

CORNELL UNIVERSITY **STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES NEWSLETTER**

FALL 2008



Courtesy of - Matt Hintsa

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome first year and transfer students to Cornell and welcome back to returning students. Fall semester is always filled with the exciting promise of new classes, activities and challenges. SDS will be here to assist you with your disability-related issues and direct you to campus resources.

The University has achieved a great deal of progress in emergency preparedness planning in the past year. An emergency text message system has been put in place and an emergency siren and public address system has been installed. These systems will be helpful addressing future emergencies.

While it is important that there are university-wide plans, it is just as important to have an individual plan. The beginning of the fall semester is the perfect time to make an individual emergency plan. SDS will help students work on individual plans so that you will be prepared if the need ever arises. On September 17, 2008 at 4:30pm, SDS will be presenting a workshop with Peggy Matta, the Director of Emergency Response and Recovery and Andrea Haenlin-Mott, the ADA Coordinator for Facilities to provide you with information about the procedures the university has put in place and measures an individual can take to maximize their safety in an emergency. We hope you will join us.

Many thanks to Rhonda Carniol, Class of '79 for the generous gift to SDS that has enabled us to create a lending library for the University community on disability topics. The donation is in memory of her mother, Diane Carniol who was an educator dedicated to helping all students recognize and meet their potential. A wonderful collection of books and movies are available for loan in our office in 420 CCC. Please stop by or visit the SDS website to see what is available.

We look forward to sharing a great year together.

Sincerely,

Kappy Fahey

IMPORTANT DATES

August 22, 2008

Residence Halls Open
SDS Orientation Program
• 3-4pm RPCC Rm. 105

August 27, 2008

Course Add/Drop Begins

August 28, 2008

Classes begin. Online request for faculty notification letters opens.

September 17, 2008

Last day to add courses
Emergency Response Workshop
• 4:30-5:30pm RPCC Rm. 220

October 11-14, 2008

Fall Break

October 15, 2008

Classes Resume
Last day to drop courses

November 26-30, 2008

Thanksgiving Break

December 1, 2008

Classes Resume

December 6, 2008

Last Day of Classes

December 10-19, 2008

Finals Period

December 20, 2008

January Graduation Recognition

FACULTY NOTIFICATION LETTERS HAVE CHANGED

This fall the letters you give to instructors from SDS with notice about your accommodations will include the name of the instructor, course and the course number. The most efficient of method of requesting letters is submitting an on-line request. If you add courses after your letter request is submitted, you will need to submit an additional request.

To ensure that accommodations will be in place throughout the semester, you should meet with your professor within the first two weeks of classes. The following steps outline the process for requesting classroom accommodations.

1. If you are new to Cornell and have not finalized the process to register with SDS, call 607-254-4545 to schedule an appointment to meet with your SDS counselor.
2. Finalize your schedule within the first two weeks of the semester or as soon as possible.
3. Complete a Request for Faculty Notification Letters Form. You can fill out a form in the SDS office or online at <http://sds.cornell.edu/sdsregistration.php>
4. Pick up your letters from the SDS office two days after submitting request form.
5. Meet privately with instructors (or designated representative), give them the Faculty Notification Letters and discuss the specific arrangements for your classroom accommodations. Faculty must have two weeks notice of accommodation needs. Notice for final exam accommodations must be provided two weeks before the last day of class.

Please contact SDS immediately if you have concerns about the accommodation process.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS

Several initiatives have been undertaken to positively affect student mental health. The Council on Mental Health and Welfare was established in 2004 to bring broad-based and sustained attention to the mental health of Cornell students. Their goal is to increase opportunities for improving the overall campus environment by reducing risks, enhancing networks and increasing support for members of the Cornell community who face mental health challenges.

Efforts include:

- Educating students about the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse;
- Providing a wealth of information to students about how to identify and reduce negative stress;
- Facilitating a network of faculty, staff in advising and student services roles, residential staff, CAPS counselors and peers to identify and assist students in distress;
- Developing the [Community Consultation and Intervention](#) outreach effort;
- Improving the mental health-related leave of absence policy.



Courtesy of www.csw.edu

For more information on the Cornell University Council on Mental Health and Welfare, visit their web site at: <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/campushealth/CMHW.html>

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN INSTRUCTION AWARD

On April 28, 2008, Paul Eshelman, Chair of the SDS Advisory Board presented the Award for Universal Design in Instruction to James Blankenship at the CALS Dean's Award Reception. Mr. Blankenship was selected from a group of outstanding nominees in this inaugural year of the award. Mr. Blankenship is a senior lecturer in the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics where he teaches BioBM 330, Autotutorial Principles of Biochemistry, and BioBM 334, Computer Graphics and Molecular Biology.

Mr. Blankenship has woven the principles of UDI into both of the classes he teaches. Universal Design, originally conceived as a set of building and design principles, emphasizes accessibility and ease of use for all individuals. Universal Design in Instruction is a teaching strategy which encourages the use of varied teaching materials and assessment techniques. Presenting information in many ways takes into consideration the potential differences in learning styles, personal backgrounds, and disability status of the students.

BioBM 330 is taken by more than 500 students per year as an autotutorial option to fulfill a Biology major requirement. Students receive a set of course expectations to work through at an individualized pace. To allow students to choose the method of instruction works best for them, there are two weekly lectures, a course textbook, and a team of highly qualified TAs who provide one-on-one tutoring. In addition to three traditional exams, students take unit exams given in both oral and written formats, allowing students many chances to display their progress and mastery of the course material in the course. The BioBM 330 website contains videos to supplement the information in the text, giving students yet another way to approach the material.

By his outstanding teaching, Jim Blankenship has won many fans among his students, colleagues and student TAs. His extensive use of the principles of UDI make him an inspiring example of exceptional teaching in the classroom.



Paul Eshelman and James Blankenship
SDS Advisory Board Director and Award Recipient

IDEAS FOR GETTING AND STAYING MENTALLY HEALTHY

FEELING STRESSED?

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed and not sure where to turn, there are many points of entry for getting help. It's not always easy to tell others about your thoughts and feelings, but not doing so early can lead to worse problems. Often things will sort themselves out if you can just express them out loud to someone else. At other times, more intensive intervention may be needed. In either case, don't wait too long to act.

Here are some ideas:

- Talk things over with your friends and family.
- If you live in a residence hall, talk with a residence hall staff member.
- Peruse the [Caring Community Helpsheet](#), an on-line resource of counseling, advising and information services available to the Cornell Community.
- Try one of the [self-assessments](#) offered by CAPS and follow up with any referral provided.
- Talk with your faculty advisor or a student services advisor in your college.
- Call [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) at 255-5208 to speak directly with a counselor and, if needed, set up an appointment.
- Visit a "[Let's Talk](#)" walk-in counselor – free and confidential consultations with CAPS counselors in several designated times and locations across campus.
- Call [EARS](#) (peer Empathy, Assistance & Referral Service) or the [Suicide Prevention and Crisis Line](#) at 272-1616 (you do not need to be suicidal to call them – they're there 24 hours a day).
- Explore the [Cornell United Religious Work](#) web site to learn about the many chaplains and religious advisors available to the Cornell community. They offer general, religious, and crisis counseling and referrals.
- Join [Minds Matter](#), a student organization open to all students advocating mental health awareness. They hold weekly meetings during the academic year.

*** FOR SOME STRESS BUSTERS SEE PAGE 5! ***

NEW DISABILITY STUDIES COURSE

In the Spring Semester of 2009, Cornell will offer a course entitled *Introduction to Disability Studies*. This two credit lecture-based course is being organized by Michael Gold, Associate Professor of Collective Bargaining Labor Law and Labor History in ILR and Susanne Bruyère, Director of the Employment and Disability Institute in ILR. The idea for the course originated with the Cornell Union for Disability Awareness (CUDA), a student group which has as its mission to bring a greater awareness to peers and the community about it means to be disabled, with the hope of working to abate the stigma attached to disabilities.

The course will address a variety of topics as they relate to disabilities including; education, bioethics, policy design and implementation, the built environment, technology and mobility, mental health, employment, healthcare, literature and the models of disability. It is designed not only to introduce students to topics within the Disability Studies discipline, but also to raise awareness of the issues faced by people with disabilities, to encourage activism, and to prompt students to consider becoming professionals in the disability field.

Introduction to Disability Studies is unique in the history of Cornell in that it originated primarily as a result of student endeavors rather than faculty or staff initiative. Prompted in large part

by a generous donation made by the Nagin family honoring their Cornell graduate, CUDA members determined that a course in Disability Studies would be a suitable legacy. Thanks to additional efforts by supportive administrators and Professors Gold and Bruyère, the course was approved and will be offered in Spring 2009.

Disability Studies emerged as an academic discipline in the 1990's. The University of California at Berkeley offers a minor in Disability Studies, and Syracuse University offers a concentration in the field, as well as a Certificate of Advanced Study. Temple University offers a graduate certificate in Disability Studies. It is possible that this initial Disability Studies course, offered through the ILR School may eventually evolve into a concentration or minor in the field.

If you have space in your schedule, please consider enrolling in *Introduction to Disability Studies* and tell others about it. The course will cover unique subject matter at Cornell, presenting a survey of subjects important to those interested in disabilities. It would be wonderful if people in the Cornell and Ithaca communities would become involved. As CUDA Treasurer Yin Tong said, "often we don't realize what issues there are until you get involved."



WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is an umbrella term used to describe a broad range of hardware, software, and rehabilitation devices. This article will focus on assistive technology software one can use to gain access to content and/or help improve study and comprehension skills. Many assistive technologies offer voice synthesis capabilities that allow text to be read aloud.

Whether you are interested in assistive technology for its study tools, reading capabilities, document editing, or audio burning features, the choices can sometimes feel like trying to decide which umbrella to use on a rainy day. While they essentially provide most of the same functionality, each one is different.

Who is Assistive Technology For?

Simply put, assistive technology is for anyone. Students and professionals alike can benefit from the many uses this technology has to offer. On campus, anyone within the Cornell community can use the software located in most CIT computer labs and other locations, free of charge.

How is Assistive Technology Used?

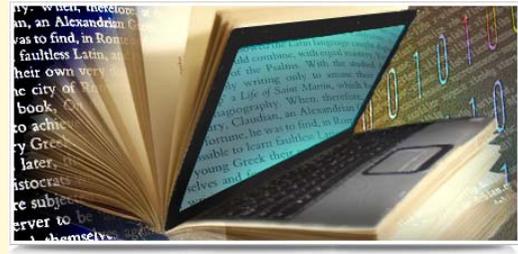
Assistive technology can be used for a variety of purposes and in many ways. Users can use it to study, read text, create audio files, voice dictation and scan material. While all material can't legally be scanned due to copyright laws, users can scan certain material under the United States Fair Use law.

Many assistive technology software developers are also creating portable versions of their software. This allows the user to use the program on any compatible computer without installing it. For instance, Premier Assistive Technology has a product called *Keys to Access*, which contains most of their programs on a thumb drive.

On campus, you will most likely find two types of assistive technology. The first type uses voice synthesis or text-to-speech technology to read printed material aloud. The second uses voice recognition, or speech-to-text technology, to allow the user to manipulate the computer using their voice.

Voice Synthesis

Voice synthesizers or speech-to-text is used as a means to read printed text aloud. Voice synthesis software isn't usually used independently, but instead, it is used by many types of reading-capable assistive technologies, such as Premier's *PDF Equalizer* and *E-Text Reader*. This type of software can be especially useful for anyone who can benefit from hearing text read aloud.



Courtesy of: www.unl.edu

In addition to being able to read text aloud, most of the software on campus comes with built in study skills, word processor, and reading comprehension features. Some of the assistive technology, such as the *PDF Equalizer*, also comes with audio burning capabilities, making it easy to load your material on a MP3 player or other audio device.

When using voice synthesis technology, you will quickly realize that not all voices are created equal. If you're using a PC, you will most likely have Microsoft Mary and Sam already preloaded. While these voices are fine, they aren't the best example of new and improved voice synthesizers. For this purpose, the Cornell campus assistive technology workstations come with *AT&T Natural Voices*- Crystal and Mike. These voices offer superior sound quality over standard voices.

Voice Recognition

One of the major benefits of using voice recognition is that it allows the user to manipulate the computer hands free. This is especially useful for people with long-term or temporary mobility impairments. Software such as Nuance's *Dragon Naturally Speaking* uses voice recognition technology to allow the user to dictate words and commands directly into the microphone. Some of Dragon's many features include the ability to create documents, transcribe voice recordings, send email, surf the Internet, and chat online using popular instant messaging programs. *Dragon Naturally Speaking* comes in legal, medical, professional, preferred, and standard editions. While some initial training is required to successfully use Dragon, it is capable of "learning" as you speak. Through this process it continuously improves voice recognition and saves it to a voice file. Best of all, user's voice files can be transferred between personal and public computers, eliminating the need to re-train Dragon.

Where Can I Find Assistive Technology on Campus?

Assistive technology workstations are available at labs across campus. The workstations include software such as the *PDF Equalizer*, *E-Text Reader*, and *Dragon Naturally Speaking*. For a complete listing of available software and locations, please visit http://www.sds.cornell.edu/Campus_Access.html

CIT Labs

- Uris Library
- Phillips Hall
- Mann Library
- Olin Library
- Robert Purcell Community Ctr.
- Stimson Hall

Department Labs

- Carpenter Library
- Law School

Where Can I Purchase Assistive Technology?

Companies such as *Premier Assistive*, *Nuance*, and *Freedom Scientific* all offer assistive technology at reasonable prices. Most will allow you to purchase and download the software online. Below, is a list of software and websites where you can find additional information.

Name	Website
Dragon Naturally Speaking	www.nuance.com
E-Text Reader	www.readingmadeeasy.com
PDF Equalizer	www.readingmadeeasy.com
NextUp.com (<i>Voice Synthesizers</i>)	www.nextup.com
Scan and Read Pro	www.readingmadeeasy.com
Keys to Access (<i>suite of 10 programs</i>)	www.readingmadeeasy.com

S T R E S S B U S T E R S

Gannett Health Center has a web page with a list of things you can do to manage stress. Visit the page at: http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/top10Topics/stress/stress_tips.html and try as many of them as you can.

Regular breathing exercises, in addition to increasing energy and decreasing tension, can help build resistance to stress. By following the breathing exercise listed on the **stress tips** page regularly and working up to 20 minute sessions once or twice a day, you can strengthen your central nervous system. More breathing exercises can be found Dr. Andrew Weil's site called "The Art and Science of Breathing" at: <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/id/ART00521>

Ideas for increasing mental clarity and productivity can be found in Dr. Daniel Amen's "Seven Ways to Optimize Your Brain and Your Life" article at: <http://www.creativityatwork.com/articlesContent/Brain/amen-optimize-brain.html>

SDS LENDING LIBRARY

CHECK OUT OUR LIST OF BOOKS AND MOVIES AVAILABLE IN OUR NEW LENDING LIBRARY ON OUR WEBSITE AT:

[HTTP://SDS.CORNELL.EDU/LIBRARY.HTML](http://sds.cornell.edu/library.html)

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