



The Office of Accessibility Newsletter

Instructor Interview

The Office of Accessibility and our students greatly appreciate the cooperation of instructors and their assistance in making sure accommodation requests are fulfilled adequately and in a timely manner. To continue our successful collaborations with the campus community, we interviewed an instructor, **Michelle Byrne**, a Professor in Summit College, regarding the Office of Accessibility and working with our students.

Q: How can students best approach their instructors about their accommodations?

Students need to provide letters to their instructors on the first day of class or as soon as possible. I find it helpful if students talk with me in addition to giving me their letter. I like to know what students have done in classes before, what has worked and what hasn't. Often, the accommodations letter is a safety-net just in case something comes up, and students may not need everything on the list. Having a 15-minute

chat about how I can best meet the accommodations can make a world of difference throughout the semester.

Q: How should students communicate with their instructors throughout the semester regarding their accommodations?

Instructors will assume that student is taking responsibility for the accommodations they need. For example, if a student needs a test-reader, that student should talk to the instructor a few days prior to the test to make sure the instructor can get the test to the reader in advance. During the semester, if trouble arises, it's important to let the instructor know right away, through a phone call or email. Explain what you are doing to keep up and when you will be back in class. It is very important to bring documentation; remember though, instructors each have their own policies regarding absences, so check the syllabus for each class.

(interview continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue:

Testing Reminders	2
Instructor Interview	3
Reminders	4
OA Student Assistants	4
Important Dates	4
Final Exam Tips	5
Faculty Spotlight	5

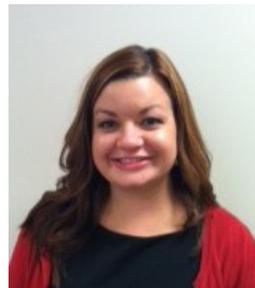
Meet the OA's Newest Staff Members



Kathleen (Kelly) Kulick, M.Ed., CRC, Director

Kelly has 17 years of experience working with students with disabilities in higher education. Fifteen years were spent at the Stark Campus of Kent State University where Kelly served as their Disability Coordinator. Since October 2009, Kelly has served

as the Director of the T.H.E.M.E. (transitioning to higher education from mentoring to employment) Project at Stark State College. Kelly earned both her Undergraduate and Master's degrees from Kent State University and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Kelly has worked extensively with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation in Akron as well as other community agencies that work with individuals with disabilities. Kelly looks forward to being part of The University of Akron family.



Meredith Sodik, M.A.Ed., Disability Specialist

Meredith is the OA's newest Disability Specialist and Service Coordinator. She will help students achieve

access and success by assisting with accommodations, stress management, and study skills. She will also help connect students with campus and community resources. Meredith comes to us from Stark State College's Disability Support Services office and has a Master's degree in School Counseling from Malone University.

IMPORTANT: Testing Reminders

The Office of Accessibility would like to remind students about their responsibilities regarding testing accommodations to ensure that requests are met adequately and in a timely manner. Several basic testing accommodations are provided to eligible students. These accommodations include extended time, distraction reduced space, use of technology on tests, and a reader and/or writer. Students' testing location is determined between the student and the Office of Accessibility based on their accommodations. These include: testing with the class, in a location decided upon with the instructor, at the Counseling Center-Testing Services, at the Computer Based Assessment and Evaluation Center, or in the Office of Accessibility. Testing in each location requires specific procedures that are listed below.

Testing in the Office of Accessibility:

- ◆ Testing in the OA is determined by the Disability Specialist. The student must communicate to their instructor the desire to utilize their testing accommodations.
- ◆ Tests are scheduled by the student through the STARS website, <https://gunadiframework.com/Akron/>, under the Alternative Testing tab, **at least 4 business days before** the date being requested.
- ◆ The Office of Accessibility will contact the instructor to secure the test.

Testing in the Counseling Center-Testing Services:

- ◆ Students who are testing in the Counseling Center must contact their instructors and explain that they would like to test in the Counseling Center-Testing Services. Students should specify the time they would like to take the test, also taking into consideration extended time and their class schedule.
- ◆ The instructor will then fill out the Testing Proctor Sheet completely and send it to the Counseling Center-Testing Services with the test. The Testing Proctor Sheet can be printed from <http://www.uakron.edu/counseling/testing/>.
- ◆ The instructor should be made aware of the student's accommodations for testing by the student. If it is not indicated on the Testing Proctor Sheet, the student will not receive the accommodations for the test. Ex. Amount of time allowed is 1 hour + 50% time extension=1.5 hours
- ◆ The student then will make an appointment with the Counseling Center-Testing Services (330-972-7084) for the time of the test. Tests are given on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ◆ On the day of the test, students will go to Simmons Hall 304, Counseling Center-Testing Services. They will need to show a photo ID before taking the test.

Testing in the Computer Based Assessment and Evaluation Center:

- ◆ Students who are taking exams at Computer Based Assessment and Evaluation (CBA&E) as determined by their instructor, must confirm with the instructor at the beginning of the semester that they will be using their exam accommodations.
- ◆ Students will need to provide CBA&E with a copy of their accommodation letter.
- ◆ Students who need distraction reduced space for CBA&E must call 330-972-6511 to reserve the distraction reduced space testing room in Shrank Hall North Room 152.
- ◆ Students who need a reader or writer for CBA&E must schedule their test through STARS.

Important Reminders:

- ◆ OA tests must be scheduled through STARS **at least 4 business days before** the date being requested. A business day only includes days and hours our office is open (Monday 8:00 AM- 7:00 PM, Tuesday-Friday 8:00 AM-5:00 PM). Scheduling a test after closing during the week or scheduling on the weekends does not count towards meeting the deadline. In order to effectively process your test request through the office, you must submit your request before the deadline. Any early test requests are always welcomed and we will work to provide you with the smoothest and most comfortable testing environment.
- ◆ During high volume times, such as midterm and finals week, it is strongly recommended to make a test request weeks in advance due to limited availability. Tests will be scheduled based on the date the test requests are made.

Best of luck on your tests throughout the semester! Please contact the Office of Accessibility, 330-972-7928 or access@uakron.edu, for any questions or concerns regarding testing accommodations.

Instructor Interview (continued from page 1):

Q: In your opinion, how can an instructor best work with the Office of Accessibility to make sure accommodations are adequately provided to students?

I have had great success talking to the people in the office about the best way to provide an accommodation or getting clarification on what exactly is expected of me with regards to a student. The OA has done some outreach with ITL and other events, which I would encourage faculty to attend. I would stress to faculty that the students who need accommodations must satisfy the course requirements like all students in the class, so being familiar with what we are being asked to do—and not do—is very important.

Q: What instructional strategies do you use in the classroom to address multiple learning styles?

Any time we can give students more than one way to connect with and understand our material, the more successful they will be, regardless of whether or not they need specific accommodations. I've learned to go for small additions: a graphic that illustrates a concept I usually write on the board or an exercise that has students standing up and moving around, even if for 5 minutes. Small changes can be just enough to help impact or underscore what I am covering that day in class. Sometimes I ask students for their input about another way to approach material and they are very creative.

Q: What campus resources or other supports would you recommend to students?

I always send students to both of the writing labs on campus and I know the math labs are useful, too. For more global issues such as time management or stress, I encourage students to go to the Counseling Center for a number of their workshops. The Peer Mentor program on campus is also an excellent program of students helping other students. It has made a huge difference for many students coming to campus and dealing with all of the changes, both expected and unexpected.

Thank you to Michelle and all other instructors on campus, for your collaboration with our office and our students to provide them with the most successful and accessible academic environment! The Office of Accessibility and its students truly appreciate your efforts.

Q: What other advice can you give to students regarding academics and their participation in the classroom?

Going to college while needing accommodations does add another level of responsibility and involvement, and the first semester or two can be a challenge as you figure out how it all works. It's probably very different than how it was in your earlier schools. Stick with it, don't be afraid to ask questions and get to know the people in the OA because they truly want you to succeed. As you become more familiar with what you do and do not need, it will seem much less daunting.

When students tell me that in high school they needed accommodations, but they want to try college without them, I encourage them to reconsider. I recognize it would be nice to be free of all the concerns that come with needing accommodations, but perhaps the first year in college is not the best time to make that leap. I recommend at very least getting a letter and sharing it with professors. If you don't need the accommodations, that's great. But if you do, they are already in place.

Q: How can the Office of Accessibility help people become more knowledgeable about our office and the services we provide?

Disabilities Awareness Week is a great way to raise awareness, so encouraging students and faculty to attend would be one way of getting the word out.

Like the Writing Labs do, the OA could visit classrooms at the beginning of the semester and give a brief presentation to students about all of their services. Many students may have no idea what their options are in college.

For faculty, ITL events that focus on issues that are on the rise in our classrooms—students on the Autism Spectrum and Veterans with PTSD, for example—would be a great opportunity to deal with real concerns of faculty while they get to know the OA staff.

Reminders

Disabilities Awareness Week: November 5-9, 2012

Disabilities Awareness Week is right around the corner. Please join us in celebrating this week by attending the various events, presentations, and workshops that this week has to offer! For more details and event information, please visit our website at <http://www.uakron.edu/access/disabilities-awareness-week/>

Spring Registration:

The Spring 2013 registration period began on **Monday, October 15, 2012**. If you haven't already registered, please do so as soon as possible through ZipLine or working with your Academic Advisor.

Once you have scheduled your classes, make sure to **update STARS** as soon as possible with this new schedule. This can be done by selecting the Spring 2013 term on STARS and adding in your new Course Registration Numbers (CRNs). Also, select which accommodations you have been given under each class. This will allow us to best meet your accommodation needs in a timely manner!

Important Dates

October 15, 2012
Spring 2013 Registration begins

November 5-9, 2012
Disabilities Awareness Week

November 22-25, 2012
Thanksgiving recess - no classes

December 10-16, 2012
Final exams week

December 14-15, 2012
Fall 2012
Commencement

January 14, 2012
Spring 2013 classes begin

Meet the Office of Accessibility's Student Assistants:

The Office of Accessibility is pleased to recognize and acknowledge our wonderful Student Assistants for their hard work and dedication to the students and staff of the OA. They help in the daily functioning of the office by assisting students, proctoring tests, aiding in assistive technology accommodations, and providing support to the other OA staff members. Read below for some of their favorite inspirational quotes!

Josh:

Senior, Biology

"Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see." -Mark Twain

Victor:

Freshman, Respiratory Therapy

"Things have a way of returning back to you, just not in the way you expect."

Jessica:

Junior, Intervention Specialist Mild/Moderate

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." -Edith Wharton

Emily:

Senior, Exercise Science

"It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed" -Theodore Roosevelt

Brian:

Junior, Sociology, Criminology, Law Enforcement

"At the end of the game, the King and Pawn go into the same box."

Katelyn:

Senior, Early Education and Intervention

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."

Amanda:

Junior, Family and Child Development

"If you can't figure out your purpose, figure out your passion. Your passion will lead you right into your purpose." - Bishop T.D. Jakes

Justin:

Senior, Computer Information Systems

"Promise me you'll always remember: You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." - Christopher Robin

Stephanie:

Senior, Intervention Specialist ECIS & Mod/Int

"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." -George Bernard Shaw

Tips for Final Exams

Since finals week will be here shortly, the Office of Accessibility would like to provide you with final exam and studying tips so that you can do your best!

Study in Chunks: Cramming isn't the most effective method! According to research, you should study in 20-50 minute increments and give yourself 5-10 minute breaks between each studying session. For best results, you should study throughout one week.

Manage your Time: Make a study schedule for yourself. Allow enough time to adequately study for each test, while also giving yourself some time to take breaks and relax.

Prioritize: Be sure to determine for which class or test you will need to spend the most time studying. Plan your studying accordingly.

Go to your Instructor's Office Hours: If you have questions about a final, make sure to schedule an appointment with your instructor or visit their office hours.

Form or Join a Study Group: Fellow classmates can be valuable resources for reviewing class material and answering questions you might have.

Get Enough Sleep: Make time to sleep. Students that are well rested are much more relaxed and alert when it comes time to take the test.

Schedule your Exams Ahead of Time: If you will be testing in the OA, tests must be scheduled through STARS (<https://gunadiframework.com/Akron/>). Select 'Alternative Testing' and 'Schedule Exam'. Make sure you schedule your exams **at least 4 days before** the day you want to take the exam. Any questions about scheduling tests can be directed to our office, 330-972-7928 or access@uakron.edu.

Faculty Spotlight

Last year, the Office of Accessibility recognized **Stacia Smilek**, a professor from the Department of Communication, for her outstanding qualities as an instructor and advocate for students with disabilities. Her supportive and positive learning environment has been recognized by her students.

The Office of Accessibility would like to acknowledge other faculty members who provide outstanding instruction and academic support to our students. We realize that at the core of student success are faculty members that go above and beyond meeting the unique needs of a diverse student population. The Faculty Spotlight allows students the opportunity to identify faculty advocates that utilize universal design practices in the classroom which includes the recognition of diversity of learning styles.

Students must provide a brief description of their distinctive qualities as a faculty member and how they have provided a supportive, positive learning environment for students with disabilities. Complete the form below including all the required information and return to the Office of Accessibility. Please be as specific as possible. If you need assistance in completing the form, please contact the Office of Accessibility. <http://www.uakron.edu/access/faculty-spotlight/> We look forward to reviewing your nominations and honoring other faculty members!

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



Simmons Hall at The University of Akron