

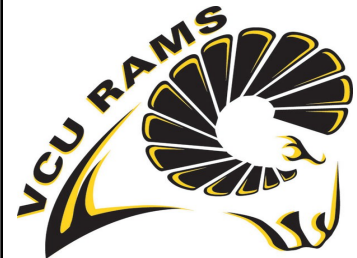
# VCU DSS

Virginia Commonwealth University

## Disability Support Services

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Welcome to the first issue of the Disability Support Services Newsletter, a newsletter for students with disabilities at VCU. Each quarter there will be one highlighted article as well as regular quarterly features. Features will include a wide range of topics including announcements/reminders, study and safety tips, technology updates, and a career corner. In an effort to make this publication responsive to your needs, we ask that you let us know what your interests and needs are by emailing us with questions or suggestions for upcoming issues. You can also help other college students with disabilities by sharing your perspective about being a college student with a disability, obstacles and barriers that you may have faced, and how you worked through the challenges. We hope that you find the Disability Support Services Newsletter helpful and informative and that you will be an active participant in making it a must read for students with disabilities at VCU. You can start by helping to **Name the DSS Newsletter**. Come up with a creative title for the DSS Newsletter and submit to Dr. Sandra Fritton at [frittonsc@vcu.edu](mailto:frittonsc@vcu.edu). The winning suggestion will be featured prominently in the next newsletter.

### ***Take Advantage of College Services to Improve Course Performance***

Located on the first floor of Hibbs Hall (900 Park Ave.), **University College** services include free academic support to all undergraduates with the goal of helping students succeed in their classes. Learning support resources through University College include the Campus Learning Center, the Writing Center, and the Campus Testing Center. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with tutoring and supplemental instruction available until 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and until 5 p.m. on Friday.

#### **Campus Learning Center**

##### Tutoring

The Campus Learning Center offers drop-in tutoring and individual appointment tutoring in many subject areas. Drop-in tutoring is not limited; however appointment tutoring is provided for up to one hour per week for a maximum of two classes and must be scheduled two days in advance. Appointment tutoring may be used in conjunction with drop-in tutoring for additional benefit. Tutors are upper-class students that earned grades of "A" or "B" in the subject(s) they tutor.

##### Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a free service for students enrolled in courses that have previously proven to be difficult. It connects students with SI leaders that have previously been successful in the course and that currently read the text, attend classes, take notes, and lead three SI sessions per week. Attendance at all sessions is not required so you can go to the sessions that fit your schedule. Check with University College to determine if there is SI for your courses.

##### Foreign Language Conversation Groups

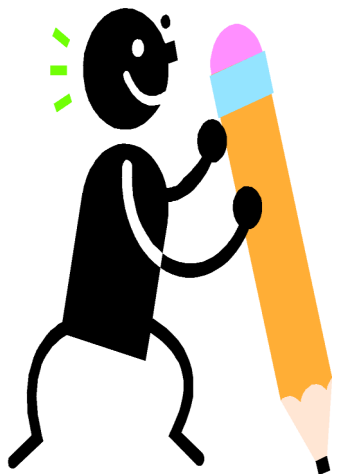
If you are enrolled in a foreign language course, you may want to take advantage of the foreign language conversation groups. Designed for students wanting to improve their conversation skills, one hour sessions are offered in French and Spanish. All skill levels are welcome. Check the website for schedules and times.

##### Study Groups

Make the most of your learning opportunities by forming a study group. University College assists with student initiated study groups. If you are interested in starting a study group call the Campus Learning Center (804) 828-8108. Guidelines for what to bring to the first meeting, an agenda for a first meeting, and things you may want to do during a meeting are available on the Campus Learning Center website. Assistance can also be provided in scheduling a place to meet.

*Continued on pg. 2*

## *Take advantage of College Services continued..*



### **The Writing Center**

Want to improve your writing and/or write a better paper? Writing Center services are available to all VCU students and include individual consultations and workshops that cover a variety of academic writing topics as well as critical thinking and reading topics. Located in Hibbs Hall Rotunda (Room 107), the Writing Center is typically open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for one-on-one thirty minute consultations. Check the website for any changes in hours of operation. The center provides not only help with improving writing skills, but readers that can provide feedback, answer questions, and provide a catalyst for thinking about your writing project. Students gain the most benefit from engaging with the writing center through the processes of brainstorming/planning, developing/organizing, and revising/editing/proofreading. This service is also offered to students registered for online courses. Call (804) 828-8108 to schedule an appointment or find out further information. You can visit the website for a list of workshop topics, what you should bring to an individual meeting and an overview of the rules of the center.

### **The Campus Testing Center**

The Testing Center is an alternate location available to schedule a test that must be completed outside regular classroom meeting times. Tests taken at the Testing Center are routinely proctored. For additional information and to find out how to schedule a test call (804) 827-8108.

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## **STUDY TIPS**

### **The Importance of Time Management**

Everyone has the same amount of time (24 hours a day), so why try to manage it?

Ever feel guilty for having some fun when you know that you have an upcoming deadline for class? Having a plan to manage your time that includes academic and personal needs can lead to less stress and takes little time to accomplish.

Time management does require a sense of balance that includes some self-discipline and control, but without becoming too rigid. The rewards can be a sense of structure that guides your days and leads to calmness and composure while pursuing your degree. It may also help you avoid all night sessions before assignments, projects, and exams.

### **Things to Know**

College demands more time outside of class for study and completion of projects/assignments. The general rule is that for each hour that you are in class you need to spend two hours studying/working on assignments or projects. That means that if your class meets for three hours per week, you should be spending an additional six hours studying/working on the class requirements. Setting aside this time is the first step in managing your time effectively. Using the time you set aside effectively is the second step. Using effective study strategies is helpful to promote learning and effective use of study time.

The purpose of time management is to plan and schedule time for activities that is sufficient for their completion. Having this written down lets you see at a glance when you will be most busy so that you can get things done ahead of time, be punctual in meeting deadlines, and remember meetings, appointments and special activities.

### **Some Advantages to Time Management**

It doesn't take much time to have a time management plan. Semester planners may take about an hour to complete, with weekly plans requiring only about 15 minutes. The DSS office has examples of these types of planners and can help you get started with one that suits your needs.

Time management leads to a sense of control in your academic career and personal life. Management skills tend to improve over time and often lead to less procrastination and/or scheduling too many activities. This, in turn leads to fewer all nighters and fewer stressful situations during college. It may also turn out that through improving time management, you create additional time for recreational activities without guilt.

## **CAREER CORNER**

Disability Support Services is building partnerships with public and private employers and establishing pre-employment opportunities for our students with disabilities. Leading this initiative is Ms. Martha Harris, Career Development Specialist. Ms. Harris will be working with students with disabilities to identify their interests, talents, knowledge, and abilities and match those attributes with employers' business needs. The goal of the program is to secure pre-employment opportunities that allow students with disabilities to gain work-related experience and compete for employment, while providing quality service to employers. For more information about the program, please contact Ms. Harris at 828-8362.

## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

### *Introducing the Intel Reader.....*

The Intel Reader has a high resolution camera with text-to-speech software. It converts printed materials to a digital format and plays it aloud to you. Most types of printed materials can be converted including books, magazines, and mail. The reader displays the text and highlights the words as they are spoken by the reader. Audio versions of printed material can also be generated for playback on most digital music players or computers. It does require some time to photograph the printed material and allow it to be converted into speech. This can take 30 seconds to several minutes depending on the text to be converted.

The Reader unit is compact and discreet with small earphones included. Stop by the DSS office to see how this technology works and if it may be of use to you in your academic career. There is a check out procedure required for equipment use.



## SAFETY TIPS

Although personal safety incidences at VCU are rare, the campus is not immune. Be proactive and take increased responsibility for your safety on campus by:

- Never walking alone. Walking alone can make you an easy target.
- Using well lighted well traveled routes.
- Knowing the location of campus of Emergency Response Telephone System (ERTS) throughout campus.
  - Students with hearing/speaking impairments should know that the ERTS system responds with police at the scene, even if there is no communication with the individual using the system.
- Call 828-WALK for the VCU Escort Service which operates from 5p.m. to 8 a.m. daily

See the **Campus Watch** for further information at [www.vcu.edu/police](http://www.vcu.edu/police)



NCAA  
TOURNAMENT  
SWEET 16

LET'S GO  
RAMS !!!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Barbara Roby Scholarship** deadline for application is April 15, 2011. This scholarship will make two awards of up to \$1,500 and is open to undergraduate students with disabilities. For specific criteria and the application requirements please see the DSS website or stop by the office for a brochure.

**Say Yes to College** student mentors needed. Say Yes to College is a conference for high school students interested in pursuing a college education. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Dale Pennell ([dppenn@wm.edu](mailto:dppenn@wm.edu)) or Joann Ervin ([jervin@odu.edu](mailto:jervin@odu.edu)) for additional information.

**VSA Arts Momentum** call for entries. This is a national juried exhibition for emerging artists with disabilities ages 16-25 with \$60,000 in cash awards for selected artists. Four original works must be submitted as digital files/photographs to [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org). The deadline is June 10, 2011. For additional information or assistance in completing the application process contact Sonja Cendak at (202) 628-2800, ext. 3887, TTY (202) 737\_0645, or by email at [scendak@vsarts.org](mailto:scendak@vsarts.org).

**DRS Public Forum** for comment on the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs will soon be held. You may view the current State Plan and locate forum dates and times by visiting [www.vadrs.org](http://www.vadrs.org).

**Early Registration** is available for all DSS students and begins March 28, 2011. You can register by using the e-services online system or you can visit the records and registration office in Harris Hall.

**???Questions ???** Do you have a question about disability related services or issues that you would like answered? Submit your question to Dr. Sandra Fritton, [frittonsc@vcu.edu](mailto:frittonsc@vcu.edu), and it may be answered in an upcoming newsletter.