Professional Spotlight: Disability Resources for Students

DRS continues to see exponential growth in the department. Now serving over 1,000 students, the office is certainly staying busy! (Seated, left to right) Nelda Scruggs and Steve Shaver are keeping the students busy with lots of academic support. (from left to right, back row) Jennifer Murchison and Amanda Rodino are working together to keep students’ accommodations covered and working smoothly. Nicole Hoyle and April Huggins keep our record-number of tests organized and administered while maintaining excellent Front Desk support, greeting students and other visitors to the office.

We recently closed a posting for a new Coordinator position to assist with accommodation, service, and technology management for students. Review of applications will start soon! We have also been working with Pat Prahalathan and Reza Chowdhury to implement a new information management system.

Special thanks go to Justin Lawhead, Dean of Students and Interim Director for DRS, and our Graduate Assistants for the support they provide our office daily. DRS could not operate as well without that support. For more information about DRS, visit http://www.memphis.edu/drs
“The Class Menagerie” by Jennifer Murchison, Assistant Director

The question of animals in public spaces has long been a subject of discussion and debate among business owners and disability advocates. The conversation has grown and continues to grow in the field of disability services regarding animals in the classroom. When the Americans with Disabilities Act was amended in 2008, the blurred lines of what is and is not a Service Animal became sharper, providing clarity for professionals and more questions for the general public. The Department of Justice has identified distinctions between Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Comfort/Therapy Animals. These differences can be confusing, but knowing they exist is important, since one does not want to offend a person with access needs.

Service Animals, as identified by the Department of Justice, may only be a dog or, in select circumstances, a miniature horse. Automatically, any other species of animal does not qualify as a Service Animal. Service Animals may go wherever their Person goes including the classroom and restaurants, except where such poses a significant risk to health or safety, like a surgical/lab environment, a welder’s studio, kitchen, etc. If there is a question about whether the dog is a Service Animal, two questions may be asked: 1) Is this animal necessary for you because of disability? (you cannot ask the person about their disabilities) 2) What disability-related service or task does the Animal perform? While Service Animals must be trained, no certification, vest, badge, or card is required as proof. An example of a service or task can include such things as providing independent mobility for a person who is blind, picking up dropped objects or pulling a wheelchair, alerting someone to changes in blood sugar level for an individual with diabetes, or getting help for someone who is having a seizure.

Emotional Support Animals can be any species of animal, as outlined by the Fair Housing Act. ESAs are not allowed in public spaces like Service Animals. This means ESAs are not allowed in the classroom. ESAs require no certification, vest, badge, or card is required as proof. Their Person, however, does need approval for the Animal to be in residence halls. DRS works closely with Residence Life and Dining Services to review and approve these requests. An example of an Emotional Support Animal would be an animal that, by its presence, creates a calming environment for their Person.

Comfort/Therapy Animals are used in clinical settings and can be seen in public spaces under the charge of their Person, usually a licensed, clinical therapist. These Animals are often identified as being “touch-friendly”. An example of this would be the presence of the Animal creates a less-anxious environment for others, not their Person. This can include people in counseling sessions or waiting at the airport. Some faculty may bring Comfort/Therapy Animals into classrooms to show the therapeutic benefit these Animals have in counseling sessions, such as with patients with Alzheimer’s.

Regardless of their distinctions, these Animals should always be well-behaved, and their Person is ultimately responsible for any damage done or the behaviors exhibited by the Animal. This includes cleaning up after the Animal and keeping control of the Animal at all times. If the Person is not properly caring for the Animal, or if the Animal becomes a threat to the health or safety of others, the Animal can be removed and not allowed back.

Each of these Animals provide legitimate care for their Person. Each bring value to their Person, but knowing there is a difference is vitally important.

There are always caveats, and unfortunately there are those who take advantage of others. The public should beware of illegitimate businesses and unethical professionals who claim that, for some amount of money, they can provide documentation to take an animal anywhere. Some people pay hundreds and thousands of dollars for such animals, vests, or letters that wind up being worthless. There are others who may call their pet a “service animal” so they can take them places. This merely creates additional barriers in society for people with disabilities. Again, knowing the differences assists people with disabilities to identify their access support and helps the public create better access support in return.
Upcoming Conferences

2017 Women’s Leadership Institute
December 03 – December 06, 2017
Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, Florida

**November 25, 2017: Regular Registration Closes**

In its 12th year, the Women’s Leadership Institute provides an experience that caters to women’s needs within the higher education profession. Representing the profession will be women from facilities and operations, administration, auxiliary services, student affairs, recreation, and libraries who aspire to be senior leaders in higher education and share a passion for the profession.

ACPA Donna M. Bourassa Mid-Level Management Institute
January 6– January 10, 2018
Chicago, IL, USA

Going into its 20th year, the Donna M. Bourassa Mid-Level Management Institute is an ACPA signature educational program for those desiring to understand their authentic leadership, strengthen their capacities and understand self and organizational dynamics in order to lead well. The Institute, named for Donna Bourassa, Ed.D. former Associate Executive Director of ACPA, is a successful professional development resource to hundreds of colleagues in the student affairs profession.

The first step in the process is for participants to submit an application. The priority deadline for applications is Friday, November 10, 2017. After that, applications will only be considered if space is available. Please note: MMI reaches full capacity each year. Don’t wait until it is too late to apply!

2018 Leadership Educators Institute
December 09 – December 11, 2018
Orlando, FL

**November 05, 2018: Regular Registration Deadline**
**November 01, 2018: Hotel Reservation Deadline**

The Leadership Educators Institute provides an opportunity for leadership practitioners and scholars to engage in active learning and dialogue to assist with program and leadership course development.

A partnership between NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, ACPA-College Student Educators International, and the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP), LEI provides a unique opportunity for all professional levels within our field to engage in critical dialogue to support leadership development.
2017 NASPA Multicultural Institute: Advancing Equity & Inclusive Practice
December 10 – December 12, 2017
Hyatt Regency New Orleans - New Orleans, Louisiana

November 10, 2017: Regular Registration Deadline

The 2017 NASPA Multicultural Institute: Advancing Equity and Inclusive Practice is the premier event for student affairs and academic affairs professionals who are seeking an interactive forum that combines thought-provoking keynote speakers, challenging educational sessions, and opportunities for resource and idea sharing. The Institute exists to connect those with responsibilities for and those who are passionate about multicultural education at institutions across the country.

2017 NASPA Student Affairs Law Conference
December 10 – December 12, 2017
JW Marriott New Orleans, New Orleans, LA

November 10, 2017: Regular Registration Closes

The Student Affairs Law Conference is an exciting event focusing on recent legal trends in higher education law and policy development and the needs of your campus.

Online Resources

Engaging in Non-Violent Protest on Campus

Culture of Respect Collective: How and Why to Get Your Institution Involved

Putting First-gen First: Meet your Center for First-generation Student Success

University of Arizona Assessment Toolbox

Do you have ideas or suggestions for professional development initiatives for future newsletters or programs you’d like to see happen? Share them with Scott Radimer at x2826 or at slrdimer@memphis.edu!