Project Bridge is the periodic newsletter of the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) within the University of Delaware’s College of Education and Human Development. This issue includes updates from the past few months and a look forward to upcoming events.

Please send news and items for the next issue to Ben Szmidt at bszmidt@udel.edu by May 15.

**IN THE NEWS**

**Karl Booksh advocates disclosure in the journal Science**

UD Professor and CDS Community Advisory Council member Karl Booksh took center stage in an April article in the journal *Science* that asked whether job candidates should disclose their disability. Booksh’s advice: “It is better for most people to be upfront with the disability” early in the recruitment process. Probably, “[i]t will come out … eventually. You want to be in a situation that is accepting, not one where you have to deny your identity.” [To read the article, visit the journal website.](#)

*Karl Booksh.*

**CLSC students/thespians appear in UDaily**

UDaily cast a light in April on Unified Theater, a new UD Registered Student Organization (RSO) that brings actors with and without disabilities together. The theater group’s first performance, held April 29, was written by its actors, several of whom are enrolled in UD’s Career and Life Studies program. CLSC is a two-year program that offers young adults with intellectual disabilities access to a college education. [To read the article, visit the UDaily website.](#)
WHYY addresses the ADA’s impact in Delaware

Brian Hartman, a member of CDS’s Community Advisory Council and an attorney with the Community Legal Aid Society in Wilmington, discussed the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act in Delaware in an April WHYY report. Joined in the PBS piece by self-advocates Daniese McMullin-Powell and Emmanuel Jenkins, Hartman touched on some of the nearly 25-year-old Act’s ambiguity. “There's hundreds of pages of regulations and guidance and the guidance may not be law… it's easy to get confused by what the standards are,” he said. To read the article and see the video, visit the Newsworks website.

PROJECT UPDATES

CDS welcomes USF professor to lead training project

DE-PBS hosted a second training session, April 30, on Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR), a model used to conduct functional behavior assessments and develop behavior support plans for students with behavior needs. Dr. Rose Iovannone from the University of South Florida led the session, in which she shared strategies for developing intervention plans that best fit specific needs of the student and classroom. PTR intervention plans address the prevention of challenging behaviors, include approaches that teach specific skills to replace identified behaviors, and reinforce behavior success. Iovannone led the first part of the training in October 2014.
Eisenman tapped for excellence award in teaching, advising

UD Professor Laura Eisenman was honored in April with UD’s Excellence in Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring Award for her work as the faculty coordinator of UD’s Disabilities Studies minor. Based primarily on nominations from fellow faculty members and current and past students, the award recognizes faculty members who are actively involved with their students, treat students on an individual basis and leave a positive and lasting impact on their students’ lives. Eisenman will receive $2,500 and a brick in Mentor’s Circle with her name inscribed on it.

Donovan returns to CDS

Jane Donovan is back at CDS as project coordinator for the “Including Youth with Disabilities in the Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) Project.” The one-year pilot, a collaboration undertaken by UD’s Center for Drug and Health Studies, CDS, and the state of Delaware’s Division of Public Health, is charged with crafting an approach that includes youth with disabilities in the YTS. The YTS gathers information about tobacco use among youth. Previously, Donovan was the project coordinator at CDS for the Domestic Violence Disability Project.

Another university looks to emulate CLSC

CDS Associate Director Brian Freedman detailed the merits of UD’s Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, along with the strategies behind its success, at “Postsecondary Symposium: A Roadmap for Making the Dream of College a Reality for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Pennsylvania.” Freedman’s host for his March 24 talk, Millersville University, plans to use CLSC as a model for a similar college program for young adults with intellectual disabilities.
Stephanie DeMayo presents in San Diego

At the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) National Conference in San Diego, CDS instructional coach Stephanie DeMayo joined panelists in a discussion of what life is like for educators with disabilities. DeMayo noted that having a disability can make it easier for educators to relate to students with disabilities. DeMayo is chair of the CEC Educators with Disabilities Caucus.

Starting a reaction in STEM education

In his Lunchtime Learning talk on April 9, UD professor and CDS Community Advisory Council member Karl Booksh described systemic obstacles nationally that too often keep people with disabilities from succeeding in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM. Among them: inadequate federal funding, a lack of accommodations, and institutional biases against people with disabilities. But Booksh also suggested ways UD could lead the way to far better outcomes. The Science and Engineering Leadership Initiative that Booksh created last year, for example, brought several undergraduates with disabilities from across the country to campus to gain practical experience as research assistants.

CDS helps young adults lead healthy lives

Young adults with disabilities can better manage their healthcare if they approach their growing independence “one bite at a time” -- and if they learn to apply tools that can help them, such as assistive technology. So suggested CDS program manager Annalisa Ekbladh and Nemours transition social work coordinator Cory Nourie in their April 29 Lunchtime Learning session at CDS. Ekbladh also demonstrated CDS’s new Healthy Transitions app, which offers instructional videos featuring basic skills that support a healthy lifestyle. The free app is available on iOS and Android devices.
Ph.D. candidate studies UD students’ views on disability

Marisa Kofke, a second year doctoral student in the School of Education, presented her study of students’ views of disability at the Steele Symposium on April 24. The study is funded by a UD Center for the Study of Diversity (CSD) Research Grant award she received in February and examines how students in a Disabilities Studies course change their views on disability while taking the class. Laura Eisenman serves as her advisor.

Marisa Kofke (right) discusses her research at the Steele Symposium in Newark.

SOCIAL MEDIA

CDS on Facebook

If you’re among the growing number of people who like CDS on Facebook, you heard about Gov. Jack Markell’s keynote address at the UN’s observance of World Autism Day, in which he called on employers around the world to give people with disabilities more job opportunities; you learned that New Hampshire passed a law repealing statutes that allow employers to pay people with disabilities subminimum wages; and you got word of low interest loans for assistive technology, available through Easter Seals.

If you haven’t yet liked CDS on Facebook, what’s keeping you? Connect with us now!

CDS on Twitter

In April, followers of CDS on Twitter read how Canine Partners have been connecting Delawareans with services dogs for 25 years; heard that the Special Olympics flame will be going through Delaware and that they could get a chance to carry the torch; and saw photos from Delaware’s first Miss Amazing pageant for women with disabilities.

Get social, and follow CDS on Twitter!
RESOURCES

New accessible programming for children now available

The Complex Moral Issues logo.

The Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development has developed a website to help guardians assist adults with intellectual disabilities in expressing intentions about end-of-life care. The website includes a review of guardianship statutes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and a three-step process for preparing for end-of-life decisions. To learn more, visit the Complex Moral Issues website.

ADVOCACY CORNER

This section is dedicated to informing you about advocacy efforts and new or pending legislation or policies that relate to individuals with disabilities.

Blue Hens at the Capitol

CDS’s Brian Freedman and Annalisa Ekbladh represented CDS April 28 at “UD Day” at Legislative Hall in Dover, where legislators and staff had the opportunity to learn about exciting initiatives within the university. Freedman and Ekbladh also informed legislators about two upcoming pieces of legislation that look to better serve children with autism. One will aim to increase resources available to the Office of the Statewide Director of the Delaware Autism Program; the other would create the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism, which would contract with autism professionals to train and assist school staff. The bills are expected to be sponsored in May by Sen. Margaret Rose Henry and Rep. Earl Jaques.

CDS helping state implement CMS rule on home- and community-based services (HCBS)

Brian Freedman and Victor Schaffner, CDS’s director of communications and advocacy, have joined work groups convened in April by the Governor’s Advisory Council on Developmental Disabilities, which are developing survey instruments and protocols to assess compliance with a new rule from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Freedman is participating in the day services work group; Schaffner is participating in the residential services work group. The rule, says the U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services, “reflects CMS’s intent to ensure that individuals receiving services and supports through Medicaid’s HCBS programs have full access to the benefits of community living and are able to receive services in the most integrated setting."

**EVENTS**

**May 6**

**Organizing Special Education Documents** – The Parent Information Center of DE is presenting a workshop from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Richardson Park Learning Center in Wilmington to help families create an effective organization system for their child’s education documents. For more information, visit the event’s website.

**May 7-8**

**Wearable Technology** – Lucy Dunne from UD’s Delaware Design Institute will discuss “The Hard and Soft of Wearable Technology,” on May 7 from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., in Rm. 101 of Recitation Hall at UD’s Newark campus. On May 8, Dunne will lead a follow up workshop from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Rm. 102 of Taylor Hall at UD’s Newark campus. Both events are free and open to the public, but advance registration is required for the workshop. Reserve a space by sending an RSVP to cdelaney@udel.edu.

**May 14-15**

**Delaware Association of School Psychologists Spring Conference 2015** – CDS and Family SHADE staff, together with UD School Psychology graduate students, will present in Rehoboth at the annual conference. Featured speakers include Dr. Mark Steege and Dr. Stephen Brock, president of the National Association of School Psychologists. For more information and to register, visit the conference website.

**May 17**

**Buddy Walk** – The one-mile walk in Newark promotes the understanding, inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome. More than 2,500 people are expected to participate by walking, volunteering or collecting donations in the name of their buddy or team. Free activities and entertainment for toddlers to teenagers will be available after the walk. To register, visit the Buddy Walk website.

Visit the CDS calendar for more upcoming events.

**CONTACT US**

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