



Notes from the Director

Accentuate the Positive!

You may have noticed that the name of the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) emphasizes the ABILITIES, rather than the Dis. We are here to assist students in obtaining academic accommodations at UH to help them emphasize their strengths and ABILITIES, and minimize or compensate for their Dis-- or areas of difficulty-- as much as possible.

Students sometimes have a difficult time accepting this concept, and want to focus on their areas of difficulty, rather than their strengths and capabilities. This negative focus can result from a variety of life experiences. Examples may include the manner in which they or others have emphasized their disability, the diagnostic nature of healthcare, language used by teachers or service providers, and numerous other reasons.

Everyone has strengths, skills, and gifts. Everyone has limitations and areas of difficulty. No one can succeed in this world without the help of others. Some people have learned to minimize or downplay their areas of difficulty at an early age, and some people do this later in life. Some people cannot do things that most other people can do, but you would never know this. I know a highly successful Houston businessman who cannot read or write. He records notes in a voice recorder and has such incredible interpersonal and communication skills that you would never suspect this.

Most people do well in some subjects, and not others. Everyone is gifted in certain areas, and not so gifted in others. It doesn't matter if you have some type of diagnosed disability or not. Students who have disabilities are just like everyone else in terms of having areas of life in which they shine brightly and less brightly. Albert Einstein had a learning disability, but he did well in life, didn't he? Abraham Lincoln had a mental illness, but he achieved great things as well.

Focus on strengths, and improve on or minimize difficulties in dealing with yourself and others. Let CSD and other campus support services, such as CAPS, the Student Health Center, Learning Support Services, the Writing and Math Labs, and other services which you pay large amounts of money to help you to do so.

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Spotlight On....A Day at the Rec



This October during UH's Disability Awareness Week, the Department of Campus Recreation hosted a "Day at the Rec". The goal of this annual event is to highlight different activities that give students who have disabilities a chance to experience and to foster a mindset of staying active and fit. This year's event included demonstrations by the Houston Challengers, which included both soccer and basketball games. UH students and faculty (including CSD's own Alan Russell) joined in the games, which were a big hit. This year saw the addition of a Yoga class and there are plans to create more programming in fitness classes and Intramurals specifically for students, faculty, staff and alumni who have disabilities who are members of Campus Recreation. Campus Recreation is excited to partner with the Center for Students with DisABILITIES to assist in raising awareness with fitness options and assist students to meet their personal health goals. We encourage students to bring a workout buddy as it is a great way to stay motivated when working out! Please visit our website at www.uh.edu/recreation to discover different activities that you can enjoy throughout the semester.

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WHAT'S NEW?...Veterans Ability and Achievement Conference



On Nov. 12, the University of Houston held the Veterans Ability and Achievement Conference. It was a chance to show appreciation to those who have served this great nation. UH veterans, including faculty, staff and students attended, and were recognized for their important role in making UH the university it is today. Bob Boudreaux, a Vietnam veteran and former anchor for ABC Channel 13 emceed the event with style and humor. The Texas Fallen Heroes Memorial, on display in the University Center Arbor, reminded us all that many service members make the ultimate sacrifice, and they should never be forgotten.

Dana Bowman, the keynote speaker for the conference, provided a riveting and motivating presentation of his personal story of tragedy and triumph. Bowman, a retired Army sergeant first class, was the first double-amputee to re-enlist in the Army. His service record and accolades are impressive: master parachutist, combat infantry, scuba and many others tell the tale of a highly motivated and professional soldier.

The conference was sponsored by the Center for Students with DisABILITIES, the Veterans Collegiate Society, the Disabled Students Association, University Career Services, the Veterans' Services Office and SAHFE Laboratories. Lunch was generously donated by Chinese Star, and breakfast was provided by University Career Services.

Chris Webb
President, Veterans Collegiate Society
Senior, English-Creative Writing and Political Science

Medical Withdrawals 101

FAST FACTS: Undergraduate Medical Withdrawals

Sometimes life presents extraordinary medical or other circumstances that prevent a student from completing coursework. We encourage students to work with their instructors and complete their courses to the best of their ability. When this is not possible, university policy permits students the option for an administrative or medical withdrawal. But there are some important guidelines and deadlines to know first.

Medical withdrawals do not guarantee a refund of tuition and fees.
Medical withdrawals are applied to all courses in the term of withdrawal.

Often a student will decide not to pursue the withdrawal because they have passing grades in some courses or they learn it will have adverse financial impact. A student would want to consider if the credit hour enrollment may impact their financial status, health insurance, housing or international student status. We encourage students to speak with the appropriate university representatives on the impact a withdrawal or drop would have before pursuing a medical withdrawal request.

Deadlines for medical withdrawal requests:

The request must be submitted, and all original documentation in the office and approved prior to the close of the semester after the semester in which courses were taken.

deadline for Summer 2008 courses is the close of fall term: **December 19, 2008**

deadline for Fall 2008 courses is the close of spring term: **May 15, 2009**

deadline for Spring 2009 courses is the close of summer term: **August 8, 2009**

Common reason medical withdrawals are disapproved:

- the deadline has expired
- the request was for only one or two courses, rather than for all courses taken in a given semester
- the documentation to support the withdrawal was incomplete

Things a student can do to make the process easier:

- speak with the instructor(s) to explore options to complete the course during the term
- speak with a financial aid or other appropriate advisors to make sure there is no adverse impact in changing the credit hour enrollment
- if a student is unable to process the withdrawal before the deadline, seek help through an immediate family member or advisor to initiate the process
- initiate the request before the deadline
- turn in all original documentation in support of the request as soon as possible
- contact us before the deadline

Dr Heidi Kennedy, Director

Contact office for medical withdrawals:

Academic Program Management

109 E. Cullen

713-743-9112

Welcome-Demetria Guinn!



I joined the Center for students with DisABILITIES in August, 2008 as Secretary II.

Although, I am new to the CSD, I am no stranger to the University of Houston System.

Before coming to work at CSD I worked at the University of Houston-Downtown campus for eleven years in the W.I. Dykes Library. I started as work-study in the Administrative Office of the Library. Later I became Library Assistant III for the Circulation Department. While employed there, I worked and went to school in Business Administrative Management. On the path towards a Bachelor's degree at the University of Houston-Downtown, I earned two Associate degrees-- an AAS in Business Administration, and an AA in Management at Houston Community College, Main Campus.

I look forward to many years with the Center for Students with DisABILITIES! I am so elated to be here and glad to be a part of the CSD family!

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Have a safe and happy holiday!



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