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 January 15.

IN THE NEWS

UDaily raises curtain on Disability Cinema

The online campus news service drew attention in December to the upcoming January cinema series, which will take place Thursday evenings in Room 127 of Memorial Hall and is designed to increase awareness of disability through film. Each event, which includes a screening, featured speakers and audience discussion, is free. Accommodations will be provided.

“We created this film series to raise awareness about assumptions, constructions and interpretations of disabilities and demonstrate the influence of different disability representations on the lives of people with disabilities, communities and social institutions,” said CDS Director Beth Mineo in the UDaily article.

Read the full UDaily article here, and learn more about the film series in Project Bridge under “Events.”

The film series is supported by a grant from the Unidel Foundation and the Center for Disabilities Studies.
A new window on UD’s disability studies minor

CDS published *Steps Ahead: Disability Studies at UD*, the new edition of its *delAware* periodical, in December. Available by mail and online, *Steps Ahead* offers readers a window on the University of Delaware’s most popular minor. Through interviews with students, faculty, university administrators, employers and members of the community, readers of the richly illustrated *delAware* receive an in-depth yet accessible account of what’s behind the minor’s success and why students from so many backgrounds enroll in the minor. Readers will also discover how those who graduate from UD with a disability studies minor are able to apply what they’ve learned to enhance the lives of people with disabilities and their families. People on CDS’s mailing list should receive a copy of the *delAware* before the new year. Anyone wishing to get added to the mailing list should contact CDS at cds-info@udel.edu.

2014-2015 Annual Report & 2016 Calendar is available & in the mail

CDS’s new annual report and calendar features scenes from Artfest on its covers and includes stories on the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project, the disability studies minor at UD, the Center’s Lunchtime Learning series and Family SHADE’s networking breakfasts, the PEERS evidence-based intervention that enhances students’ social skills, the Center’s new Inclusion blog, the plan from the Center and state of Delaware to eliminate health disparities for people with disabilities, the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative, Disability Mentoring Day, and new website and app options for families to navigate and access healthcare services, among others. If you’re not on CDS’s mailing list and wish to receive the annual report and calendar, please contact us at cds-info@udel.edu. In January, CDS will release a digital version of the annual report, which will showcase additional information, including videos, slideshows, newspaper articles, research studies and PowerPoint presentations. Watch for it at http://www.udel.edu/cds/.
CDS at AUCD

CDS staff discussed social skills training, collegiate disability studies, emergency preparedness and health equity at the 2015 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Annual Conference from Nov. 16-18 in Washington DC. Debby Boyer and Susan Veenema of CDS’s school age unit presented findings on the implementation of the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) curriculum in Delaware Public Schools. They noted that data from participating PEERS classrooms show a 25-percent average increase in students’ social-skill knowledge.

Laura Eisenman, faculty coordinator of UD’s Disabilities Studies minor, co-presented with colleagues from the University of Wyoming, the University of Hawaii, the University of Illinois-Chicago and Virginia Commonwealth University about how each of their Disability Studies programs fosters diverse perspectives on disability.

Phyllis Guinivan of CDS’s Health and Wellness unit shared how collaboration between CDS, the Delaware Medical Reserve Corps, the Delaware Division of Public Health’s Office of Preparedness and self-advocates has improved the landscape for people with disabilities during emergencies. The partnership has created two new trainings: a workshop that teaches people who staff shelters how to help individuals with disabilities during emergencies, and an emergency drill for first responders that includes participants with disabilities who act as simulated victims.

Eileen Sparling and Jae Chul Lee of CDS’s Health and Wellness unit spoke about CDS’s collaboration with Delaware Health and Social Services to examine health disparities experienced by Delawareans and their creation of a plan to achieve health equity.

CDS diversity fellows chosen

UD senior Lindsey Roque and junior Jackeline Saez-Rosario have been selected as Enhancing Diversity in Disabilities Studies Fellows. The one-year fellowship program is intended to improve the engagement of under-represented groups with disability-related issues and increase diversity and build cultural competence within the UCEDD network. Roque is a cognitive science major with a...
concentration in Speech-Language Pathology. She plans to pursue a Doctorate of Audiology. Saez-Rosario is a political science and criminal justice double major. She aspires to be a special education or corporate lawyer. Both Roque and Saez-Rosario are also disability studies minors. CDS was one of 14 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities to receive an Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities grant to fund the fellowship.

**ACCESS & PBS give joint presentation on DE’s IEP progress**

CDS instructional coaches Steve Smith and Susan Veenema presented with Tracy Neugabauer of the Delaware Department of Education on recent revisions of Delaware’s IEP process at the annual Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) Conference in Atlanta. Their Oct. 31 talk outlined CDS’s statewide ACCESS project to ensure that all IEPs contain goals that are aligned with a student’s grade-level standards, and DE-PBS’ plan to use the IEP to address a student’s problem behaviors. This collaboration between the two could serve as a model for other states embarking on similar initiatives.

**CLSC to develop summer high school program**

UD Professional and Continuing Studies awarded the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program with an Innovative Program Development Fund first prize to support a summer program for high school students with intellectual disabilities. The one-week residential program will help the students set goals, explore career options and sample life on a college campus. CLSC is UD’s two-year college certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities.

**Workshop held to better support students with behavioral needs**

Staff from the DE-PBS project held a professional development workshop at Dover Downs on Nov. 17 aimed at helping schools improve their Tier 2 systems, or small group interventions that target students requiring extra behavioral support. Participants from 17 schools, representing eight school districts across Delaware, attended the workshop. Participants discussed the importance of tailoring those interventions to each student’s unique needs, as well as ways to measure the interventions’ success.

**Volunteer assistive technology initiative begins work**

CDS’s fabricATe initiative for people who are interested in creating low-cost assistive technology for children with disabilities kicked off a 6-month initiative on Dec. 1. During this period, fabricATe will accept requests for custom-built AT from CDS partners Christina...
Early Education Center and Bayada Pediatrics. fabricATe coordinators expect to start accepting requests statewide in the Summer of 2016.

**Workshop aims to decrease problem behavior and increase self-discipline**

DE-PBS project staff hosted a workshop at Dover Downs on Dec. 3 that targeted schools’ abilities to both decrease students’ problem behaviors and foster greater self-discipline among those students to prevent future problem behaviors from occurring. Participants representing 24 schools from eight districts across the state attended the workshop, and all were offered resources designed to help them develop actions plans for effectively combining these two approaches in their respective schools.

**STAFF UPDATES**

**Summit seeks to improve education for Delawareans with visual impairments**

Annalisa Ekbladh co-facilitated a statewide summit to examine education issues for students who are blind or visually impaired on Nov. 10. Participants from the Division for the Visually Impaired, state school districts, advocacy organizations and parents formed four working groups to address issues involving curriculum, instruction and literacy, transition, preservice and inservice, and assistive technology. The working groups will meet five times through April to develop their recommendations for a statewide plan to improve services in the four key areas as well as systems coordination and parental involvement. CDS’s Beth Mineo, Dan Fendler, Karen Latimer and Sonja Rathel are part of the assistive technology working group. Ekbladh co-facilitated the summit with Jerry Petroff, principal investigator of the New Jersey Consortium on Deafblindness.

Annalisa Ekbladh.
Eisenman discusses self-disclosure in college settings

Difficulties students with intellectual disabilities face when deciding whether to disclose their disability in a college environment were the subject of a talk given by Laura Eisenman, faculty coordinator of UD’s Disability Studies minor, at the Division for Career Development and Transition’s annual conference in Portland on Nov. 5. She was joined by Meg Grigal and Debra Hart from the Think College National Coordinating Center. Their talk also offered recommendations for post-secondary education programs, including fostering an inclusive atmosphere and involving the student in the disclosure process as much as possible.

Mineo presents on person-centered rights

CDS Director Beth Mineo and the seven other members of the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC) gave a poster presentation on Nov. 13 that detailed a revision to the Committee’s Communication Bill of Rights. The amendment adds language affirming the rights of persons with severe disabilities to interact socially, to be informed, to access interventions and functioning AT devices, and to be treated with dignity and respect. The Committee made its presentation at the annual American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention in Denver.

A CLSC showing at State of the Art Conference

A panel comprised of Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) students and undergraduate students discussed their experiences with an experimental UD mentoring class at the State of the Art Conference on Nov. 12 in Fairfax, Va. CLSC is a two-year college certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities. The panel discussed how communication was key in developing a successful mentor/mentee relationship and the importance of keeping everyone’s goals in mind when working together. The course’s instructors, CDS’s Debbie Bain and Wendy Claiser, moderated the panel.

(From left) Undergraduate students Jessica Kleinman and Cara Yerman, former CLSC student Albert Wilson and current CLSC student Tayair Blake present at the State of the Art Conference.
SOCIAL MEDIA

CDS on Facebook

If you're among the growing number of people who like CDS on Facebook, you learned about a supportive exoskeleton outfit for infants with disabilities being developed by UD researchers that is comfortable, affordable and fashionable; you heard about new upgrades coming to the Brandywine Zoo that will make it ADA compliant; and you read that UD’s Mobility Challenge spawned controversy and negative reviews from members of the Office of Disability Support Services.

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

CDS on Twitter

In November and December, followers of CDS on Twitter read about a new 10-week, UD experiential learning class that pairs Special Olympics athletes with UD students to play soccer; learned that web accessibility was a featured topic at Delaware Innovation Week Dev talks; and saw that inclusionary sports are on the rise in Delaware.

Get social, and follow CDS on Twitter!

RESOURCES

A guide to writing about disabilities

The National Center on Disability and Journalism at Arizona State University has released a second, expanded edition of their “one-of-a-kind” style guide for professionals who write about people living with disabilities. The guide provides readers with advice on almost 70 disability-related terms, such as “people-first language” and “able-bodied,” and mentions instances in which disability organizations disagree on the usage of a particular term. The NCDJ also released a companion piece titled, “Terms to Avoid When Writing About Disability.” The style guide can be accessed here on the web or as a printable PDF, and the companion piece can be accessed here.
New app tracks and promotes infant development

Dr. Norma Jean Stodden, a former faculty member at University of Hawaii’s UCEDD, has developed and released an educational app for newborns. “Baby’s Daily Play App” includes 365 educational games, one for each day of a baby’s first year, for parents to play with their child. The games cover a wide range of developmental skills, including gross motor coordination, visual discrimination, sound awareness and discrimination, eye-hand coordination, fine motor coordination, muscular development, and language and social development. The app also includes 72 stickers to help parents track their child’s milestones, as well as a journal for storing notable moments and photos. The app is available for iPhone and iPad and costs $1.99.

Screenshot from Baby’s Daily Play app.

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.

Bloggers shine light on voice recognition software, entertainers with disabilities, Internet solicitations

At CDS’s Inclusion blog in November and December …

David Lynch discussed the power of voice recognition software. Without it, he noted that he wouldn’t be blogging, writing his life story, sending emails to politicians, surfing the Internet and taking classes to further his education. The times it doesn’t recognize what he’s saying are just bumps in the road. Its technology is a marvel and empowering and more readers ought to take advantage of it, he writes.

Cory Nourie warned readers to not be in a hurry to “like” photos they see on Facebook when they’re accompanied by come ons such as "Like if I am beautiful" or “Share if this child deserves friends.” Liking those kinds of photos, she wrote, won’t help the kids in them and can send the wrong message.

Megan Pell directed visitors to the Can Do Musos website at http://www.candomusos.com, where more than 200 international musicians with disabilities are featured, each with his or her own style of music and level of professional success. They and other everyday musicians with disabilities aren’t just making great tunes, she noted, but are “demystifying what it means to have a disability.”
New Inclusion blog writer Kristen Black suggested that Sesame Street’s Julia, a recently introduced character who has autism, not only should benefit many children with autism and their parents but also typically developing children who tune into Sesame Street. Because of their exposure to Julia on Sesame Street, typically developing children – when they come face-to-face with an individual with a disability in school or anywhere else – might be more apt to perceive a person’s disability as a difference and “nothing more,” Black writes.

CDS launched its Inclusion blog in June to engage the disability community, the public and policy makers in a provocative discussion of issues with the potential to bring about positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities.

Our bloggers include advocates and experts, people with disabilities and people without disabilities, staff at CDS and writers outside CDS.

Visit the blog at http://blog.cds.udel.edu. And please don’t just read what’s there, comment!

EVENTS

**Thursdays in January**

**Disability Cinema** - CDS will be hosting a free disability film showcase in Room 127 of Memorial Hall each Thursday evening in January. Each installment will feature a screening, a speaker and a discussion of a film that focuses on disability. Films include:
- Tod Browning’s *Freaks*, with speaker Rachel Adams from Columbia University;
- *Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement*, with speaker Stephanie Kerschbaum from UD;
- *Silver Linings Playbook*, with speaker Susan Veenema from UD;
- *Rory O’Shea Was Here*, with speaker Emmanuel Jenkins from We Stand 4 Something

All evenings are open to UD students, faculty, staff, and the public and each feature will begin at 7 p.m. Accommodations will be provided by request. Please see the event flyer for more information and to guarantee your seat. This series is supported by a grant from the Unidel Foundation and CDS.

**January 6**

**Family SHADE Networking Breakfast – Kent/Sussex** - Representatives from organizations in Kent and Sussex counties serving children with special healthcare needs, as well as other interested members of the public, are invited to attend Family SHADE’s Networking Breakfast. Each organization that attends will have an opportunity to share information about upcoming activities and new initiatives with the group. Attendees are welcome to bring flyers and brochures to share with our colleagues at the breakfast. The breakfast will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Autism Delaware, 17517 Nassau Common Blvd, in Lewes. Please contact Annalisa Ekbladh at annalisa@udel.edu with questions.
January 11

Dive In: Diversity Institute – CDS’s Debbie Bain and Melanie Sipko will lead a presentation dispelling myths and stereotypes about ability status. The presentation is part of a three-week program hosted UD’s Residence Life and Housing allowing undergraduates to explore five topical areas of diversity in order to promote an inclusive campus. UD CLSC students will also be on hand to demonstrate that students with intellectual disabilities can succeed in college. The presentation will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at UD’s Independence West residence hall. Students can sign up for the course on the Center for the Study of Diversity’s website.

January 20

18th Annual LIFE Conference - This year’s conference will feature a session on enhancing student communication led by Esley Newton, Judi MacBride, Karen Latimer and Dan Fendler of CDS’s school age and assistive technology units. Joining them will be Mark Campano from the Delaware Program for Children with Deaf-Blindness. Headlining the conference will be Dr. Connie Garner, who will deliver a keynote address on community integration. More than 500 consumers, families and professionals attend this annual conference for educational and networking opportunities. Registration costs $75 for general attendees; $25 for people with disabilities; $25 for parents, guardians, and caregivers of people with disabilities; and $25 for full-time students. Please contact info@lifeconferencede.org with questions about registration. This CDS co-sponsored event will take place from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at Dover Downs Hotel, 1131 North DuPont Highway, in Dover.

Visit the CDS calendar for more upcoming events.

CONTACT US

The University of Delaware’s Center for Disabilities Studies is located at 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, Delaware, 19716. Please call us at 302-831-6974 or 302-831-4689 (TDD), send an email to ud-cds@udel.edu or visit our website at www.udel.edu/cds.

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