



# INSIDER



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
DIVISION OF DIVERSITY AND  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## NEWSLETTER

Services for Students with Disabilities \* Division of Diversity and Community Engagement

Spring 2016

### *Letter from the Executive Director*

For returning students, welcome back to UT Austin! We hope you had a relaxing winter break! Welcome as well to those of you who are new to campus and to SSD. We hope you find the 24th edition of our newsletter, the *Insider*, useful and informative. In this newsletter you will discover important dates and deadlines, information from our student organization, the Disability Advocate Student Coalition (DASC), upcoming events, and the introduction of several new staff members.

As we have mentioned to you throughout the year, the introduction of our new database last spring has allowed us to streamline many of our processes and services. As a result, we went live with the SSD Student Portal, and for the first time, SSD was able to give students the option of downloading and printing their own accommodation letters. The response has been tremendously positive from both students and professors. We appreciate everyone's patience as we make these changes and strive to improve the experiences of students using accommodations. Please continue to check your emails and our homepage for the latest updates about any changes in policies and procedures.

*Once again, welcome back and best wishes for a successful Spring 2016 semester!*

*Kelli Bradley,*  
LMSW, MBA



### In This Issue

- DASC: Disability Advocacy Student Coalition
- Students on the Spectrum
- Important Dates
- New Staff
- Student Government: Student Disability Director

### SSD Walk-In Services

Are you thinking about registering with SSD but you're not sure of the process or whether you would qualify for accommodations? We have staff available for walk-in sessions from 9am to 4pm, Monday through Friday to answer your questions. These walk-in sessions are limited to 10-15 minutes.

Emily Shryock	Kristen Anton	Sarah Vahle	Heather Kaplan	Lauren Kinast
Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays

## Important Dates & Deadlines

March 14–19	<b>SPRING BREAK !!!</b>
April 4	Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean's approval, withdraw from the University or drop a class except for urgent and substantiated, nonacademic reasons. Last day a student may change registration in a class to or from the pass/fail or credit/no credit basis.
April 13-15, 18-22	Academic advising for continuing and readmitted students for the summer session and Fall 2016 semester.
April 22	Last day for undergraduates to submit a CLR application with medical documentation explaining why they are seeking to drop class(es) beyond the University drop deadline of <b>April 4</b> . Graduate students must submit completed CLR application and supporting documentation.
April 18-29	Daily Registration for the summer session and the fall semester for continuing and readmitted students.
May 2	Last class day in the School of Law.
May 4-7, 9-14, 16-17	Spring semester final exams in the School of Law.
May 6	Last class day except in the School of Law. Last day to submit master's report, recital, thesis, doctoral dissertation, or treatise to the graduate dean. International undergraduate students must submit completed CLR application and supporting medical documentation that offers justification for why the application was not submitted prior to the University drop deadline of April 4. Last day for all Medical Withdrawal applications with supporting documentation.
May 9-10,15	No-class days.
May 11-14, 16-17	Spring semester final exams except in the School of Law.
May 20-21	Graduation ceremonies in the colleges and schools.
May 20	Commissioning of ROTC graduates.
May 21	Commencement (official graduation date).

### From the Desk of: Donald Egan, Agency Director for the Disabilities and Inclusion Agency

Hello SSD,

*I hope you're all having a fantastic beginning of the new semester! My name is Donald Egan and I am the Agency Director for the Disabilities and Inclusion Agency in Student Government. This year we are excited to be working with SSD on a student volunteer note taker program. Undergraduate students will volunteer their notes taken during class for students registered with SSD in exchange for volunteer service hours. Since this is the first semester of the program, we have been focusing on advertising across campus to have volunteers come forward. SSD hopes to go live with the notetaking module of the new SSD web portal in the fall, and after we can better gauge students' interest in the notetaking program.*

*We are also planning a series of student forums to be held later this semester. I will be sending out surveys in preparation for the forums, so be on the lookout for those!*

*Finally, we will be working to create additional job training and research opportunities for students registered with SSD. Recently, members from SSD and I met with the directors of the Freshman Research Initiative (FRI) and discussed the future of research opportunities on campus for students registered with SSD. We will continue to work with the FRI, and hope to expand to other research and job opportunities. Moving forward, we would appreciate any input from students who are registered with SSD and have had research or employment experience on campus. If you would like to share your stories, please let me know!*

*If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please let me know at [donaldegan@utexas.edu](mailto:donaldegan@utexas.edu)*

*Thank you,  
Donald Egan*

## Testing at SSD

Please remember that SSD has very limited testing facilities. See if your professor is able to provide accommodations before scheduling tests at SSD. If professors are unable to provide accommodations, you must submit a SSD testing reservation form 2 weeks prior to the date of the exam. The deadline for all testing reservation forms is **FRIDAY, APRIL 1.**

*Meg Allen Kareithi  
Coordinator of Assistive  
Technology and Testing*



## Students on the Spectrum Monthly Meetings

- ◆ Thursday, February 25, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, March 23, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday, April 21, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

*All meetings will be held in SSB 4.206*

## **NEWS FLASH!! NEWS FLASH!!**

Are you looking for a place to meet new friends, a safe place where you can be yourself, a chance to boost your resume, or a student organization that actually makes a difference (and has fun)???

**WE ARE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!**

We are DASC! UT's very own Disability Advocacy Student Coalition. And we want YOU! You DO NOT have to be registered with SSD, and you DO NOT have to have a disability to join us!  
**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

The next club meeting is  
Tuesday, February 23 @ 5:00 p.m. in SSB, room 4.212.  
Meetings are every other Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in SSB, room 4.212.

Learn about our exciting events planned for this semester, including:

### **The Disability Forum**

Wednesday, March 9th from 4:00—6:00 p.m. in SSB, Glenn Maloney Room.  
Join us for a discussion about the range of human abilities and learn more about what it's like to be a student at UT with a disability.

### **Dinner in the Dark**

Thursday, April 14th, time to be determined.  
Enjoy a meal in the dark and learn more about the lives of people who have visual disabilities.

*For more information contact DASC at [dascatut@gmail.com](mailto:dascatut@gmail.com).*

## **INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?**

SSD is interested in collaborating with Texas Center for Disability Studies to create posters and PSA videos to promote disability awareness and invisible disabilities on campus. At the moment we are interested in having a videographer film different skits related to how some of our services work. For example, we would like to act out a role play demonstrating the typical way accommodation letters would be delivered to professors. We would like the videos and posters to feature students with disabilities. If you are interested

or have any questions feel free to contact:

Marisa Ortega, Social Work Intern for SSD  
[marisaortega@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:marisaortega@austin.utexas.edu)

## **January 2016 Students on the Spectrum Event with Sparrow Rose Jones was a success!**

Since the first monthly meeting in September 2015, SSD co-sponsored a campus visit by Sparrow Rose Jones on January 20th. She is an Autistic adult advocate, writer, speaker, and musician. Sparrow presented during two separate events open to the public, "Living on the Autism Spectrum: An Insider's Perspective" and "Understanding Autistic Ways of Being." If you were not able to attend this event and want to learn more about Sparrow, check out her website at: <http://www.sparrowrose.com/about.html>

# Meet our new Staff & Intern!

**Kristen Anton** joined the SSD team as a Disability Services Coordinator in November 2015. Kristen is a native Texan, who earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology at Texas A&M. With her passion for helping others, she decided to attend graduate school at the University of North Texas for counseling psychology. Although her initial plan was to become a therapist for children and families, she discovered an interest in working with college students as a practicum student in the college counseling center and through her academic advisor graduate assistant position. After completing her master's degree, Kristen moved to Austin in 2007 and began working as an academic advisor for UT's College of Natural Sciences. She then worked as an academic advisor for undeclared and undecided students in the School of Undergraduate Studies from 2010-2015. Although Kristen has enjoyed academic advising and working in higher education, she wanted to apply her education, experience, and passion to other areas of college student life. Since joining the SSD team, Kristen has been thoroughly enjoying her new role and is excited about all she is learning about the world of disability services and advocacy. In her free time, Kristen enjoys hiking the beautiful trails around Austin with her husband and dog, playing soccer, watching Texas Stars hockey, and going to musical events of all kinds.

**Vanessa Ayala**, ATEC Lab Manager, grew up near Dallas, Texas. She likes Austin much more because of the young active atmosphere. Her favorite part of Austin is probably the food trucks and the festivals. Although, nothing compares to the State Fair of Texas, she always plans a trip back to Dallas during fair time. She came to Austin a little over 5 years ago to attend UT for Studio Art. While completing her degree she worked with SSD as a Student Worker. This gave her the experience to learn more about how to work with students with disabilities. In 2014 she graduated with a BFA in Studio Art. After graduation, she stayed in Austin to continue working with SSD as an Office Assistant. She became more interested in the ATEC Lab, when SSD was hiring for a new ATEC Lab Manager she seized the opportunity! During her free time, she does metal work. She makes jewelry and large scale steel work. She likes to work from scratch; using only sheet metal, wire, and metal grain for casting. She supplements her metal work with wood work and 3D production methods. She recently set up a personal studio and is excited to get to work making things.

**Katherine Green**, Associate Administrative Assistant, is a native Austinite and has worked at UT for the last 13 years, her previous position was with University Health Services. She loves working with students and loves seeing them grow from wide eyed freshman to confident graduates. Katherine has deep roots with UT. She is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation family member to work for the University. Her great grandfather was on the UT baseball team in 1898, thus she loves the Longhorns! She enjoys walking, quilting, and crochet in her spare time. Katherine has two short haired miniature dachshunds, Rowdy and Slinky, and she adores them. Married to her husband Lynn for 22 years, they share four grown children and 5 grand-darlings. Katherine has truly enjoyed her first few months with SSD and loves working with the staff here. She says, "Everyone here is amazing, I truly have found a home I enjoy. You can truly see the impact this office makes on campus, and I am proud to be part of that."

**Marisa Ortega**, SSD Intern, is originally from Dallas, Texas. She is studying Social Work here at UT and is in her final field placement at SSD. She is interested in working with the disability community along with youth in schools. During her free time she enjoys watching football, spending time with family and friends, and cuddling for hours with her dog, Peanut.

## Contact Us: SSD

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