



The Office of Accessibility Newsletter

Welcome Back from the OA Director!

Hello Everyone and Welcome to the Spring 2015 semester!

I hope all of you had a restful and enjoyable Holiday Season.

It's hard to believe the Spring 2015 semester is already in full swing. Please remember the Office of Accessibility is here for you. If you have questions about your accommodations or you have concerns about how a specific accommodation can be implemented in a class, please stop in or give us a call. It is the goal of the staff in the Office of Accessibility to provide a friendly, welcoming environment for our students. We are constantly looking at ways to enhance your experience at The University of Akron. If you have an idea of how we can enhance your educational experience, please let us know.

On behalf of the disability specialists, the staff and I, we wish you success in your Spring 2015 classes.

Remember, we are here for you.

Kindest regards,

Kathleen (Kelly) Kulick, M.Ed., CRC
Director
Office of Accessibility
The University of Akron

Inside This Issue:

Testing Accommodations	2
Important Dates	2
Flannery Endowed Scholarships	3
UA to Host College Goal Sunday	3
Important Reminders	4
Tax Tips for the Legally Disabled	5



Winter Weather at UA

The winter weather has arrived on campus! In addition to taking extra precautions while driving and walking around campus, students should also be aware of possible class cancellations due to inclement weather. The decision to close will be made as early as possible.

News of closing will be disseminated several ways:

- ◆ **Radio and TV:** Closing information will be provided to major radio and television stations in Akron, Canton and Cleveland.
- ◆ **On the Web:** Closing information will be posted on the University's home page.
- ◆ **E-mail:** A message will be sent to students' and employees' University mailboxes.
- ◆ **Text messaging:** Alerts will be sent via the University's Z-Alert text messaging service. Learn more and subscribe at <http://www.uakron.edu/safety/z-alert.dot>. We also will use Z-Alert on Twitter.
- ◆ **By phone:** The University's emergency information phone line is updated around the clock as conditions warrant. The number is 330-972-SNOW (7669) or 330-972-6238 (TDD/Voice).

If you are having accessibility and/or mobility issues due to snow or ice on campus, please feel free to call the Office of Accessibility for assistance! We will help to resolve these issues by working with other University departments on campus.

Testing Accommodations Reminders

Those students receiving and planning to use their testing accommodations should be aware of important details when scheduling their tests in the Office of Accessibility or Counseling Center.

- ◆ If you plan to utilize your testing accommodations (reader, writer, extended time, distraction reduced space) at either location, these **test requests must be scheduled through STARS**. Tests can be scheduled by the student through the STARS website, <https://andes.accessiblelearning.com/Akron/>, under the Alternative Testing tab.
- ◆ If you wish to take a test with the class and not in the Office of Accessibility or the Counseling Center, you **do not** need to submit a test request through STARS.
- ◆ It is important to schedule your test at least **4 business days** prior to the day you would like to take the test. Given the bulk of tests processed by our office on a daily basis, late requests can and will cause detriment to processing requests and retrieving the tests from your instructors. Problems can range from not having a room or proctor available at the requested time, to not having the test delivered at the intended testing time. In the event of late test requests, you the student, are responsible for cooperating with your instructor to arrange for delivery of the test.
- ◆ Remember to schedule early during midterms and finals week due to high volume of testing requests!
- ◆ If you want to change the date or time for a test you have already submitted, you can do so by modifying the test request on STARS. Be sure to do this as soon as possible before your scheduled test.
- ◆ If you need to cancel a scheduled test, you can do so through STARS as well.
- ◆ Please arrive on time for all scheduled tests. If you arrive late for a scheduled test at either location, you may not receive your full extended time accommodation and your late attendance will be noted by both offices. You will be asked to complete a form at the Counseling Center and provide your signature stating you forego your full time extension due to your late arrival.
- ◆ Remember to bring your Student ID when arriving for tests at **all testing locations**.

Tutorials are also available on the Office of Accessibility's website: <http://www.uakron.edu/access/STARS/>. Please contact the Office of Accessibility for further questions and concerns regarding your testing accommodations, 330-972-7928 or Simmons Hall Room 105.

Important Dates

January 12, 2015
Spring 2015
classes begin

January 19, 2015
Martin Luther King
Jr. Day—University
Closed

February 17, 2015
President's Day—
classes cancelled

March 23-29, 2015
Spring Break

March 30, 2015
Classes resume

May 3, 2015
Final Instructional
Day

May 4-10, 2015
Final Examination
Period

Flannery Endowed Scholarships

Dear Students,

Thank you to everyone who applied for the Flannery Endowed Scholarships! After careful consideration of the applicants two recipients have been chosen and notified.

We very much appreciate your interest in the Flannery Endowed Scholarships. Please consider applying for the scholarship in future semesters.

Best Wishes,

Kathleen (Kelly) Kulick
Director, Office of Accessibility



UA to host 2015 College Goal Sunday

The University of Akron is once again serving as a host of College Goal Sunday on Feb. 8, from 2 to 4 p.m. in Simmons Hall, 277 E Buchtel Ave., Akron. The college financial aid event is presented annually at sites around the state by the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) and is endorsed by the Ohio Board of Regents.

Two other UA campuses also will host College Goal Sunday. They are:

- ◆ The University of Akron Medina County University Center, 6300 Technology Lane, Medina.
- ◆ Wayne College Holmes County Higher Education Center, located at 88-B East Jackson St., Millersburg.

In addition, the Akron Public Schools' East Community Learning Center, at 80 Brittain Road, will be a second Summit County site for College Goal Sunday.

College Goal Sunday is designed to provide assistance to students and parents in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA is the application that is required to be completed to receive federal financial aid, including the Federal Pell Grant and student loans as well as need-based state grants. The FAFSA can be a key to overcoming financial barriers so a college education is possible. Studies show that students are 50 percent more likely to attend college when they complete the FAFSA.

The free event is open to current college students at any institution, as well as prospective students planning to attend a college in Ohio or out-of-state, and their parents. While walk-ins are welcome, registration is encouraged. To register for College Goal Sunday, visit www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org, or call 1-800-233-6734.

The Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) is a nonprofit, professional organization for individuals actively engaged in the administration of financial aid within the state of Ohio for higher education. As an educational organization, OASFAA strives to offer resources to students, families and high school advisors to promote higher education and increase awareness of financial aid opportunities. Other College Goal Sunday sponsors are the Ohio College Access Network, USA Funds and Great Lakes.



Parents and Family Weekend

Zips! Your parents and family can join you for a weekend of activities during the *First Annual Parents and Family Winter Weekend*, **Saturday and Sunday, February 21-22, 2015.**

Events include:

- ◆ **Discounted Admission** to the Zips Men's and Women's Doubleheader Basketball game against Miami of Ohio
- ◆ **Free Movie** in the Student Union
- ◆ **Buffet Breakfast** Sunday morning
- ◆ **Special Presentations** by UA departments
- ◆ And so much more!

Deadline to register is **Friday, February 13, 2015.**

Registration Information available soon.

For a Tentative schedule of events or to learn more info., please visit www.uakron.edu/pfa



Important Reminders

STARS Updates:

- ◆ You are now able to log into STARS using your University of Akron username and password. You will be directed to the MyAkron logon page from STARS. Once you log in, you should see your dashboard. After you are finished in STARS, it is imperative you logout and close your browser. If you have any problems accessing STARS, please contact our office at access@uakron.edu or (330)972-7928.

Requesting accommodations:

- ◆ Once you have finalized your class schedule for the spring, make sure to also request your accommodations on STARS.
 1. Log into STARS
 2. Scroll down to "Select Accommodations for Your Class"
 3. Select classes you are requesting accommodations and click "Step 2-Continue to Customize your Accommodations"
 4. Select the accommodations you would like to request for each class and the checkbox to email the accommodation letter to your instructor
 5. Select "Submit your Accommodation Request"
- ◆ Transcribers/CART or interpreter accommodation requests should be submitted at least **six weeks prior** to the beginning of the semester.
- ◆ If you are requesting notetakers, please remember to only request the notetaking accommodation for classes in which you will need notetakers. This does not include classes like labs, recitations, gym classes, or online classes. If you have any questions about which classes to request notetakers, please contact your Disability Specialist.

Tax Tips for the Legally Disabled

Several tax breaks are available for people living with disabilities. These tax breaks aren't always obvious, though. You have to know where to look for them. The federal tax code includes a number of provisions that can ease the tax burden on people living with a disability. Some disability payments and benefits are free of income tax, while deductions and credits can reduce the taxes you do owe. These tax breaks aren't always obvious, though. You have to know where to look for them.

Payments and Benefits

Some disability payments are subject to income tax, while others are not. Here are some common situations:

- ◆ Employer-paid disability benefits: If you receive disability income from an employer while you are unable to work, that money is usually taxable just like regular wages.
- ◆ Disability insurance payments: If you receive benefits from a disability insurance policy, your tax liability depends on who paid the premiums for the policy. If your employer paid the premiums, then the benefits are taxable. If you paid the premiums using after-tax money, your benefits are not taxable.
- ◆ Social Security disability: Social Security disability benefits may or may not be taxable depending on how much other income you (and your spouse, if you're married) may have. In general, though, if Social Security disability is your only source of income, your benefits aren't taxable. Internal Revenue Service Publication 915 provides further details on determining whether your benefits are taxable.

Disability Tax Credit

If you are permanently and totally disabled and have taxable disability income, you may qualify for the federal Tax Credit for the Elderly and Disabled. This credit is available only if a doctor has certified that your disability prevents you from working and that your condition is expected to last more than a year or result in your death. The size of your credit depends on how much taxable disability income you had as well as how much you received in nontaxable disability benefits. See IRS Publication 524 for more details.

Home Modifications

If you make certain home improvements to accommodate a disability, you may be able to claim those costs as a medical expense deduction. This includes such things as adding a wheelchair ramp, chair lift or grab bars; modifying hardware, electrical fixtures or railings; or widening doorways or aisles. The improvements must be made solely to accommodate a disability and not for aesthetic reasons. If the improvements increase the value of your home, you can deduct only the portion of the cost that exceeds the increase in value. IRS Publication 502 provides more details and examples.

Care Expenses

If you are married, and you and your spouse paid someone to take care of you because your disability made you unable to care for yourself, then you may be eligible for the Child and Dependent Care Credit. The exact amount of the credit depends on how much you spent on care and how much earned income you and your spouse had. In 2014, for example, the maximum credit ranges from \$600 to \$1,050, depending on income, or \$1,200 to \$2,100 if you also paid for care for one or more children or other dependents. See IRS Publication 503 for more details.

Information from: <https://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tools/tax-tips/General-Tax-Tips/Tax-Tips-for-the-Legally-Disabled/INF22825.html>

Suggestion Box

We want your feedback!

Email ooaga1@uakron.edu with comments about the current newsletter or ideas you would like to see in future newsletters.

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The University of Akron Fax: 330-972-5422
Akron, Ohio 44325-6213 E-mail: access@uakron.edu

Fall & Spring Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.



Simmons Hall at The University of Akron