



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



OSAA E-NEWS

Issue 8, June 2011

Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance



Spring quarter marks the end of the second successful academic year of Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance. The number of students benefitting from OSAA programming has almost doubled this year. Students with disabilities participating in OSAA are eligible for a number of academic and STEM enrichment opportunities as well as mentoring and advising assistance as they work toward earning a

degree in a STEM field. The numbers speak of our success with over eighty students receiving support from the program funded by the National Science Foundation.

This issue of the OSAA E-News highlights our accomplishments, shares our student successes during spring quarter of 2011, and provides a preview of upcoming events.

Diverse-Ability U. 2011

Final preparations are underway for OSAA's Diverse-Ability U. which will begin July 17. The Dayton Quad is hosting the event on the Wright State University Campus. This year, OSAA staff from The Ohio State University are joining with WSU to produce a single OSAA pre-college residential experience that will make optimal use of resources from both QUADs. Wright State University received over thirty applications from the surrounding area with fifteen selected for attendance. The Ohio State University recruited another fifteen students, making this annual Diverse-Ability U. the largest so far for the five day event. The joint OSAA program offices are currently in the process of interviewing this year's participants to ensure that Diverse-Ability U. activities are designed to accom-

modate each student's needs. Obtaining detailed information about students past experiences, expectations and any of their required accommodations provides our counselors and staff the necessary tools to ensure the event will be a rewarding experience for all. This year's workshops will include skills for college success including topics such as communication, self assessment, organization and time management. STEM Modules will cover topics in neuroscience exploration, gaming and artificial intelligence, statistics and human factors psychology. Evening recreation will include swimming, wheelchair sports, bowling, low rope course and group activities. The students will also be working in small groups to prepare presentations on the results of projects which integrate knowledge gained in the STEM modules at the commencement celebration, Thursday July 21, 2011.



Inside this issue:

<i>Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance</i>	1
<i>Diverse-Ability U. 2011</i>	1
<i>Dayton QUAD News</i>	2-3
<i>Columbus QUAD News</i>	4
<i>Columbus QUAD Highlights</i>	5-6
<i>Dayton QUAD Highlights</i>	7
<i>Resources and Internship Opportunities for STEM</i>	8-9
<i>OSAA Upcoming Events</i>	9
<i>Dayton QUAD Student Highlight - Disability ≠ Inability</i>	10
<i>Going to College with a Disability</i>	11-13





Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance
STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



OSAA Dayton QUAD News

National Science Foundation's Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) 2011

The Joint Annual Meeting of the Division of Human Resource Development (HRD) was held June 6-8, 2011 in Washington, D.C. HRD is a part of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR). The purpose of the meeting was to bring the Principal Investigators and the leadership teams of HRD Awards together to support and encourage collaboration among researchers, educators, and administrators; leverage resources across projects; further advance the missions of NSF, EHR, and HRD; and for training. Wright State University and The Ohio State University OSAA faculty and staff traveled to Washington D.C. to take part in this event.



WSU's Brittany and OSU's Bianca at the JAM 2011 poster session

ODS Awards Ceremony – May 31, 2011

The Office of Disability Services held their Scholarship and graduating seniors reception on May 31, 2011. Five OSAA Scholars from Wright State received ODS Scholarships.



Presenters of the Fairborn Lions Scholarship

Jean Denney presenting Michael Emrick Scholarship



Congratulations!

ODS Scholarship- Lisa D.

Thomas C. Faye Scholarship - Rachel K.

ODS Scholarship for Minority Students with Disabilities- Najee W.

Michael Emrick Scholarship - Jennifer R.

Fairborn Lions Scholarship- Heather M.

Power-Tripping

Seven OSAA Scholars, WSU Learning with Disability IGERT fellows and staff traveled to Columbus to spend a day at one of the stops on Permobil's cross-country "Power Trip" tour. This event is designed to show off Permobil's new M300 mid-wheel drive wheelchair and Corpus 3G seating system. The tour began March 14 in Miami and the 34-city tour will end June 16 in St. Louis.



WSU Career Services Office's Business Etiquette Luncheon

Wright State University's Career Services Office held a Business Etiquette Luncheon on May 10, 2011. OSAA sponsored three OSAA scholars to participate at this professional training event. They were coached the finer points of business dining, mingling and networking. Presenter Charlene Walker from Career Services is a Business Etiquette Trainer.



OSAA Dayton QUAD News

OSAA Scholars SLC Meetings

The Dayton QUAD first spring quarter OSAA Scholars Student Learning Community meeting was held on April 11. The students viewed an episode of the Discovery Channel’s Mythbusters, “Driving Blind.” Over thirty students and OSAA staff were able to attend to view and discuss the hilarious Discovery Channel program that looked at the ability to control a vehicle without vision using verbal instructions from a sighted companion.



The following May meeting was the venue for the second annual portfolio updating party and was attended by 20 OSAA Scholars. Everyone was required to bring an updated resume. In addition, the students shared the contents of their portfolios of professional development experiences for the year including: research papers produced for classes, flyers from events attended relative to professional development, copies of posters presented at meetings, constitutions of campus group affiliations, volunteer work, and STEM contacts lists.



OSAA Student Learning Community Apr - 2011

Starting Wright hosted a social event at Wright State University that allowed high school students interested in STEMM careers and their parents to meet current OSAA Scholars working on STEMM degrees and ask them questions about attending college and choosing STEMM majors. The event also featured the premier of a new webcast featuring Engineering careers. During the event, OSAA Scholars shared their experiences on campus, issues they had transitioning to college with a disability, and their success in STEMM. The live interactive webcast focused on different types of careers in Engineering, problem solving techniques, and an interview with a Senior Design Engineer at Nuvo Musical System Technology. Know a middle school or high school student who may be interested in the Starting Wright program? Please visit www.startingwright.org for more information!



OSAA Scholars providing the younger Starting Wright students an opportunity to ask questions



High School participants and their parents at the OSAA Diverse-Ability U. Orientation on June 24, 2011



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities

The Ohio STEM Ability Alliance is supported by the National Science Foundation under NSF Award Number HRD-0633961. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Science Foundation.

OSAA Columbus QUAD News

Students and Mentors Team up for Goalball and Wheelchair Basketball, April 2011

OSAA students and their mentors got the quarter started with some lively games of wheelchair basketball and goalball. Students played a fast-paced game of full-court basketball, challenging each other to keep up between possessions. The game was new to many of the students, who learned that instead of constantly dribbling the ball, players are able to bounce it once before "rolling" their chairs twice. Along with working on their basketball skills, students used a lot of team



OSAA students during wheelchair basketball

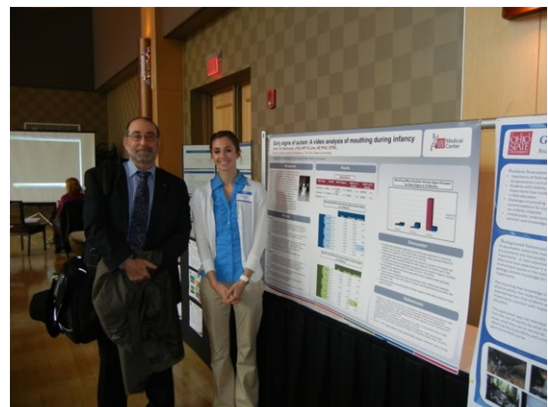
work to make it happen. For goalball, a sport in which 3 players on each team are blindfolded, the object is to try to throw a ball that has bells embedded in it into the opponents' goal. Players must use the sound of the bell to judge the position and movement of the ball and try to block it from getting by them into the goal. It was a fun opportunity for students and mentors to socialize, do some networking, and try something new.

Networking and Dining Etiquette Seminar, April 2011

With spring job and internship fairs in full swing, OSAA students took advantage of a presentation by OSU's Career Connection. The presentation focused on important networking skills and dining etiquette tips specifically for students. The latest trend in networking is on the internet. It provides a new way to tap into the "hidden" job market. "Net knocking" is the practice of using the internet to advertise your skills and experiences to your target audiences (i.e. knocking on employer's door via the internet). Some popular online net knocking is participating in virtual job fairs and contributing to newsgroup and listserv discussions on a particular topic. For those uncomfortable with the concept of "net knocking", the traditional practice of establishing network contacts through professional associations is still recommended and the internet has made it easier to identify associations matching one's needs. Students gained a lot of useful info from this session and are ready to put it to use!

Multiple Perspectives Conference, May 2011

The annual Multiple Perspectives Conference held at OSU provided a wealth of information on access, inclusion, and disability. It is an annual conference held by the ADA office at Ohio State. As part of the conference, a student poster competition was held to highlight the research being done by students on various areas of disability. Two OSAA students presented posters at the competition. At the conclusion of the conference, the musical group FLAME played a concert including covers and original songs.



OSAA Student with ADA Coordinator Scott Lissner during poster session at Multiple Perspectives

Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities

The Ohio STEM Ability Alliance is supported by the National Science Foundation under NSF Award Number #10332961. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Science Foundation.

OSAA Columbus QUAD Highlights

Mentor Mingle at the OSU Biological Sciences Greenhouse, May 2011

Students and mentors got together for a visit to one of OSU's greenhouses and its insectary. The Conservatory houses plants native to tropical and desert environments. The collection has an estimated 1500 specimens representing over 100 plant families from around the world, including some specimens rarely found in cultivation. There are flowers and fruits year-round and a vast diversity of foliage shapes, sizes and colors. The insectary rears approximately 130 species of insects and arthropods for instructional and research purposes, including tarantulas, walking sticks, and giant hissing cockroaches. Students had the rare opportunity to see a Titan Arum a few weeks after its bloom. The flower, which is known for a putrid meat smell, was named "Woody," for the legendary Ohio State football coach, Wayne Woodrow "Woody" Hayes. Titans are the world's largest, rarest and on-the-brink of extinction, blooming plant. In the wild, they grow only in the tropical rainforests of Sumatra. Even there, they have always been uncommon. Now, 70 percent of their habitat has been destroyed. On the threatened species list, many committed conservationists are racing to save it from extinction. Since the first Titan bloomed at the New York Botanical Garden in 1937, fewer than 100 titans have bloomed in cultivation in the United States. In fact, only 35 institutions in the United States have been able to coax a bloom.



OSAA student holding a *Phasmatodea*
(also known as a walking stick)



Blooms are equally rare in cultivation worldwide. This gigantic plant, *Amorphophallus titanum*, or "titan arum," is unique and strangely wonderful. It is one of nature's true wonders, boasting the plant kingdom's largest known un-branched inflorescence (flower structure). The titan arum emerges from and stores energy in a huge underground stem called a tuber. Even though we visited after its initial bloom, it was still a sight to see!

OSAA Students pictured with the gigantic plant,
Amorphophallus titanum



OSAA Columbus QUAD Highlights

Making the Most of a Job Fair & Life After College Seminar, May 2011

Job fairs are great opportunities for connecting with organizations to collect information, submit resumes or arrange interviews. They also offer opportunities to meet with new, less familiar organizations and develop a job search network. OSAA students learned the best tips and skills for attending job fairs and also what to expect for life after college. Some tips to acknowledge.

Before a job fair:

- Find out what businesses will be there.
- Develop some questions you'd like to ask employers.
- Proofread your resume - at least twice.
- Be sure your resume contains your updated contact information.

At the job fair:

- Dress the part.
- Take time to talk to employers.
- Use your research to appear confident and knowledgeable.
- Have a firm handshake and maintain eye contact.

After the job fair:

- Follow up with a thank you note.

OSAA Reception and Awards, June 2011

On June 1st, The Columbus Quad recognized its Choose Ohio First scholarship recipients and honored active members of the mentoring program for all their hard work throughout the 2010-2011 school year. Mentors were also recognized for partnering with OSAA and contributing to the lives of their mentees. Students were addressed by Dr. Mary Juhas, Associate Dean for Diversity & Outreach, Clinical Associate Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, and Program Director of Project CEOS (Comprehensive Equity at Ohio State). Dr. Juhas spoke to the significance and importance of diversity in STEM and the need for students with disabilities to pursue STEM degrees and employment. In addition, students were addressed by the President of the University, Dr. Gordon Gee. He congratulated students on their hard work and perseverance as they completed the school year and further emphasized the value of diversity in STEM.



OSAA Students at June banquet with OSU President (Dr. Gee) and mentors



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



OSAA Dayton QUAD Highlights

COF Scholarship and Scholars Dollars Updates

Applications for the OSAA Choose Ohio First scholarship program have been collected for the 2011-2012 academic year. The awards to qualified applicants are expected to be announced in early July.

Six college students received awards under the WSU OSAA Scholars Dollars incentive program for their active participation in the WSU's OSAA Scholars programs and other STEM related activities. This incentive program, designed to encourage the OSAA Scholars to immerse themselves in activities that contribute to success in earning a quality STEM degree and entering the workforce, provides funding to support their professional and personal growth in the form of assistive technology, STEM materials and equipment and professional travel. One OSAA Scholar was approved for Scientific Freedom's WYNN Wizard software student license. This screen reader software WYNN is designed to enhance success for individuals with reading challenges and writing difficulties. Another student received software for her smart pen that records handwriting and the audio together. This software changes the image to text format for editing. This makes it easier to turn in assignments without having to retype the information.

Three scholars used their funding to pay a portion of their professional conference expenses. Registration was paid for a student to the International Conference of Forensic Sciences being held in Portugal early next fall. OSAA also partially funded an OSAA scholar to attend the National Model United Nations conference in New York City. He was representing the government of Japan on the Human Rights Council promoting human security, poverty alleviation and sustainable environmental development. The third student received support to attend the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference in Chicago this spring.

A final awardee chose to use the funding to prepare for the GRE test. OSAA funds paid registration for the test and the GRE Test Preparation Guide.



Midwestern
Psychological
Association



Internships, Scholarships and Research Opportunities !

Now is the time to start planning for fall internships and research experiences. Check out the Columbus QUAD events on Twitter for additional updates: <http://twitter.com/OSAAOSU>

National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), List of all Research Experiences available for undergraduates.

AAAS ENTRY POINT! - is a program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) offering outstanding internship opportunities for students with apparent and non-apparent disabilities in science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some fields of business.

EasyColumbus.com, a website dedicated to retaining central Ohio college students after graduation, has been expanded to include internship information.

ColumbusInternships.com in Science, Engineering, or IT - Internship possibilities for both the student and employers.

WrightChoice - serves educational institutions, business and non-profit communities by sourcing and developing under-represented talent focusing on career and professional development, job readiness, internship placement, disability inclusion and diversity training.

The Student Educational Employment Program including Student Career Experience Program provides Federal employment opportunities to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as degree seeking students taking at least a half-time academic, technical, or vocational course load in an accredited high school, technical, vocational, 2 or 4 year college or university, graduate or professional school.

NASA Education, Lists all student educational programs for NASA.

Consortium Research Fellows Program - The current goals of the CRFP are to provide educationally-relevant, well-paid, professional experiences for undergraduate and graduate students.

Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) is a national leader in science education and research. ORISE administers a broad range of internships, scholarships, fellowships and research experiences.

Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART); Scholarship for Service Program has been established by the Department of Defense (DoD) to support undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines. Applications will be open August 1, 2011.

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) – Advocacy Internship. For the student who wants to get involved. The fall application period will open in May 2011. This unpaid internship is ideal for students who have an interest in communications, public policy, project management, community organizing, and/or disability advocacy.



More Opportunities!

Caterpillar is currently recruiting for Career and Internships - Apply ASAP! - Accounting, Marketing, Human Resources, Logistics/Supply Chain Management majors. Please visit their website; <http://www.caterpillar.com/careers>.

Teradata will be posting 3 intern opportunities for the IT business applications organization. Looking for students completing their junior year in either an MIS or Computer Science/CE major. Position descriptions on line in the Students and Graduates section at: <http://www.teradata.com/careers>.



AHEAD 2011: Sustainable Access Through Partnership

The 34th Conference of the Association on Higher Education And Disability annual international AHEAD conference will be held July 11-16. This conference brings together professionals in the fields of higher education and disability for a week of information-sharing, networking and theoretical and practical training. It will be held in The Washington Convention Center, Seattle, Washington.

Dayton's Air Camp



Air Camp is a week-long summer camp adventure in aviation and aeronautics for middle school students, which takes place at the birthplace of flight – Dayton, Ohio. At Air Camp, students will experience the rich and exciting aviation and educational resources in the Dayton region, from the place where the Wright Brothers invented flight to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Home base for the week will be on the campus of the University of Dayton.

October 12-14, 2011 29th Annual Closing The Gap Conference

Assistive Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation

Minneapolis, MN

Contact: Jan Latzke

Closing The Gap

P.O. Box 68

Henderson, MN 56044

Tel: 507-248-3294

FAX: 507-248-3810

E-mail: info@closingthegap.com

WWW: www.closingthegap.com/conference/faqs.lasso



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



Dayton QUAD Student Highlights

Science and Disability

Lab coat? Check. Slide? Ready. Microscope? On. Science is a world full of wonderful adventure and diversity that is growing every day. From the foods that we eat, the medical care we receive, and the technology that we use, science is a contributor in many ways shapes and forms. The adventure of science is like a universal art; with a little bit ingenuity, plenty of motivation, and an open mind, science is open to anyone. Through the mind of a college student, there is much that can be understood about being a researcher while tackling the obstacles associated with a disability.

Disability ≠ Inability

Jacob Brewer, WSU OSAA Scholar



Jacob Brewer

Howdy there! My name is Jacob Brewer and I am currently a psychology undergraduate at Wright State University with a research concentration in behavioral neuroscience. When I was three I was diagnosed with a genetic disorder called Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, which causes muscle degeneration. I now rely on a power wheelchair for mobility. Despite these circumstances, I have not lost sight of my goal of getting my PhD and becoming a research scientist.

My interest in research dates all the way back to my years in high school, where I excelled in labs in chemistry, biology, and physics. When I was a senior, I took my first psychology course and not only excelled in the course, but also, I immediately became interested in research psychology. It seemed only logical that I pursue a career in psychology. Although I was discouraged by many of my teachers and peers to go into research due to my disability, I still worked towards graduation and the achievement of my dream. I graduated with honors and filled out several college applications and was accepted into many colleges and universities.

When I began my undergraduate career at Wright State University, I had the wonderful opportunity to be exposed to a full range of psychology courses, all of which reinforced and solidified my interest in psychology. I was also introduced to both the human factors and behavioral neuroscience fields of psychology, through summer research experiences. I was even given the rare and exciting opportunity to present research at two prestigious conferences.

For me, working in a research lab has been a wonderful experience. Nevertheless, this isn't to say that there weren't any obstacles or challenges along the way. When I first started working in a lab, I had to receive laboratory safety training, but on top of that I had to think about obstacles such as getting my lab coat and other safety gear on. Also, since a large portion of my field of research usually involves animal behavior, I had to learn such tasks as animal handling, animal care, and animal surgery. I would have to say performing an animal surgery is scary enough by its self. Throw in a physical disability and things seem impossible. However, Walt Disney once said, "It is kind of fun to do the impossible." By the end of my training, I was able to not only, "Scrub in," but I was able to perform an actual animal surgery.

My take home message to you, the reader, is whether you are a high school graduate, a first year college student, or a graduating senior, I challenge each and every one of you to live your dreams no matter how scary or impossible they might seem. On an ending note, "Do not worry if you have built your castles in the air. They are where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." ~ Henry David Thoreau



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



Going to College with a Disability

by Jennifer Barga

OSAA Dayton Staff and Starting Wright Project Coordinator



Attending college can cause anxiety for most students. From admissions deadlines to financial aid, most students worry about whether or not they will get into the college they like, how they will pay for school and whether or not they will be able to survive on their own. College is a new environment, often away from the comforts of our family and home we've known since we were little kids. Moving into a new phase on your own can be intimidating! Every student worries about succeeding in class and meeting new people, but students with disabilities have more concerns than just the academics and the social atmosphere. As a student with a disability it is important that you choose a school which offers a strong academic program in your desired field of study, a vibrant community in which you feel comfortable and an Office of Disability Services which makes you feel at home and provides you with the services you need to be successful and teaches you methods that will go on to make you successful after graduation.

Do you know what field of study interests you? Begin the search by spending some time deciding what career field you would like to enter. Once you have some suggestions, find people who work in that field. You could also focus on organizations that hire people in your chosen occupation. Spend some time interviewing people who are currently working in the field that interests you. An important piece of information to find out from those you interview is where they went to college and if they had the opportunity to go to college again where they would go. Also look at corporations or organizations that hire people in the field of study you are interested in what colleges or universities do they recruit from each year. Now you can begin researching schools that have strong academic programs in that field or schools that were recommended by corporations, organizations and individuals in the field you are interested in. Look at their admissions standards online and email any questions to the office of admissions at each school.

Schedule an on-campus tour when possible! This is extremely important for any student, but especially important for students with physical disabilities. Getting the chance to visit campus gives you clues to the social atmosphere, the sense of community and the ease at which you would be able to navigate on your own. Remember, once you are on campus you are responsible for getting yourself to class, the dining hall and cafeteria! If you have a physical disability that makes getting around difficult you might reconsider some of your choices after visiting campus.



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



Going to College with a Disability (con't)

If you schedule to attend an on-campus informational event or campus tour call the Office of Disability Services and schedule an appointment on the same day. Meeting with someone from disability services will allow you to gather information about how they accommodate students with similar disabilities, eligibility requirements for services and the types of services provided to students with similar disabilities. Ask questions about how the department might react to a situation where you need an accommodation and a faculty member refuses a reasonable accommodation. Is that a situation where you are on your own or will the staff of ODS be your advocate? Make sure you leave with a clear understanding of what services you would receive and how they are funded. If possible ask to have the opportunity to communicate (by phone or e-mail) with a student who has a similar disability and is attending that institution. Interview that student ask why they selected their school and are they happy or do they regret their choice and why. It is important to learn about what kind of support your campus provides once you graduate. Do they simply hand you a diploma and say good luck! Or do they have work experience programs that you can begin as early as your sophomore year. Most individuals choose to go to college so that they can be employed. Your chosen institution should have programs in place that will assist you in achieving your goal.

Be sure you know your priorities before you narrow your list to your top choices. Remember that you are going to college for the academics, not to attend a party every weekend. The social atmosphere is important but is not the sole reason to attend college. Remember how comfortable you felt on campus and whether you felt the office of disability services would effectively meet your needs. Once you have reviewed all of your choices narrow your list to two or three schools and get those applications out!

I've been accepted!!!! Now what?

It's great that you've been accepted to the college of your choice. You can rest easy for a little bit, the college search completed, the application essays finished. Don't sit on your laurels for too long. Now you need to work out the details of what you need to do to prepare yourself for this transition to college. First, make sure you understand your rights as a college student with a disability. As a younger student you were covered by the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). You are covered under this law through high school. This law states that it is the school district's job to ensure that you receive appropriate special education services and that the school adjusts the curriculum to meet your abilities. This law also says that it is the school's responsibility to identify students who need assistance. Once you are in college you are covered under two different laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These laws entitle you to "reasonable" accommodations without adjusting the curriculum. This means that colleges are required to accommodate you to a "reasonable" degree. You are also required to identify yourself and provide documentation of your disability. The college you choose is not responsible for ensuring that you take advantage of services or accommodations that are offered. It is your job to ask for services or accommodations that will help you succeed in college.

Once you have been accepted to the college of your choice, contact the Office of Disability Services again and inquire about any orientation provided for students with a disability. If offered, be sure to sign up! They will provide you with important information regarding the services or accommodations they offer and what you need to secure those services or accommodations. Orientation schedules differ from college to college, and some may be quite early in the summer. Be sure not to miss your college's orientation. Make sure you contact your housing office and inquire as to how and to what degree your room and bath room can be adapted to meet your needs. This will vary from campus to campus. If you have a physical disability you want to make sure that your room environment is one that supports your physical independence.

Going to college not only requires you to be more independent in terms of your academics, but also in your personal life as well. Developing strong personal skills prior to heading to college will make the transition much easier for



Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance

STEM Degrees and Careers for Ohioans with Disabilities



Going to College with a Disability (con't)

you. Practice skills such as self-advocacy, basic personal skills and communication at home. You will need to know how to explain your disability to people who don't know you as well as explain the accommodations you need academically and personally. Get ready by writing out a short statement explaining your disability and how it impacts you academically and socially. Ask your parents, teachers and counselors about services you use at school to help you and services or accommodations you need at home. Make a chart with all of your accommodations in one column and why you need them in another column. Familiarize yourself with both your statement of your disability and your accommodations. Once you feel comfortable, practice telling your parents and teachers about your disability and the services you use and need. Practicing this way will help you not only develop the skills to advocate for yourself, but will also improve your ability to communicate your disability and needs clearly.

Self-advocacy is a skill that can help you in a number of areas. You need to be a good self-advocate to get the academic supports you need, in your living arrangements, scheduling for PA's and a variety of other situations. Make sure that you are the one asking for services or accommodations, not your parents! Be prepared to explain why you need these. Remember, once you get to college it is up to you to ask for what you need.

Self-advocacy skills will help you in personal situations as well. Is your dorm not suitable for you? Are you having issues with your roommate? Being a strong self-advocate will allow you to discuss issues like these in a productive way.

Good communication skills are also a must! If you cannot clearly communicate with your peers, professors or other adults you will struggle in college. Make sure that you have all the tools available to you in the communication department. Being able to express yourself clearly is an important part of self-advocacy as well. If you can organize your thoughts and words you will find it much easier to ask for what you need or to explain why something is or isn't working for you.

Going to college is an exciting time. Make sure that you are choosing a college that fits your personality and will provide you with the services or accommodations that you need to be successful! Don't forget to contact each college's office of disability services and make sure that you ask good questions about documentation and services provided. Start planning early and your transition to college will be much smoother!