Welcome to another Newsletter from the Disability Resource Center. Over the last year, the Disability Resource Center has gone through some changes and we would love to share! In this edition of the DRC Newsletter we will introduce our new staff, discuss some important campus resources, and share information about laws related to disability. As always, if you have any questions about the content of this Newsletter, please reach out to us.

**Office Statistics**

Our office works to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students and the campus community. Exam accommodations, classroom accommodations, reformatting of text materials, and provision of adaptive technology are just a few of the accommodation services that are offered in this office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>497 Students Served</td>
<td>546 Students Served</td>
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<tr>
<td>223 New Students</td>
<td>146 New Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,546 exams (8/22/16-12/16/16)</td>
<td>1,316 exams (1/17/17--5/19/17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>433 during Final Exam Week (12/5/16-12/10/16)</td>
<td>323 during Final Exam Week (5/8/17-5/12/17)</td>
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Staff Changes

Carrie Aldrich
Interpreter and CART Coordinator

Carrie became the Interpreter and CART Coordinator in 2016. CART stands for Communication Access Real-Time Translation. While Carrie has been an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter for NIU since 2004, her new role has brought forth added responsibilities. Carrie coordinates the scheduling of both staff and freelance interpreters and CART providers for the classroom and for other university events, assists professors in adding closed captioning to their class videos, and is part of a committee that is working to coordinate a better captioning process for all university video media. Carrie graduated with her B.A. in Deaf Education from NIU in 2003. Outside of NIU Carrie has also worked as an Interpreter for Elgin Area School District U-46, the 2nd largest school district in Illinois. Carrie loves interpreting because she loves being in the classroom process where she sees the information transferred from teacher to student. Seeing the “light turn on” when a student learns new information is always gratifying for her. When her hands are free Carrie is guaranteed to be holding coffee. She loves her family, crafting, and gardening.
Robert Uhren
Access Consultant

Robert combines his love for technology and working with people as an Access Consultant. Prior to joining the DRC in March 2017, Robert earned his M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling and became a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor shortly after. He is always thinking of how others, especially people with disabilities, can utilize computer technology to improve the quality of their lives. Robert has seen how empowering the use of technology can be through his experience performing technology assessments to individuals who are blind and deafblind. He is looking forward to making the classroom experience more accessible through accommodations while incorporating technology when possible. Before working in the field of Human Services, Robert was a computer technician working with various computer equipment such as Cisco switchboards, security camera monitors, desktops, etc. Robert enjoys spending time equally unplugged and present with his family in various forms of nature such as wooded areas, beaches, mountains, especially trails that lead to scenery, and especially having conversations in his native language, American Sign Language (ASL)!
Staff Changes

Tim Pagani
Access Consultant

The DRC welcomed Tim as an Access Consultant in April 2017. Tim loves to learn and has always wanted to work in the field of higher education. He earned his M.A. in Human Services Administration from Concordia University in 2014, preceded by a B.S. in Special Education here at NIU in 2010. Tim received services from the DRC when he was a student at NIU, and as someone with a vision impairment called Optic-Nerve Atrophy, Tim understands firsthand the importance of accessibility. He is eager to educate the community and assist others in recognizing their abilities, in order to have an exceptional educational experience. For the past two and a half years Tim worked as a Dorm Manager at The Maryland School for the Blind. His experience also includes three years as a Shift Supervisor at a group home for children who experienced emotional and/or physical trauma, and almost two years teaching individuals of various ages and abilities. Tim enjoys watching historical and/or animal documentaries, Westerns, stand-up comedy, eating at different restaurants, and laughing with family and friends.
Jessica Schraft  
Graduate Assistant  

Jessica is the Graduate Assistant for Adapted Testing. Since August 2016, she has worked under the Testing Coordinator to schedule, acquire, match, audio-record, and administer exams. She is also often found helping around the front office. Jessica is pursuing her M.S.Ed in Counseling, with a Trauma-Informed Counseling Certificate of Graduate Study. As a future school counselor Jess is passionate about advocating for the equity of marginalized students. She earned her B.A in Rhetoric and Public Communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and soon after joined College Advising Corps in Chicago as a College-Access Adviser to underrepresented high school students for two years. In her free time, Jess enjoys watching HGTV, listening to live music, boating, and traveling.

Alex Egger  
Graduate Assistant  

Alex is the Graduate Assistant for E-Text. Since starting in January 2017, he works with DRC students who need alternative textbooks as a middleman between the student and the textbook publisher. Alex is a graduate student in the Counseling program, specializing in Clinical Mental Health. He would like to work with clients from a lower socioeconomic status and hopes to start his own private practice in the future. Eager to work as a helping professional, Alex enjoys working at the DRC with its positive and open atmosphere. Alex earned his B.A. in Psychology from NIU as well. When he is not busy being a graduate student, Alex enjoys reading and playing video games to relax.
Staff Changes

Mastewal Seyeneh
Graduate Assistant
Mastewal is an additional Graduate Student for E-Text. She will be working alongside Alex in obtaining text books in electronic format and converting materials into accessible formats. Mastewal is a Ph.D. candidate in Counselor Education and has earned multiple degrees from various institutions such as the University of Montana and Wageningen University and Research Centre.

Saying Goodbye

Bonnie Bird
Graduate Assistant
At the end of the spring semester, we had to say goodbye to one of our Graduate Assistants, Bonnie Bird. Bonnie graduated from the Counseling master’s program this May with a specialization in Clinical Mental Health. Bonnie started at the DRC in August of 2015 as the E-Text Coordinator Graduate Assistant. Her time here was spent working with publishers in getting alternate texts to our student base. In addition to her primary responsibilities, Bonnie also helped record tests and proctor exams. After working here for two years, she facilitated the transition for the next E-Text Coordinator, Alex Egger, and trained him throughout her last semester. After graduating from the program, Bonnie was offered a position at the Northern Illinois Academy as a Residential Counselor. We at the DRC are proud to have worked with such a dedicated and hardworking individual, and wish her the best in her future professional career.
Accessibility Laws

**Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act**
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act establishes requirements for electronic and information technology (EIT) developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. The requirements ensure that EIT can be accessed by people with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. [Section 508 Standards for Electronic and Information Technology](#)

**The Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act**
The Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act requires that information technology developed, purchased, or provided by the State is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Every State entity must ensure information technology that it or its contractors develops, purchases, or provides for use by or on behalf of the State complies with the IITAA to the greatest extent possible. [Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act Standards](#)
What This Means for the DRC-
These laws are meant to compel colleges to ensure they are providing equal access to higher education for students with disabilities. Many offices and faculty approach our office asking for assistance in making sure their materials are accessible. NIU is working to comply with new requirements for making audio and video perceivable to people with disabilities across campus. Job Access With Speech (JAWS), a screen reader for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse, is in 17 computer labs across campus. The Department of eLearning Services, Faculty Development and Instructional Design, and the DRC coordinate to provide captioning to online course content. For larger projects, e.g., captioning full-length movies, the DRC contracts to assist in captioning.
Mental Health Supports on Campus

A question that is often asked is whether or not we offer counseling services in the DRC. Though the DRC does not offer therapeutic counseling, we are devoted to our students’ mental health and direct them to the resources on campus that can assist them in the transition to college life, as well as general mental health. Below is a list of mental health services that are offered here at NIU:

**Counseling and Consultation Services**
Campus Life Building 200, (815)-753-1206
No Fees, Open Monday-Friday, 8AM-4PM
http://www.niu.edu/counseling/

**The Couple and Family Therapy Clinic at NIU**
Wirtz 146, (815)-753-1684
Sliding scale fee, though no one will be turned away due to not being able to pay
Open Monday 12PM-9PM, Tuesday/Thursday 9:30AM-9PM, Wednesday 9AM-9PM, Friday 9AM-5PM
http://www.chhs.niu.edu/familytherapyclinic/

**Psychological Services**
Psychology Building 86, (815)-753-0591
Sliding fee based on income, though most insurance is accepted here.
Open Monday 12PM-8PM, Tuesday 11AM-7PM, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-5PM
http://niu.edu/psychology/resources/psc/index.shtml

**Community Counseling Training Center at NIU**
Graham Hall 416, (815)-753-9312
No Fees, Open Monday-Thursday, generally in the afternoon.
http://cedu.niu.edu/cctc/

Please seek any of these services during your time here at NIU. Mental health can be a stigmatizing issue, even though it is as important as physical health and overall wellness. The DRC is happy to direct our students to these service at their request. Finally, many students ask about Emotional Support Animals. Students may be approved for the accommodation of an Emotional Support Animal should they meet the necessary requirements. If a student is approved for an Emotional Support Animal, they should be aware of the many rules related to them. You can find out more information at our website:
http://www.niu.edu/disability/accommodations/types/animals.shtml
THANK YOU!!

New Furniture in the Testing Rooms

During the spring semester, the DRC was able to acquire updated furniture for the testing rooms that students utilize to for extended testing accommodations. This would not be possible without support from the Office of the Provost, as well as the assistance of the Materials Management department for helping move the furniture. The DRC would also like to recognize how well everyone cooperated and assisted in this transition from moving chairs and desks, to setting up the computers in order to keep the transition from affecting the students using our services.