

Students at our first meeting discussed the future of the group, what the format should be, and how frequently we should meet. It was decided that SSD will hold monthly meetings of Students On the Spectrum, open to any UT student with an autism spectrum diagnosis. Meetings will continue to be open discussion, to allow for connection among members and for the sharing of ideas and experiences. Ideas for discussion topics can be sent to the group facilitator, Laina Hubbard, at laina.hubbard@austin.utexas.edu. Please feel free to contact Laina if you have any questions about the group or would like to get involved!
This year, Student Government’s Students with Disabilities Agency will focus on creating a strong, permanent presence in the Student Government Assembly, Senate and the Faculty Council. We will help SSD tackle any issues that will require legislation in the future. We have an ambitious agenda for the 2014-2015 school year such as increasing accessibility of course material for students with permanent and/or temporary disabilities and we hope to increase resources available to students with medical or depression issues who are struggling academically. We are very excited for the year to come and for all of the exciting things we are working with SSD to accomplish!

Erin Gleim,
Students with Disabilities Agency Director

September is Deaf Awareness Month and the Services for Student with Disabilities and the Department of Linguistics invite you to join us for our second annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Meet & Greet event on Wednesday, September 24, 2014, from 4-6 p.m. in the Glickman Conference Center, CLA 1.302B in the new College of Liberal Arts Building. This is an opportunity to meet deaf and hard of hearing students, staff, and faculty here at UT Austin. Learn more about the American Sign Language (ASL) program in the Department of Linguistics, Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), and two student organizations, SignHorns and the Longhorn College Bowl Team. Light refreshments will be provided. For more information or to request accommodations, contact Lauren Kinast, Associate Director, SSD at: LKinast@austin.utexas.edu.
For those of you that are new to UT or to SSD, please check out our website. It includes a lot of helpful information about delivering accommodation letters, talking with professors, and coordinating your accommodations. You can also check out helpful videos, find resources, request your accommodation letters, and download various forms and applications. The home page is a great resource for finding the most up-to-date news from SSD. Be sure to check the site regularly. http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/. In addition, you can check out SSD’s Facebook page (UT-Austin’s Services for Students with Disabilities) and Twitter feed (@UT_SSSDisability) for other important information and updates.

The Disability Advocacy Student Coalition (DASC) is a student organization with the purpose of promoting awareness, advocacy and education about disability on the UT campus. DASC meetings are open to any student who is interested in promoting the goals of DASC and members with and without disabilities are encouraged to get involved. If you’d like to join or learn more about DASC, check out their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/116905971748511/
Thank you to all the students that took part in our Spring 2014 Survey. Your feedback is very helpful to us and greatly appreciated. We received 166 responses. Some of the highlights were:

- Only 7% of respondents had attended an SSD event. SSD hosts several events throughout the year. Check out our Facebook page or twitter for more information. We’re looking to create more engaging programs. We’d love to see that number increase!!
- Some responses expressed concerns approaching professors about your accommodations due to many things, including fear of stigma or judgment. We created and promoted a new student orientation to address many of these questions and concerns. This year’s orientation was a smashing success. Incoming freshman and transfer students who were not able to attend can contact their coordinator or visit us during walk in hours with any accommodation questions you may have.
- Remember that DASC exists. The disABILITY Advocate Student Coalition engages students in promoting disability awareness and advocacy to create a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities at the University of Texas at Austin. Check the SSD website for upcoming DASC meetings.

Thank you again to those of you who took the time to fill out this survey.