

# The Insider



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

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

For all returning students, welcome back to UT Austin! We hope you had a wonderful summer and are ready for an exciting year! We also want to welcome those of you who are new to campus and SSD. We have had a very busy summer planning for the upcoming academic year, and we are looking forward to working with you.

We hope that you find the 21st edition of our newsletter, *The Insider*, useful and informative. Inside this newsletter you will find important dates and

deadlines, upcoming events for Disability Awareness Month, the disABILITY Advocate Program schedule, and information from our student group, DASC. You will also read about our newest Disabilities Services Coordinator.

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

Kelli Bradley, LMSW, MBA  
Executive Director,  
Services for Students with Disabilities

## STUDENTS ON THE SPECTRUM

On Tuesday September 16<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto: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!

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

## IMPORTANT DATES 2014-2015

### October 22, Wednesday

Last day a graduate student may change registration in a class to or from the credit/no credit basis.

### October 23–24, Thursday–Friday, October 27–29, Monday–Wednesday

Academic advising for continuing and readmitted students for the spring semester.

### October 27, Monday (2:00 PM–12:00 AM)

Priority registration for Spring 2015 semester.

### October 27–November 7

Daily Registration for the spring semester for continuing and readmitted students.

### November 4, Tuesday

Course Load Reduction Deadline

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 an undergraduate student may change registration in a class to or from the pass/fail basis.

### November 21, Friday

Last day students can submit course load reduction (for time-sensitive or extenuating circumstances), with supporting documentation.

### November 27–29, Thursday–Saturday

Thanksgiving holidays

### December 5, Friday

Last class day

Medical Withdrawal Deadline

Last day a graduate student or a law student may, with the required approvals, drop a class or withdraw from the University.

### December 8–9, Monday–Tuesday, 14, Sunday

No-class days

### December 8–13, Monday–Saturday, December 15–19, Monday–Friday

Fall semester final examinations in the School of Law.

### December 10–13, Wednesday–Saturday, December 15–16, Monday–Tuesday

Fall semester final examinations except in the School of Law.

### December 20, Saturday

Official graduation date



## DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING: MEET & GREET EVENT

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](mailto:LKinast@austin.utexas.edu).

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT—STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AGENCY

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



## WHO'S NEW TO OUR OFFICE?

SARAH VAHLE

### Where are you from?

I'm originally from Welcome, Maryland. Yes, it's really called Welcome. No, people aren't any more welcoming than normal there. I've also done stints in Purcellville, Virginia, and Auckland, New Zealand.



### How did you get to UT Austin?

By accident, honestly. I was looking to move out of the DC area, but hadn't considered Austin. A mentor forwarded me the posting for this position and a friend recommended looking into the city itself. Low and behold, both UT and Austin proper really fit what I was looking for. The rest is history.

### What do you like the most about working with college students?

I love hearing the array of unique stories that make up a student body and the diversity that comes with each of these stories. I also like being able to help advocate for students and, in the process, train students towards advocating for themselves.

### What do you do for fun?

If I'm not working, you'll probably find me on a training run or complaining about having to complete a training run. I'm currently (complaining about) training for the Capital to Coast relay, which is approaching much faster than I'd like to admit. I also like to swim, shop and test out vegan food at the many restaurants around Austin.

## DISABILITY ADVOCACY STUDENT COALITION

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/>

## SSD: WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, TWITTER

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\_SSDisability) for other important information and updates.



## DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

### **Brown Bag Discussion: SSD / Legal Aspects of Accommodations**

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

11:30a.m.—1:30p.m., SAC 1.118

"Have you wondered why some students get extra time on exams?" or "Are you curious about who has access to accommodations and why?" Bring your lunch and join us for this roundtable discussion about accommodations.

### **White Cane Day**

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

9:15 AM - at Texas State Capitol, march to City Hall

10:00 AM – City Hall; speech by Austin Mayor followed by a celebration at Republic Square Park

This is a day to educate the world about blindness, how the blind and visually impaired can live and work independently while giving back to their communities and to celebrate the abilities and successes achieved by blind people in a sighted world.

### **Breaking the Silence**

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

7:00p.m.—9:00p.m., Texas Union Ballroom

Sponsored by Voices Against Violence

Keynote speaker Aimme Morgan (Miss Wheelchair Alabama 2012), On and off-campus resource fair, free refreshments, and speak-out for student survivors of relationship violence.

**disABILITY  
ADVOCATE**  
Ready. Willing. **ABLE.**

### **Disability Advocate Program Training**

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

1:00p.m.—3:00p.m., SAC 1.118

This is a 2-hour disABILITY Advocate Foundation Program open to faculty, staff and students. The Foundation program is designed to facilitate open conversation and provide an engaging learning environment through 5 interactive activities. After completing the program each participant will receive a placard that indicates completion of the program and an advocate status.

### **Disability Advocate Program Training (Faculty)**

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

1:00p.m.—2:30p.m., SAC 1.118

This 1.5 hour disABILITY Advocate Program specifically designed for faculty members. The Faculty Program is conducted in a lecture format with 3 engaging interactive activities. In addition to awareness and sensitivity training the program will also focus on SSD policies and procedures and review how to best accommodate students with disabilities. After completing the program each participant will receive a placard that indicates completion of the program.

## SURVEY RESULTS!!!

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.