

From Jazz to the Disability Van

by Karen Keen

If ever I am having a down day, and I am fortunate enough to run into the likes of Avondina Wills, I can be sure things will begin to look up. Avondina is one of those people whose warm smile and easy manner make you feel he genuinely likes you. He also happens to be the Supervisor of UCSC's Disability Van Service.

The Disability Van Service (DVS) is what makes it possible for students with mobility disabilities to attend UCSC. Just over 25 years ago, students using wheelchairs were re-directed to other campuses. However, in 1979, thanks to civil

rights laws, students were given equal access to the hilly campus via accessible transportation.

Recently, I chatted with Avondina in his office at the base of campus, a small room full of desks and computers that he shares with other Transportation and Parking staff. Our conversation was often punctuated by in-coming requests for rides and radio calls dispatching drivers. It is evident DVS is well utilized.

Avondina was born an "army brat" in Tokyo, Japan and as a youngster lived in various places throughout the U.S. He attended Adam State College and the University of New Mexico as a music major studying jazz with a particular emphasis on the cornet. While he admits his cornet playing is more sporadic these days, his artistic interest continues with his involvement in theater. In the fall, he played three different characters in "Spoon River Anthology" with the new downtown Santa Cruz theater group, Running Dog Studio.

Avondina first moved to Santa Cruz in 1990 from New York, where he'd been scoping out the acting field. After working at Staff of Life for a season, he applied for a job as a driver with DVS in 1999. Five years ago, he was promoted to Supervisor. During his tenure he has seen the van fleet increase from two to the current four. Sometimes a fifth van is borrowed from shuttle services to keep up with the demand. "When I first started, we



Avondina smiles for the camera

stayed until 5:30 pm, now we're here until at least 10:00 pm, and on-call on the weekends." Avondina oversees two full-time and one part-time staff, a student employee, and up to eight substitute shuttle drivers who have been trained to help out with DVS as needed.

The increase in students, faculty and staff using the vans has made the job challenging, particularly with scheduling dynamics. Avondina reports an average growth of 20% each year in the last three years. He hopes DVS will soon acquire a new software program to better manage the system. **He also says the UCSC community can help by thoroughly reading the DVS brochure before calling for rides.** Brochures can be found at different locations on campus, including the Disability Resource Center. There is also information on the web at: www2.ucsc.edu/taps/pages/disabilityvanservice.html.

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Director's Corner

By Peggy Church



Spring Greetings!

I can't believe I have been in the DRC for over six months...the time has gone by so fast. I am happy, and it is great to be a part of the ARCollaborative and the Student Affairs Division.

In the previous newsletter I promised to share with you a bit about the DRC program objectives for 05-06. It wasn't hard for the DRC staff to agree that first on our list of goals is to develop collaborative efforts with faculty and department staff regarding academic accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

We knew the process for accommodations, particularly alternate exam arrangements, was not as optimal as we would like for all involved parties—DRC clients, faculty members, department managers and assistants, DRC staff. . .everyone seemed to be frustrated. We decided we needed to initiate communication and gather information about the situation from the various perspectives.

Academic Department Staff

First, we met with the academic department staff as they are often the ones responsible for coordinating the alternate exam arrangements. It was a nearly unanimous opinion that competition for space throughout campus translates into a serious lack of rooms for alternate exams. In addition there were reports of DRC clients not checking their UCSC email regarding test arrangements and/or neglecting to cancel their accommodation requests if no longer needed. Availability and reliability of test proctors was also a problem for some departments.

Key Faculty Members

Next, we met with some key faculty members on campus, and they kindly provided us with information from the instructor point of view. There was overwhelming concern that DRC clients often hang on to their DRC Accommodation Authorization letters; they are frequently presented to instructors in a hurried moment before or after class, and often well into the quarter rather than during office hours within the first two weeks of instruction.

DRC Clients

And of course we have been listening to DRC clients who share with us their alternate exam experiences. It seems that many times the procedure runs smoothly. But often situations develop where students do not receive appropriate accommodations for a variety of reasons. For example, a student who needs a separate, non-distracting environment might find himself in a department office, separate from classmates, but surrounded by fac-

ulty and staff coming and going to check their mail, making photocopies, etc. Or, in a classroom where other students keep opening the door looking for a section meeting that has been relocated. Other times the test proctor fails to show, or a fellow DRC client is in the room eating loudly during the exam.

Next Steps

How can the DRC and the University address some of these difficulties? Space seems to be one of the primary challenges. With our faculty, staff and student colleagues we intend to seek resolutions to these concerns, possibly lobbying for a room on campus that is devoted to alternate exams. Making changes for the better will depend on all of us working together. We invite any of you to contact us if you have further feedback on the test accommodation process and/or are interested in being involved in improvement efforts. Feel free to send me an e-mail at pechurch@ucsc.edu or call 459-2089 to speak with any of our staff.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is to ensure legally mandated equal educational access and to support the retention and graduation of UCSC students with disabilities.

To accomplish our mission we collaborate with students, staff, faculty and community resources to provide effective academic support services; we serve as an educational resource to promote a diverse non-discriminatory campus environment; and we encourage student development and independence.



College Life with a Learning Disability

By Gabrielle Blachman

I've been called brilliant, stupid, genius, disabled, gifted, talented, slow and creative. I was never called normal. When I was six and had to repeat kindergarten, I was diagnosed with learning difficulties. I thought by doing the reading therapy, and my second year of kindergarten, I would rid myself of these learning challenges. I stopped therapy before second grade and struggled all the way through high school with zero confidence in my scholastic abilities. My teachers constantly told me I was not fulfilling my potential. I was shuffled from the gifted classes to the "slow-kids" classes and back again.

I re-discovered my learning disabilities (or, LD for short) in a diagnosis class at community college five years ago. Once I found I had LD, I researched like crazy. Before I knew I had LD, I was constantly angry with myself for not "fulfilling my potential." I thought I was just being lazy, or a slacker as my friends said. Really, I was struggling with so much more than they could have dreamed. I am decidedly not an audio learner, which means I don't understand lectures, they sound to me like the Charlie Brown teachers, "Wawaw wa. . ." When I concentrate on a lecture I only frustrate myself. When I take notes I end up focusing on my spelling and my horrid handwriting; important concepts

whiz by my head as I wrestle with jotting down the ideas in any comprehensive form. But when I have a note taker and a knitting project to occupy my hands, I find I relax and allow myself to grasp more than I would if I "concentrated."

After the class, I have to go over the note taker's notes if I want to understand the lecture. This extra work is par for the course of LD. If I want to do well, then I have to put in twice as much effort into things I do not understand. In reaction, I've developed a brilliant memory; once a concept is in my head it goes nowhere. To burn concepts to memory I make flash cards, re-re-re-read passages, work extra problems and quiz myself.

Speaking of quizzes, I find tests terrifying. I tend to choke under time constraints. Regurgitating memorized equations and their appropriate uses paralyzes me. To counter this I get extra time and a separate room for my exams. Despite efforts by the university to offer support I usually find myself disadvantaged by the process. For an example, I've been bumped from a "distraction-free" room in the middle of an exam. It's happened multiple times, in the middle of tests.

I can't tell you what a definitive distraction it is walking from building to building with a distraught proctor desperate to find a quiet spot for me to use my last twenty minutes so I can stare painfully at my half-finished proof now that my train of thought has completely left me. So what to do? I recommend students contact their professor immediately afterward. Tell the Prof what happened and how it affected your performance. Make sure you follow up by reporting the whole

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New Student Club!

By Nicole Baxter

Slugs with Learning Challenges, SLC, is the only student organization on campus that is registered to help bring awareness and tolerance about learning disabilities.

The purpose of the organization is to educate our peers, professors and TAs about what it is like to have a learning disability, to provide support for students who have learning disabilities, and to generate an overall awareness to eliminate stereotypes.

S.L.C. will serve those with learning disabilities as well as anyone who interacts with students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges. Please join us in achieving our goals to become UCSC's most unique group on campus!

**For questions, please contact
SLC President Nichol Baxter:
nbaxter@ucsc.edu**

News Flash!

The SLUG LC student organization just received funds to sponsor a special, educational event. Core council and Oakes Senate both granted funds for the group to host an expert to speak on campus about learning disabilities. Contact Nichol or any other officer to be involved. Watch for more information in our electronic advising note!

College Life continued from page 3...

experience to your DRC advisor.

At this point in my life, after struggling through five other colleges, three of them community colleges, I'm pretty satisfied. I have had to work harder than most of my classmates to get to this exact same point. I excel in the work place, since I've had to develop a work ethic my colleagues will never have. I know the intricate steps of the bureaucracy shuffle from my college education on the fringe of what is considered a "normal" college experience. I know I am more determined. I know intimately my strengths and weaknesses and how to use both to my advantage.

Recently, I discussed what LD means with a child I tutor. He has LD and was frustrated because the other kids could type faster than he could, write faster, do lots of things faster. Just wait, I said, your hard work will pay off. Even though these other kids can do the everyday things better or faster, you think differently, which means with hard work you can type as fast as they can, but no matter how hard they try, they will never be able to think as creatively as you. Look at Einstein, he had LD and definitely used his creative problem solving skills to his advantage.



Physical Accessibility at UCSC

By Susan Willats



The Disability Resource Center (DRC) has been a presence on this campus since the mid-1970s, when it was established to meet the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Essentially, Section 504 prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability by any entities receiving federal funding.

This caused the creation of disability support service programs in colleges and universities across the country. It also prompted the first wave of physical accessibility improvements at UCSC, including the installation of accessible parking spaces, handrails, ramps, water fountains, and the renovation of some bathroom stalls. (Some of these original bathroom remodels can still be found on campus, even though they fall far short of today's accessibility requirements.)

When the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) took effect in 1992, it had little impact on the DRC, which continued on with its mission of providing academic support services to en-

rolled students with disabilities. But there were three significant changes in store for UCSC:

- The non-discrimination requirement was broadened to include anyone who wants to access university programs, not just enrolled students. Examples include community members who want to attend a performance or public seminar, staff or faculty members who wish to participate in large meetings, or parents who need accommodation to attend a graduation ceremony.
- There were new requirements for architectural access. All new construction must meet the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAGs). When alterations or major renovations are done, the areas of alteration must meet ADAAGs, and there must be an accessible path of travel to that area.
- Any new shuttles purchased for use in our campus shuttle system must be accessible to wheelchair users. While the Disability Van Service continues to provide "door-to-door" service, the ADA required that all fixed-route systems (including the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District) purchase only accessible vehicles.

As a public institution, the ADA required UCSC to make each of its programs, functions, and activities accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This means that while every classroom on campus does not have to be physically accessible,

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Ask the DRC

by Valerie Steward
and Claudia Gonzalez

I am really busy and can't seem to make it to your office during business hours. Can I request services online?

Any student that is affiliated with the DRC and has filled out an Information Sheet for the current academic year can request services through our web site by completing the Service Request Form online. Just go to www2.ucsc.edu/drc

Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on **Update your Information Form or Request Services**. Then, click on **Information Form** only if you have changes to make to your personal information such as phone number or address. Otherwise, click on **Service Request Form (SRF)**.

Enter your student ID# and birth date, then click on **Login**. Complete the form the same as you would the paper form at the DRC. Remember to click on **Submit** at the bottom of the page.

After you have submitted the online SRF, a completed Follow-Up to Accommodation Request letter is sent to you via email informing you that your packet is ready for pick-up at the DRC. If you do not receive the follow-up e-mail within 2-3 days, contact the DRC right away, as your request may not have gone through.

What happens after I request a notetaker?

After a notetaker has been assigned to you, it is your responsibility to contact the notetaker

to make arrangements for the exchange of notes. The notetaker's contact information (both phone number and email address) is either emailed to you if you submit an online SRF or it will be inside your packet that you pick up from the DRC. A few things to keep in mind when contacting your notetaker are:

1. Tell your notetaker how often you would like copies of notes.
2. How are you going to make the exchange? Do you want the notes after class or would you rather pick them up at the DRC?

It is important to contact your notetaker as soon as you receive their information. If you contact a notetaker after the third week of the quarter, the notetaker is not responsible to provide copies from the beginning of the quarter. Notetakers are responsible for providing notes from the time you contact them. Be proactive about giving your notetaker feedback about the quality of their notes and let them know if there is room for improvement.

After I have requested test accommodations, I don't have to worry about doing anything else, right?

Not exactly. There are more steps that need to be done before your accommodations can be made. Inside your packet that you pick up from the DRC there will be an Accommodation Authorization Form that has a pink half sheet attached to it. This is a form that you must give to your professor immediately.

It is recommended that you ask your instructor a few key questions, such as, "Who will be the contact person for the specific test arrangements?" "Where and when will

each test be given?" and most importantly, "How will you confirm arrangements before the test takes place?" It is advised that you write this information down on the yellow form inside your packet titled Exam Accommodations.

This form is very helpful in organizing information regarding your exam accommodations. If you have extenuating circumstances or questions regarding your accommodations do not hesitate to contact your DRC Service Coordinator right away.

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Avondina readily admits he likes his job because it allows him to help people. He was particularly moved by a student he worked with for two years. The student had been hit by a car in downtown Santa Cruz, suffering severe injuries. Initially, there appeared to be little hope of continuing her education, but she was determined to try, relying on DVS daily in order to access her classes. With the use of the van she was able to graduate on time. "That's when I truly understood that what I'm doing is really important," Avondina says. I couldn't agree more.



Avondina and his van

*Physical Accessibility continued
from page 4...*

every class or program needs to be made accessible when a request for such access is made

In those cases where this is not possible, then the room itself must be made accessible. Public institutions were required by the ADA to conduct a self-evaluation of their facilities to determine if these physical barriers existed, and to create a “transition plan” — a list of all such barriers and how they planned to remove them.

UCSC conducted an accessibility study in 1991 by using teams of staff and students to examine every building on campus. The results of this study became the basis for UCSC’s Transition Plan (<http://ada.ucsc.edu/ADATransitionPlan.html>), which included over 150 separate projects for improving or installing pathways, doors, thresholds, ramps, water fountains, bathroom facilities, stairways, and signage. The last Transition Plan improvement projects were completed in 2002.

The state of physical accessibility at UCSC today is much improved since the passage of the ADA. Not only have the Transition Plan projects been completed, but all newly-built and remodeled buildings must meet very stringent access requirements. However, those requirements were designed to meet the needs of most people with disabilities, and won’t necessarily work for everyone. But UCSC still needs to make its programs accessible, regardless of disability, and this is where the ADA Compliance Officer

for Facilities, Transportation, and Computing Access comes in. If you are having difficulty accessing university programs due to a physical barrier (e.g., high door thresholds or curbs, heavy doors, inadequate space in bathroom stalls, etc.) please call Susan Willats (459-3759) or email her at willats@ucsc.edu. She will work with you to find out the location and nature of the barrier, and determine options for removing the barrier and/or improving the situation.

History of the DRC: We’ve Come a Long Way Baby

by Karen Keen

The Disability Resource Center at UC Santa Cruz exists as the result of historic federal regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, signed in the 1970’s. Prior to Section 504 there was little access to higher education for those with disabilities. John Hessler, former Director of the then named “Physically Disabled Students Program” at UC Berkeley and former Assistant Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation wrote:

As late as the 1960’s, if you went on to higher education and were disabled, the chances are your disability was not severe. Indeed, if you couldn’t handle your own physical needs, you were unwelcome on most campuses in this country. Changes began in the late 1960’s. In 1969, Special Services in the Office of Education was created by an Act of Congress. Ten

percent of the moneys available in this program were to be used to provide services to disabled students. By 1970, several programs had been funded and were providing services. They included Wright State University in Ohio, East Oklahoma State in Ada, Long Island University in Brooklyn, University of Arizona in Tucson, University of California at Riverside, Southwest Minnesota State and University of California at Berkeley.

Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973 after it was pocket vetoed twice by President Nixon. The law was to focus primarily on vocational rehabilitation programs. However, its wording made room for equal access to education. It read:

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United Postal Service.

There was only one catch. The Health, Education and Welfare department (HEW) had to promulgate regulations in order for 504 to be implemented. Unfortunately, many in positions of power were resistant to the new law and efforts were made to stall it. As a result, the disability community began to advocate for themselves.

In 1976, the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities
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(ACCD) announced their intention to demonstrate at various locations throughout the United States. In San Francisco, disabled activists engaged in a month long sit-in at the HEW offices—the longest sit-in of a federal building to date. In the end, their efforts paid off and Secretary of HEW, Joseph Califano, signed the important regulations for Section 504.

At the same time the fight for meaningful regulations was brewing, UC San Diego had commissioned Mark Hyman Rapaport in December 1975 to evaluate the UC campuses for physical accessibility. In his report, Rapaport commented: *UCSC does not have a program for physically limited students. They discourage physically limited students from attending because of the geography of the campus. The campus is too segmented and primitive for most physically limited students, and thus they intentionally redirect students that are physically limited.*

It was shortly after this evaluation by Rapaport and the 1976 victory for disabled activists that the UC system began to seriously examine its campuses with the intention of compliance with Section 504. Just a few years prior, UC Los Angeles, UC Berkeley and UC Davis had already begun to develop accessibility on their campuses of their own accord; now all the UC's were to initiate programs. In mid-1977, the Disability Resource Center was born at UC Santa Cruz under its original

name "Office of Handicapped Student Services." The Campus Plan for that year stated:

The University of California is committed to a policy of not discriminating against any qualified handicapped persons, on the basis of their handicap. This policy states that such persons cannot be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any university program or activity.

The new disability office at UC Santa Cruz immediately began implementing academic accommodations, and by 1979, a disability van program was established to allow students with mobility impairments equal access to their classes, dorms and other campus buildings. Without the van it was impossible for many to navigate the hills of the campus.

A dramatic shift in thinking had occurred in four years. No longer would students with mobility challenges be discouraged from attending UCSC and redirected to other schools. Rather, efforts were made to think inclusively and welcome students with physical challenges.

In time, the Office of Handicapped Student Services shed its name and became "Disabled Student Services," before changing its name again in the 1990's to its current title, "Disability Resource Center." Over the years, service to disabled students has grown tremendously. Just 18 months after the office was first established, a campus census found only 53 who identified as having a disability. Currently, the DRC serves approximately 500 students a year.

During the fiscal year of 1978-1979, the operating budget was a mere \$59,389. Staff consisted of

one coordinator, an assistant and a typist clerk. Today the DRC has an annual budget of nearly \$500,000 with 6 professional staff as well as several student office assistants and hundreds of student employees who provide services such as note taking, reading books on tape, and scribing for exams.

It's astonishing what one law and the voice of the disability community accomplished to transform colleges and universities across the nation. The quality of life for thousands of our talented and intelligent fellow Americans was enhanced exponentially as a result of our society choosing to work against discrimination and barriers to equal access.

The Disability Resource Center considers it a privilege to be a part of implementing Section 504, as well as the more recent Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It is our goal to continually find ways to improve universal access at UC Santa Cruz, and through that, fulfill the dreams of students who otherwise would never have had the chance to participate in a crucial rite of passage so many of us take for granted.

Sources:

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2. *Campus Plan Upon the University of California Response to Assembly Concurrent Resolution 201*. January 1979. McHenry Library, Special Collections.
3. Hessler, John. *College Education for the Severely Disabled*. McHenry Library, Special Collections.
4. *Overview of 504*. www.504idea.org/504overview.html
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6. *Section 504 History—Overview*. www.dredf.org

Who Really Uses Accessible Technology?

by Angela Holleman

Accessible technology maximizes individual potential because it allows users to increase their independence, participation, and productivity by working with computer programs and applications and adjusting them to meet their cognitive, speech, hearing, dexterity, and visual needs.

There are two types of accessible technology: operating systems with built-in accessibility features and commercially available software. Operating systems that have features built in are labeled as accessibility features. These features can typically be turned on or off by a user.

Examples of these features include: “reversing the color scheme” (to assist people with low vision), “showing a visual prompt when an error tone is sounded” (to assist persons who are deaf or hard of hearing), “or providing ‘sticky keys’ that allow a user to press key combinations (such as control-C) sequentially rather than simultaneously” (to assist persons with dexterity disabilities).

An example of commercially available accessible technology is voice recognition software. With voice recognition software, the computer listens to words spoken into a microphone. The words are translated to digital signals, which the computer interprets as keystrokes or mouse

commands. As words are dictated, they appear on the screen. Voice commands can open or close applications, save and print documents, move the cursor, and click a mouse. Voice recognition can benefit a variety of individuals. Typically, it serves as a means of entering computer data for persons with orthopedic impairments who are unable to type.

In a study commissioned by the Microsoft Corporation in 2004, a team at Forrester Research examined the users of built-in accessibility features and commercially available assistive technology products. Their findings revealed some interesting news: “52 million [of the general population] use built-in accessibility options/utilities” and “22 million use assistive technology products” (Forrester Research, p. 22).

The Forrester study states, “It is commonly assumed that individuals choose to use accessible technology because they have a difficulty or impairment.” On the contrary, research points to the fact that “32% [who use built-in accessibility options] have no difficulty or impairment.” When individuals were asked why they use accessible technology options or products, they said it was because “it makes the computer easier, more convenient, and more comfortable to use” (Forrester Research, p. 27).

Universal Design is human-centered with everyone in mind, not just those with disabilities. If computer technology is created with universal design in mind, it will remove barriers for those with or without disabilities. Rather than requiring people with disabilities to adapt or purchase additional accessible programs, all technology applications could be made accessible.

Accessible technology that is universally designed does not subscribe to a particular design style, but instead is an orientation to any design process that starts with a responsibility to the experience of the user. Universal Design can help bridge the gap between com-

puter users who have temporary medical conditions, people with permanent disabilities and those without disabilities.

Works Cited:

A Study Commissioned by Microsoft Corporation and Conducted by Forrester Research, Inc. *Accessible Technology in Computing—Examining Awareness, Use, and Future Potential*. Cambridge, MA: Forrester Research, 2004.

Accessibility. (2006). Apple Computer, Inc. Retrieved March 7, 2005, from <http://www.apple.com/accessibility/>

Don't Forget!!!

Last Day to Add/Drop or apply for part-time is April 24th

Last Day to Withdraw from a class is April 25th

Need Tutoring? Contact the Learning Support Services at: 459-4333. LSS has a new web-site:

www2.ucsc.edu/lss/

The Math Department also offers drop-in tutoring. Check them out at:

www.math.ucsc.edu

Need a writing and research mentor? Are you a transfer or re-entry student? Contact STARS at:

<http://stars.ucsc.edu/>

