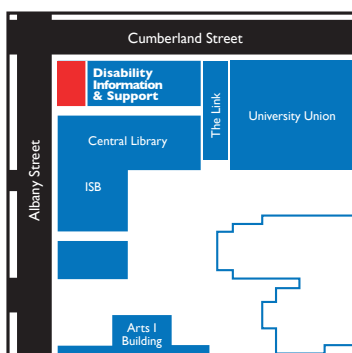


Imagine

"It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen."

Muhammad Ali

Disability Information & Support Newsletter: Issue 2 2016



Our physical address is:
Disability Information & Support
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Welcome to 'Imagine', Disability Information and Support's newsletter. This is our last edition for the year and I think you will find it very informative. Our vision is to work in partnership to promote an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity, promotes comprehensive academic support and empowers individuals with impairments to achieve their full potential. You will see many examples of our vision in action throughout this newsletter.

2016 has been another very busy and productive year for us as a service and to date we have supported 900 students with some form of academic learning support. Historical data indicates that the number of students with disabilities at the University of Otago increases every year. This means as a university community, we need to be aware

of students, their diverse needs and how they may impact on students in a tertiary environment. Willingness among staff to accommodate and support students makes a significant difference to a student's experience of tertiary education. We all have the opportunity to create positive change and, as a service, we have many examples of staff providing reasonable accommodations to alleviate disadvantage, with the purpose of allowing students to compete equally, on a level playing field, with their non-disabled peers. This is absolutely valued by the students we have the privilege of working with.

Finally, as the year draws to a close, we wish you all the very best for the remainder of the academic year!

Melissa Lethaby, Manager



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Student profile

...here I'm just one of the crowd – just another student. I still do normal student things.”



HENDERSON (HENNY)

When Henderson decided to head to Otago in 2013 it was as much about striking out on her own as getting a great education.

“I wanted to move out of home to prove to myself I could live independently.”

Living independently has brought a few extra challenges but Henny (as she is often called) found living at Unicol a real help and she was then able to move into an accessible flat with a friend who also has a disability.

“I have cerebral palsy so everything takes me a little bit longer – that’s just life,” she says. “But here I’m just one of the crowd – just another student. I still do normal student things.”

Henny is studying Sociology and Marketing. “I started off doing Physical Education and really enjoyed it, but not the sciences part of it. I enjoyed one of the papers on sociology so I decided to do a BA in Sociology instead. I put myself down for a marketing paper and really enjoyed it too, so decided to do that as a minor.”

Having tutors in her first and second years helped her get into the swing of University study and what was going to be required of her. DI&S has continued that support arranging a note taker in classes, while during exams she gets extra time to dictate the answers to a writer because it takes her longer to write.

“It’s a massive step for anyone going from high school to university – and I still find it mind boggling. But I somehow managed it,” she says.

“My lecturers and tutors are really good. They just treat me like all the other students. That’s how I want it to be.”

Henny also loves sport and has found Parafed Otago to be a huge help.

She goes to a gym which includes people with disabilities and the Halberg Activity Disability Support Foundation has funded a trike so she can go for bike rides.

Henny recommends the Parafed ski weekends and also does Boccia – a Paralympic sport which is a cross between bowls and petanque.

Her message to would-be students? “Just do it. If you need help there is always support there. It sounds cheesy – and I hate being cheesy – but don’t let anything stop you.”

For more information about Parafed Otago contact Kelsey Howlett at sdo@parafedotago.co.nz or check out their website parafedotago.com/

Be. Employed



Applications open for Be. Employed internship opportunities

“The purpose of the programme is not only to create opportunities for young people with access needs, but also to establish a more diverse, open and accessible workplace culture in New Zealand.”

It's a challenge all students and recent graduates know too well: how do you get your foot in the door when it seems every available position asks for experienced applicants?

Social change enterprise Be. Accessible offers a solution for eligible students through the Be. Employed Internship programme, a four to 16-week placement in a role that reflects the student's area of study.

Be. Employed Relationship Manager Jake Mills says the programme is about providing experience and work opportunities for young people with disabilities, or access needs.

We are excited to offer the Be. Employed Internship Programme to students that are studying at the University of Otago

The programme is now entering its third year following a successful pilot in 2014. Be have matched students with a wide variety of businesses including ACC, Wellington DHB, Hamilton City Council, BNZ Auckland

“I enjoy my job because we see massive growth in people as they develop their confidence and skills in a meaningful work environment,” says Jake.

“We received lots of great feedback from our interns and the businesses we're working with, about the value of the programme.”

The purpose of the programme is not only to create opportunities for young people with access needs, but also to establish a more diverse, open and accessible workplace culture in New Zealand.

“Access citizens are overrepresented in underemployment stats in nearly all OECD countries. In New Zealand, more than 60% of people with access needs are unemployed or underemployed.”

Apply for the Internship programme now via the internship checklist beaccessible.org.nz/be-employed/internship-checklist2 or for more information, contact Be. Employed Relationship Manager Jake Mills on 027 699 6974 or jake@beaccessible.org.nz.

Visit beaccessible.org.nz to find out more about the work of Be. Accessible and the Be. Employed programme.

Tutoring at DI&S

Check out DI&S's website

If you are interested in reading more about the experiences of other students at Otago have a look at the profiles on our website.

otago.ac.nz/disabilities/index.html

Are you aware that most Departments have a Departmental Disability Contact? If you would like to find out who your Departmental contact is please look on our website.

otago.ac.nz/disabilities/about/departmental-contacts/index.html

Our website also provides you with opportunities to provide confidential feedback on our service or website. Please click on the following link to provide feedback.

otago.ac.nz/disabilities/questions/feedback/index.html

DI&S tutors provide valuable support, helping new students get up to pace with the demands of University study and providing ongoing support for those who need it as they get further into their studies.

Michaela, who has been tutoring for four semesters, says she enjoys helping students and making a difference.

"It allows the student to cover information in lectures that they found difficult at a slower pace, or in a way that is easier for them to conceptualise. I think this boosts their confidence, and increases likelihood of continuing with the course, attending classes, and ultimately passing."

Those thoughts are echoed by Hayley, who has been tutoring for two years now.

"Students really appreciate having someone that they can go to in order to clarify their ideas, explain difficult concepts and review the course material with."

It has also helped her develop a better teaching style which is more patient and flexible, she says.

New to tutoring this year, Chris is finding it really rewarding to help students reach and even surpass their learning objectives.

"There is never a dull moment because every student is unique and requires a tailored approach to their learning."

Lukas, who is in his second year of tutoring, says tutoring has contributed to his own growth too, showing holes in his own knowledge. It is an experience he would recommend to others.

"Definitely! It's a great opportunity to give back to the Otago community, and helps you develop positive personal and academic skills."

All the tutors we spoke to had words of advice around having fun, being yourself, being honest and not pretending you know all the answers. Michaela also offers some solid practical advice around putting in a bit of preparation.

"Try to set up weekly sessions early on, ask the student how they prefer to learn, and get access to blackboard for the paper you're tutoring (for lecture slides, past tests and other important information)."

"Students really appreciate having someone that they can go to in order to clarify their ideas, explain difficult concepts and review the course material with."

News bites



Disability Awareness and Inclusive Teaching Award

Disability Information and Support was once again delighted to sponsor the Disability Awareness and Inclusive Teaching Award in the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) Teaching Awards.

This award recognises a person who demonstrates excellence in inclusive teaching, responds to the diversity of all learners, is respectful of students with disabilities, and advances equity and opportunities for all students.

From the nominations received, Tony Zaharic, Department of Biochemistry, stood out as a very worthy recipient of the 2016 Disability Awareness and Inclusive Teaching Award.

Congratulations to Tony on a job well done!

The N G Stewart Scholarship

This scholarship is awarded to a student of the University who has a disability that makes attending university a challenge. The N G Stewart Scholarship was established in 2003 with funds bequeathed by Norman George Stewart (1913-1997) through the Stewart Coombs Trust.

Applicants must:

- ~ Be New Zealand citizens or a New Zealand permanent residents
- ~ Have a disability of at least six months or longer
- ~ Be intending to enrol, or already be enrolled in an undergraduate degree at the University of Otago

A student who has held the scholarship may apply again for up to a further two years, provided that he or she continues to make satisfactory progress in all respects.

Additional information about this scholarship is available by clicking on the following link.

otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/database/otago0146531.html

Course Advice

The University Course Advice Service is located on the ground floor of the Arts Building. This is your first point of contact if you require course advice. The team will help you plan your course and can ensure you make contact with expert staff at the University if necessary. Please click on the following link for more information.

otago.ac.nz/course-advice/services/index.html

The Liaison team

The Liaison team is based in Dunedin, Auckland and Wellington. Staff visit all secondary schools during the year to let students know about the learning opportunities at the University and to help students plan their studies. Students and parents are able to talk to the team at Information evenings, Tertiary Open Day, Careers Expos and during school visits. You can also contact the Liaison team directly if you have any questions.

Please click on the following link for more information.

otago.ac.nz/administration/service_divisions/otago029897.html

Student Services

The Student Services Divisional Office is the administrative centre for all Student Services Departments. The office is responsible for the Career Development Centre, Disability Information and Support, Maori Centre, Pacific Islands Centre, Proctor, Recreation Centre, Student Health and Counselling, University Union and the University Volunteer Centre. Click on the following link for information about these support services.

otago.ac.nz/studentsservices/

Feeling Stressed About Exams



Most people experience increased anxiety as they get closer to exam time. Here are some tips to help you keep that stress in check.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR COOL

- ~ **Study with a time table**, this will keep you on track and you can build in breaks to take guilt free rests.
- ~ **Eat well**, your body needs regular fuel to keep that brain working. Be prepared, if you know you are heading into a full on study week, head to the supermarket and pick up some healthy study snacks. Healthy snack ideas could include fruit, banana chips, pretzels, nuts, carrots, humus, salsa and muesli bars.
- ~ **Keep hydrated**, keep a water bottle with you at all times. Try to avoid having too many drinks that contain high levels of caffeine and sugar, these can affect your sleep and lead to an energy crash later in the day.
- ~ **Exercise**, you may be thinking that you have no time for exercise, but even a ten minute stroll around the block could help to clear your head.
- ~ **Have a laugh**, sometimes a good laugh is the best way to unwind. Balance out all that serious studying with a comedy film or stream some comedy festival clips on YouTube.
- ~ **Try to get a full night's sleep**, set up a relaxing routine before bed. This will help switch your mind from study-mode to sleep-mode.
- ~ **Talk about it**, if you are feeling stressed talk it through with a mate, a family member, or one of the counsellors at Student Health. They may have ideas or helpful strategies and sometimes just talking it out can help lighten the load.
- ~ **Have a change of scenery**, try taking your readings to a café. Dunedin also has beautiful botanical gardens which make a lovely spot to sit and read on a sunny day.
- ~ **Keep it in perspective**, you can only do your best so set realistic goals and be proud that you are doing the best you can. When exams are over try not to dwell on things you may have missed, instead look for the positives.
- ~ **Plan for fun**, start planning your holidays or what you'll do to celebrate when that last exam is completed. It's great to have something to look forward to.

Important dates

- Mental Health Awareness Week – 10 to 16 October.
- Semester Two exams – 19 October to 12 November.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities – 3 December.
- NG Stewart Scholarship closes 15 January 2017.
- Conference at the University of Otago titled Disability Matters: Making the Convention Real – 26 to 29 November 2017.

save the date: 26 – 29 November 2017

Disability Studies

Conference Announcement

Disability Matters: Making the Convention Real

26 – 29 November 2017

University of Otago

Dunedin, New Zealand

Following on from the highly successful 2011 Inaugural Disability Studies Conference, *Every Body In*, we invite you to our 2017 conference, *Every Body In Again: Making the Convention Matter*.

Conference theme:

The conference offers a forum for discussion of disability matters, with a particular focus on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD). New Zealanders played a significant role in the development of this Convention – how are we doing now in terms of its implementation?

We look forward to sharing a breadth of perspectives, practice, policy and research initiatives regarding the implementation and impact of the UNCRPD in all aspects of people's lives, across national and international contexts.

A conference for every body (not just academics):

As with the 2011 conference, we encourage participation by disabled people, families-whānau, students, practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, representatives of self-advocacy, advocacy, service, community organisations and government departments – anyone who is interested in disability matters.

A Call for Papers is forthcoming...

In the meantime, please save the date and plan to come to Otago in November 2017.

Queries? Email disability.matters@otago.ac.nz



Thank you.

Contact Details

Please contact us directly if you have any enquiries.

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