

THE DASS INSIDER

A NEWSLETTER FOR SMU FACULTY

INFORMATION ON DISABILITY SERVICES AND ACCESS ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR STUDENTS AND CLASSES



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Welcome Back! Meet the DASS Office

DASS is the primary contact for all SMU students with disabilities. Our staff is dedicated to helping students receive equal opportunities to participate in the University's curriculum, programs and activities on campus. DASS supports students who are significantly impacted by a condition that is considered a disability. These conditions include learning disabilities, physical disabilities, psychiatric disorders and others.

In addition to putting accommodations in place for students, and providing back-up test proctoring for faculty, DASS also offers valuable academic counseling for undergraduates with learning and attention disorders.

Meet our DASS team



Alexa Taylor, DASS Lead & Senior Assoc. Director of A-LEC
Alexa supervises the other four full-time staff, collaborates with departments and faculty members on accommodation issues, reviews and revises operational processes, and handles special projects for DASS. She has been with SMU for 16 years.

Michelle Bufkin, Senior Accommodations Coordinator
Michelle primarily reviews accommodation requests from students with LD or ADHD. She is also a Certified Academic Language Therapist, a Licensed Dyslexia Therapist, an SMU Mom, and has been with SMU for ten years.

Karen Turbeville, Accommodations Coordinator
Karen primarily reviews accommodation requests from students with medical or psychiatric conditions. Her experience as an educator in special education gives her a unique perspective to help students transition from high school to SMU. She is also an SMU Mom and has been with SMU for three years.

David Tylicki, Learning Specialist

David primarily provides academic counseling and coaching to students with learning and attention disorders, assisting them with goal setting, time management, self-awareness and advocacy skills. He has been at SMU for five years.

Candy Brown, Administrative Assistant

Candy receives and directs all paperwork and correspondence coming to DASS, along with coordinating test proctoring for DASS students. She is the voice on the other end of the line or email when you contact DASS! She has been with SMU for five years.

Our team welcomes any questions from faculty to assist them in working with students with any disability-related need.

Test Proctoring Reminders for the New Semester

When you call the main number at DASS, you usually are speaking with Candy Brown, our DASS Administrative Assistant. Candy works with DASS students in many ways and also coordinates all the test proctoring for the department. Students order accommodation letters online and come to her office to pick them up. DASS prints over 2500 letters each semester (for around 600 students) so we do stay very busy stuffing envelopes the first few weeks of the semester. When giving letters to DASS students, Candy also takes the time to remind them to meet with their professors to discuss their accommodations (in office hours!). In this meeting, faculty can determine whether they're able to provide the necessary classroom accommodations, or need to explore alternatives. DASS can be an alternative, but be sure to check out our limitations on our website. Your department may have resources for you, as well, so consider talking to your department Chair person.

As you begin administering tests to your class, we, too, begin test proctoring. We serve as a back-up to faculty but your student *should* know they are responsible to schedule tests *at least* 7 days from the test date. If you don't inform your students about a test date with at least 7 days notice at DASS, that will really put them (and us...and you!) in a bind.

When your student schedules a test online at DASS, you will receive a test request by email, along with an attached proctor form from DASS usually 6-7 days out from the test date. It is *critically* important to complete and send the proctor form back to DASS! This is the perfect time to contact Candy if the student has not accurately scheduled the time or date, or if the test date has been changed or cancelled or the student has decided to test with you. Clear communication between our students, faculty and the DASS office will keep misunderstandings (and stress) to a minimum. Lastly, if you do need to drop off a test (and choose not to email it to dass@smu.edu), there's a handy locked drop box right outside Room 202M for your convenience.

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Successful Professionals with Dyslexia: Tommy Hilfiger, Fashion Icon

Watch a [short video](#) about how famed designer Tommy Hilfiger struggled with dyslexia and how it has impacted his work within the fashion world.

Hilfiger says that a big part of his success is the way he thinks, and these differences are in part due to his dyslexia. His creative mind helped him stand out from his competition.

TOMMY HILFIGER

Faculty FAQ's: A DASS Web Site Resource

On the DASS website, there is a section of FAQ's for Faculty. These include your most common questions regarding working with your students with disabilities, as well as policies and procedures of the DASS office. Here are a couple of FAQ's you might be interested in, and check out the site for the complete list.

Is providing exam accommodations to students with disabilities fair to other students?

Determination of exam accommodations is made after carefully reviewing documentation of a disability and the effects of the disability in a test taking situation. Accommodations are determined so as to minimize the disability and "level the playing field," not to give the student with a disability an advantage. Faculty should express any con-

cerns regarding exam accommodations to a DASS staff member who can verify the appropriateness of the requested accommodation and provide assistance to both the student and faculty.

What do I need to know about confidentiality, when working with students with disabilities and accommodations?

What can I say, and to whom? This can be confusing, when you receive a letter that says "Confidential"! This means you shouldn't discuss this student's disability status with anyone OTHER than the student, except in real "need to know" situations. Your TA might need to know the student has extended time for testing, but the TA does not need to see all of their accommodations or know about their condition, if the DASS student shared that with

you. Also, store the letter in a secure place in your office and shred after it is not needed anymore. Do NOT talk about accommodations with this student, in front of other students, for any reason. This is the most common way a student's confidentiality has been broken, and although unintended, it can be very upsetting to the student. Failing to bcc: a group of students in an email concerning test arrangements also violates confidentiality and should be avoided.

I know I must include a statement in my syllabus about accommodations. What should I include?

Syllabus statement for All Undergraduate and Graduate Faculty EXCEPT Law School:

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/>

to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Professors sometimes add requirements to the approved statement; some are appropriate, but some are not and should be avoided. An example of an acceptable addition is to encourage the student to meet with you in your office when submitting the DASS accommodation letter. Inappropriate additions include a firm deadline to deliver accommodation letters (such as in the first two weeks of school).

If you are not sure whether the statement you wish to add is appropriate, we are here for any consultation. Please contact the DASS office at 214-768-1470, or by email at DASS@smu.edu.

DASS By the Numbers

Here is some recent and historical data about the numbers of students identified to the university as having a disability, along with some information about particular types of support services provided by DASS. During the Spring 2017 semester, 731 students were identified to DASS as having a disability and were approved for some type of accommodation. Graduate students made up 96 of the 731.

About 9% of the undergraduate population is approved for a disability-related accommodation. Most (more than half) have identified with a learning or attention disorder, 150 identified with a psychiatric condition, 103 identified with a medical condition, and around 20 other students identified with either a hearing or visual impairment or a physical/mobility impairment.

DASS also provides support to those with learning and attention disorders. Around 180 sessions of academic counseling were conducted in the spring semester to help these students with organizational strategies and goal setting, as well as improving self-awareness.

Additionally, DASS does proctor tests when a faculty member is unable to do so himself/herself, assuming the student has disability accommodations that require such proctoring. In the spring, 173 students took at least one test at DASS as we administered 728 tests. This service is especially useful during finals and for students who have complicated accommodations such as a reader and scribe, but DASS appreciates the faculty's efforts to test as many students within the department as possible.

Lastly, some of the most common accommodations provided to DASS students are extended time (typically 1.5x), note-taking assistance, a reduced distraction environment for testing, and priority enrollment. Other less common accommodations may be appropriate at times, such as allowing the student to use a laptop for note taking or test taking, housing or dining accommodations, or providing some flexibility in attendance due to the impact of their medical condition. If an instructor ever has a concern about the appropriateness of an accommodation in his or her particular course, please contact DASS to discuss this concern.

Technology in the Classroom

There are a variety of issues that come along with technology in the classroom as it relates to students with disabilities. For the most part, technology has reduced barriers for people with disabilities, such as those who are hard of hearing or deaf as well as those with visual impairments. FM transmitters and amplifiers make it possible for students to hear not only the instructor but sometimes, the other students. Magnifiers can process material from the board and magnify it onto a personal sized computer screen for an individual student. Students might also be approved for an accommodation that requires technology to be used in order to take notes independently (e.g., with a laptop or recording device).



However, there are times that **technology creates some additional barriers for students**. Your department may be utilizing some software or an application that isn't fully accessible to someone using a screen reader. If the content on that app is critical to their learning and participation, it may require the University to identify another method for the student to access the material (either through a hired assistant, a TA, the instructor, etc.).

A student who is blind or low vision may require access to videos ahead of time, or even may require verbal description of those videos.

If you teach a **fully online or Web-enhanced on-campus course**, you will want to request training on how to ensure the content is accessible, especially for those with sensory impairments. Videos should be captioned, images should have alternate text (to describe them), the content should work with magnification, as well as with the most common screen reader, JAWS.

In Canvas you need know how to extend the time of a test or quiz correctly. If a student has extended time as an accommodation, the steps to extend the testing time (not the window) are:

Create the quiz as usual; once the quiz is finished and saved:

Click on the "moderate quiz" link on the right

Find the student you need to extend time to

Click the pencil icon (on same row as student name)

Add time (in minutes) needed in addition to the already allotted time...if you had a quiz that was 30 min and the student receives time and a half – type 15 in the box.



There are WalkThru lessons titled "Add extended time for an existing quiz attempt" for more assistance. The [Academic Technology Service Director](#) for your college or school is an excellent go-to for questions about Canvas and accessibility. The [STAR Program](#) is also available for transcribing videos and adding captioning in Canvas. Lastly, the Center for Teaching Excellence offers support to ensure your online course content reaches all learners.

One final word about technology...if you do **administer your tests and quizzes exclusively on Canvas**, you will need to be prepared to proctor your own students with classroom accommodations (like extended time or a reduced distraction environment). However, DASS can administer the test in a paper/pencil format, so please contact us if you need more information.

Did you know?

Fonts that are sans-serif are the most readable for people with print disabilities, like low vision or dyslexia. Among the better sans-serif typefaces are APFont (free to download and designed for people with visual impairments), Tahoma, Verdana, and Helvetica. Avoid *italics* or all CAPS, but use bullets and ragged right margins for increased readability.

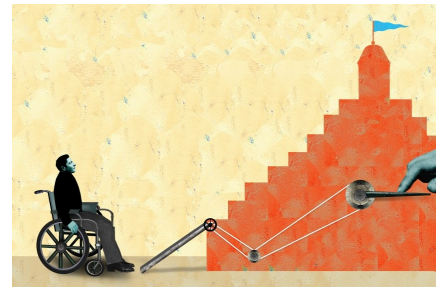
For more information, check out:

<http://www.aph.org/research/design-guidelines/>

Disabilities and Careers

Several recent articles highlight often overlooked populations who manage disability impacts in demanding careers. A [New York Times](#) article from June, describes the benefits patients experience from working with medical professionals with disabilities.

Faculty members with disabilities were highlighted in [The Neglected Demographic: Faculty Members with Disabilities](#). A discussion of issues surrounding disclosure of disabilities by faculty members can be found [HERE](#).



SMU's Office of Institutional Equity and Access handles disability accommodation requests for faculty on our campus.

DASS Collaboration with Hegi Career Center

By David Tylicki

Many students with disabilities have questions about making the transition from college to the world of work. Do workplaces have accommodations and support for me as a person with a disability? Should I even disclose my disability and my needs to my employer? Thankfully, resources to help job-seeking students with disabilities abound, even right here in Dallas.

The Business Leaders Network (BLN) of North Texas held its quarterly meeting this past July, with a focus on recruiting students with disabilities. Lisa Tran, Director of the Cox School's Career Management Centers, and I were invited to serve on a panel to discuss making connections between businesses and student jobseekers with disabilities attending local colleges and universities. Representatives from Bank of America, AT&T, Texas Instruments, Lockheed-Martin, Pepsi-Co, Marriott, and many others attended and joined in the conversation. These companies increasingly look to hire students with disabilities to diversify their workforces.

One concern I had entering into this discussion, was that the companies might be more focused on hiring people with more profound disabilities. What I learned was that they are not interested in hiring only people with visible disabilities, but invisible as well, such as those with ADHD and learning differences. Speaking with a representative of Lockheed Martin, I learned that they are interested in hiring students with disabilities not just for support positions, but also those with engineering degrees. Another of my concerns was that the companies might not have support for students with disabilities after they were hired. In fact, not only are their HR departments prepared to work with employees to implement workplace accommodations, but most also offer job coaching, one-on-one mentoring, and wide-ranging benefits packages.

DASS will be fostering these new connections to benefit our job-seeking and internship-seeking students with disabilities.

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.SMU.EDU/ALEC/DASS

VISIT US AT DASS

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5800 Ownby Drive—Suite 202 Loyd Center
2nd Floor - Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center
Entrance near Gate 3 of Ford Stadium
Parking in the Meadows Garage

Phone: 214-768-1470
Email: dass@smu.edu



DASS IS MORE THAN ACCOMMODATIONS.

For resources that may be helpful to faculty and staff, please visit:
<http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS/Resources/ForFaculty>