

Message from the Director

Welcome back! After a wet, wet summer, we have now settled into the heat. It is hard to believe it is the start of the fall semester. We hope you had a great break.

This is our 7th edition of the *Insider*. For those of you who are new to UT Austin, we publish it at the start of every fall and spring semester. In this edition, you will get to know Stephani Wolfe, our newest disability services coordinator. You will also get to learn more about our Assistive Technology and Equipment Center (ATEC), upcoming events for Disability Awareness Month (October), and helpful deadlines and dates. There is also a spotlight on Bipolar Disorder.

We are planning on having an SSD Open House later in the fall. Look for information about it among other "launch" activities scheduled to introduce the University to our new division—the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. We hope you can attend at least one of these events—it is an exciting time to be at the University.

Best wishes for a successful fall semester!



Jennifer Maedgen, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean of Students
Director, SSD

Disability Awareness Month

October is Disability Awareness Month. Watch the SSD Web site for information on upcoming programs and opportunities. In previous years, SSD sponsored unique events such as the performance of *Actual Lives* and screenings of *Murderball* and *The Devil and Daniel Johnston*, including a Q & A with key individuals in the documentaries. We also promoted awareness of Deaf culture with Deaf Awareness Day, and a lecture about "Deafhood" from Don Miller. SSD is organizing more fun and interesting events for October 2007, and will keep you posted as we confirm exact dates and times.

ADHD Groups Now Forming

This six week group is designed to help UT Austin students who are diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder get the information they need to be more successful at juggling the obligations of school (and life). Students will have the opportunity to develop new skills and learn about on-campus resources, while meeting peers dealing with similar issues. Topics addressed include: **ADHD, Time Management, Organization, Stress Management, Self-Advocacy, Problem-Solving, Note Taking, Test Taking, and Writing Papers**

Monday, September 17–October 29, 1–2 p.m.
Student Services Building (SSB), Room G1.104

or

Tuesday, September 18–October 30, 1–2 p.m.
SSB, Room G1.104

Space is limited! To register, contact Krista at khampton@mail.utexas.edu or 512-471-6259.
Registration deadline is September 12, 2007.

About Bipolar Disorder

Have you heard individuals say, “I’m bipolar,” or “I’m having a manic episode and wondered exactly what Bi-polar disorder really is? According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly 6 million American adults (ages 18 and older) have bipolar disorder. The NIMH website defines bipolar disorder as, “a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in a person’s mood, energy, and ability to function.” (www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolar.cfm). The mood shifts are usually fairly severe with the elevated moods being referred to as “mania” and the lower moods commonly called “depression.” As with many disabilities, it is possible to have symptoms of manic and depressive episodes simultaneously. See below for the NIMH lists of symptoms for manic and depressive episodes.

Scientists, doctors and researchers are not sure what causes bipolar disorder. Some research indicates that there is a predisposition to bipolar disorder. Typical treatment includes self-awareness, behavior therapy, psychological counseling, and, for some individuals, prescription medications. Common accommodations for bipolar disorder in an academic setting include additional time on exams, a reduced distraction testing environment, a note taker, and permission to attend to medications during class time. For more information about bipolar disorder talk with a medical professional or visit www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolar.cfm.

What Are the Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder?

Signs and symptoms of *mania* (or a *manic episode*) include:

- ❖ Increased energy, activity, and restlessness
- ❖ Excessively “high,” overly good, euphoric mood
- ❖ Extreme irritability
- ❖ Racing thoughts and talking very fast, jumping from one idea to another
- ❖ Distractibility, can’t concentrate well
- ❖ Little sleep needed
- ❖ Unrealistic beliefs in one’s abilities and powers
- ❖ Poor judgment

- ❖ Spending sprees
- ❖ A lasting period of behavior that is different from usual
- ❖ Increased sexual drive
- ❖ Abuse of drugs, particularly cocaine, alcohol, and sleeping medications
- ❖ Provocative, intrusive, or aggressive behavior
- ❖ Denial that anything is wrong

A manic episode is diagnosed if elevated mood occurs with three or more of the other symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, for 1 week or longer. If the mood is irritable, four additional symptoms must be present.

Signs and symptoms of *depression* (or a *depressive episode*) include:

- ❖ Lasting sad, anxious, or empty mood
- ❖ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- ❖ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- ❖ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed, including sex
- ❖ Decreased energy, a feeling of fatigue or of being “slowed down”
- ❖ Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- ❖ Restlessness or irritability
- ❖ Sleeping too much, or can’t sleep
- ❖ Change in appetite and/or unintended weight loss or gain
- ❖ Chronic pain or other persistent bodily symptoms that are not caused by physical illness or injury
- ❖ Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- ❖ A depressive episode is diagnosed if five or more of these symptoms last most of the day, nearly every day, for a period of 2 weeks or longer.

(Taken from: www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolar.cfm.) ✨

Disability Mentoring Day

National Disability Mentoring Day is **October 17**. The City of Austin, in conjunction with Austin area high schools and universities sponsors a resource fair, mentoring experience and networking luncheon. Applications are available in the SSD Office and are due on September 7, 2007. See www.dmd-aapd.org for national information. For UT and Austin information, contact Deb McCarthy at dmccarthy@mail.utexas.edu or 512-471-6259.

Meet the Austin Chapter of

The American Council for the Blind

The American Council for the blind strives to improve the well-being of all blind and visually impaired people by: serving as a representative national organization of blind people; elevating the social, economic and cultural levels of blind people; improving educational and rehabilitation facilities and opportunities; cooperating with the public and private institutions and organizations concerned with blind services; encouraging and assisting all blind persons to develop their abilities and conducting a public education program to promote greater understanding of blindness and the capabilities of blind people (taken from www.acb.org).

Members of the Austin Chapter of the American Council for the Blind are sponsoring an open house on **Tuesday, September 18** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in SSB 1.104. Food and drinks will be provided. Come meet others who are blind or visually impaired or are interested in being an advocate for those with visual disabilities. Members will be available to discuss the American Council for the Blind's national conference to be held in Austin during fall of 2007. American Council for the Blind scholarships are also available for current UT Austin students. ✨

Important Dates to Remember Fall Semester 2007

General University Academic Dates

August 29	Classes begin
September 14	Last day to add a course or drop a course for possible refund
September 26	LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY
October 24	Last day to drop or withdraw with approval (undergraduates)
December 7	Last day of classes
December 12–15, 17–18	Final exams

Important SSD Dates

October 1	Undergraduate students not yet registered with SSD must register and complete an intake appointment by this date in order to be included in October 29 priority registration.
October 29	Priority registration for summer and spring for undergraduates registered with SSD and approved for priority registration (2–5 p.m., 6 p.m.–midnight).
November 30	Last day to request accommodation letters for faculty for fall 2007 classes.

Meet Stephani Wolfe!

Disability Services Coordinator



I began working with Services for Students with Disabilities in June 2007. Over the summer, I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of students and can already see that this job is going to be a great fit for me.

Prior to being a UT Austin employee, I was a student here and graduated in May 2007 with a Masters of Science in Social Work. I decided to attend graduate school after completing my bachelor's degree at University of Arizona and working in the field for a year with individuals with cognitive disabilities. I really enjoyed the work but knew I needed to get more education.

At both of the universities that I attended I had the opportunity to be a mentor to a small group of undergraduate students. In my senior year at U of A I was able to be a peer mentor and at UT Austin I worked with student athletes. From these experiences I realized how much I enjoyed working with college students and when the position opened with SSD combining my areas of interest I could not pass it up and was thrilled when I was offered the position.

My interests outside of work include running, reading, and movies. I completed a marathon in 2003 and now that I am out of school would love to get into training to do another one, or possibly a triathlon. I am a movie fanatic and am adjusting to reading books that are not assigned by professors, my most current being the 7th Harry Potter. ✨

To Disclose or Not to Disclose: Career Exploration, Job Searching and Disability

Ever wonder how a disability might influence your employment opportunities? Concerned about whether to tell a possible employer about a disability prior to an interview? Looking for career exploration resources that cover disability issues? Want to meet other UT Austin students who are exploring careers and disability issues? Join SSD and the Career Exploration Center on **Thursday, October 11 from 4-5 p.m.** in the Career Exploration Center (off the Jester Center concourse) for an informal presentation and discussion of disability and career issues. The session is open to students of all majors and classifications. ✨

About ATEC

(Assistive Technology Equipment Center)

SSD has a number of adapted technology resources in our ATEC lab for student use. Come by the SSD office to learn more about ATEC resources. Current technologies are detailed below and at the following Web site: www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/assistive.php. In addition to assistive technology and adaptive equipment, the ATEC Lab offers on site staff to assist students with scanning, testing and assistive technology use as needed.

The ATEC Lab contains 3 Dell Optiplex GX620s with 17" monitors, keyboard, speakers and headphones with the following software and hardware:

- ❖ Windows XP
 - ❖ JAWS for Windows: screen reading software
 - ❖ Kurzweil 3000: scan and read systems
 - ❖ Kurzweil 1000: scan and read systems
 - ❖ Dragon Naturally Speaking
 - ❖ Microsoft Office
 - ❖ Internet Explorer
 - ❖ ZoomText
 - ❖ Adobe Reader
- One monitor with OS X is also available in the ATEC Lab and includes:
- ❖ Microsoft Office
 - ❖ Kurzweil 3000
 - ❖ OS-X Universal Access Tools
 - ❖ Adobe Reader
- Other Equipment:
- ❖ Color CCTV by Optolec: magnifies text and graphics

Tips for Getting Off to a Great Start

Whether you are a first year student, a senior or a graduate student, everyone can use advice on how to make the most of your time and stay organized during the semester. Follow some of these commons tips for success:

1. **Write it down.** It's much easier to remember, "what you have to do when," if you develop a system of writing down your assignments, meetings and appointments. Choose a planner, wall calendar, computer program or portable notebook that works for you.
2. **Repetition is key.** Whether it's calculus, history or foreign language, the more often we review material, the more we remember. Review class notes and homework problems frequently.
3. **Use daylight hours.** Make the most of the time you have between classes. Successful students study and do homework throughout the day rather than waiting until evening to start.
4. **Same Time, Same Place.** Whenever you can, identify several locations on campus where you would be able to complete assignments. Use labs, libraries, residence hall study lounges and quiet areas of academic buildings. Try to develop a routine so that you study in the same place and at similar times on a daily basis.
5. **Make connections in your classes.** Get to know your professors and your fellow classmates. Exchange phone numbers or e-mail addresses with at least one person in each course so that you have a contact person if you need to ask questions about a class. Consider meeting with 1 or 2 other individuals for short review sessions on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. To stay focused, limit your review sessions to 30 minutes at a time. ✨

The Results Are In!

Many thanks to all of you who responded to the Spring SSD 2007 survey. We're pleased to work with such a responsive group of students. More than 70% of those who answered the survey indicate that they were pleased with the services that SSD provided. As a result of your suggestions, we've increased our promotion of the Adaptive Technology (ATEC) lab. See the article in this issue of the INSIDER for more information about ATEC. The connection between career explo-

ration and disabilities is another area where survey respondents indicated a desire for more information. See the article entitled, "To Disclose or Not to Disclose: Career Exploration, Job Searching and Disability" for information on an upcoming program on this topic. Finally, keep checking the SSD Web site for information on how to approach faculty regarding accommodations, effective note taking and other areas where survey respondents made suggestions. ✨