

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY NEWSLETTER

ACPA – College Student Educators

QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER  
WINTER 2010  
EDITION

## Letter from the Chair...

NEWSLETTER  
CO-CHAIRS:  
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Hello SCD,

Details are being finalized for the 2010 Convention in Baltimore, which will be here soon! SCD is discussing plans to host an interactive exhibit called *Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit*, which was developed at Saint Louis University and will provide an activity-based learning opportunity to help educate our membership around inclusiveness. We are currently working with Patty Parillo, this year's convention chair; in order to determine what ancillary space will be available to us for this initiative. Also, SCD is again sponsoring several programs that focus on disability—a big thank you goes out to Jaci Jenkins Lindburg, who coordinated our program review process this year, in addition to those who volunteered their time to review proposals.

Please consider nominating a student or colleague who you feel should be recognized at the convention for their efforts this past year! Calls for SCD award nominations have been shared via the listserv, which are due to Val Erwin at [verwin@smu.edu](mailto:verwin@smu.edu) by December 1st. This year promises to be an exciting convention—remember to register soon! The early bird rate ends on January 31st.

A major change this year is that Matthew Gilsbach is stepping up to fill the very large shoes of Al Souma and Deb Casey, who have served SCD and ACPA well for many years in the role of access coordinators. If you have feedback or questions for Matthew regarding accessibility of the convention this year, please contact him at [mgilsbac@uvm.edu](mailto:mgilsbac@uvm.edu). In addition, Melanie Thompson is serving as SCD's first accessibility liaison throughout this year. Please contact her at [mthompson3@niu.edu](mailto:mthompson3@niu.edu) if you have questions about how to make a document, resource, or event more accessible.

The Directorate has several exciting initiatives underway that members have been working on over the past several months. The scholarship committee has put in many hours of hard work to provide a comprehensive list of disability-related resources, which is now available on the SCD website. In addition, Jeanne Higbee, Alice Mitchell, and Karen Myers presented a Webinar entitled *Being an Ally to Students with Disabilities: Communication and Other*

*Considerations* in October. They received a much higher number of registrants than expected and facilitated a successful presentation on creating more inclusive environments on our campuses. Unfortunately, we found out that ResLife.net does not provide closed captioning capability for webinars. In addition, we recently realized that the ACPA Foundation video is also not captioned. As a result, the Directorate is currently engaged in discussion with the international office regarding what changes may be possible to make ACPA services and technology more accessible to our entire membership.

Finally, I encourage each of you to read the report recently released regarding the possible unification of ACPA and NASPA, which may hold important implications for our work as a standing committee. This report can be found on the ACPA website. As always, please contact me with any feedback you have.

Sincerely,

Katie Stolz

Chair of The Standing  
Committee on Disability

## Self-Authorship and Students with Disabilities

Nancy J. Evans and Kristin A. Economos Iowa State University

Self-authorship is an important developmental process through which college students develop the ability to identify who they are, what they believe, and how they wish to interact with others (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Baxter Magolda (2008) identified self-authorship as “the internal capacity to define one’s beliefs, identity, and social relations by trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments” (p. 269). As Baxter Magolda (2001) pointed out, many college students begin their experience in college defining themselves based on external factors, including how significant others and society in general think they should be. As students develop self-authoring skills, they shift from using external sources to define their identity to building internal beliefs, commitments, and a sense of personal empowerment. This shift in identity formation is crucial for the successful launch

of students from the college environment into post-graduation adult life. Individuals who are self-authored are better able to cope with conflict, build healthy relationships with others, and identify who they are to the world around them. Developing opportunities for students to become self-authoring is a crucial responsibility of student affairs professionals since development of the whole person is a core mission of the student affairs field (Evans & Reason, 2001).

### Self-Authorship Status of Students with Disabilities

While the development of self-authorship skills is crucial for any student to be successful, the process is especially important for students with disabilities. Many students with disabilities arrive at colleges and universities having been denied opportunities for self-authorship in previous settings. In K-12 schools, students with disabilities receive

accommodations under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), which requires that all students have access to free public education in the least restrictive environment. As such, school systems, in conjunction with parents, doctors, and rehabilitation personnel, determine what accommodations individual students need and students receive these accommodations without any personal advocacy or request for accommodations from the students themselves (Simon, 2000). These educational experiences embed the idea that disabilities are automatically accommodated without self-advocacy. As a result, many students with disabilities have never learned how to advocate for their specific needs. Indeed, many students do not even know specifically what their impairment is or how they are affected by it. In addition, these students have often been overprotected, silenced, ignored, discounted, or treated as “less than” within their

# Self-Authorship and Students with Disabilities

Nancy J. Evans and Kristin A. Economos Iowa State University

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community and family environments (Olkin, 1999). Because of their home and school backgrounds, students with disabilities miss the chance to develop an internal voice to express and validate their own needs and the self-authorship process is hindered. Students with disabilities experience dissonance as they enter the collegiate environment and discover that their previous experience of having others decide on and implement their accommodations and determine their day-to-day activities is no longer applicable.

## **Assisting Students with Disabilities to Move Toward Self-Authorship**

Too often, educators' only concern when working with students with disabilities is that they succeed academically. Disability resource services center around academic accommodations and educating faculty to provide appropriate

assistance to students with disabilities in their classrooms. While academic success is certainly important, if we are to develop the whole person, as our professional statements call us to do (Evans & Reason, 2001), we must also attend to interpersonal and intrapersonal student development. Ensuring that students with disabilities development self-authorship addresses this concern.

Because of previous experiences in which students with disabilities had decisions made for them, student affairs professionals must understand that their ability to take ownership of their lives is probably minimal. As such, to become authors of their own lives, students with disabilities may need additional support and encouragement throughout their college experience. By familiarizing students with resources on campus, encouraging their involvement in decision-making, and providing families with an

understanding of the student's role in the self-advocacy process, student affairs professionals can aid in the development of self-authorship.

Baxter Magolda (2001) suggested that educational practices to encourage self-authorship be guided by three principles: (1) "validating learners' capacity to know," (2) "situating learning in learners' experience," and (3) "mutually constructing meaning" (p. xxi). Using these principles, student affairs professionals can foster self-authorship within the disability community in a variety of ways. We suggest that particular attention be given to students with disabilities learning self-advocacy, developing community, and becoming actively involved on

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## Self-Authorship and Students with Disabilities

Nancy J. Evans and Kristin A. Economos Iowa State University

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campus. All of these actions expose students to the principles that Baxter Magolda (2001) advocated.

Creating awareness immediately upon arriving on campus is the first step student affairs professionals must take to ensure clear communication with students and their families regarding disability services. Students must learn that the policies surrounding disability accommodations require that students take responsibility in advocating for themselves. By stressing the students' role in self-advocacy, student affairs professionals are validating the students' knowledge of their own needs as well as their ability to take action to see that these needs are met. The self-advocacy process is an opportunity for students to develop their internal voice, a skill that Baxter Magolda (2008) mentioned as being crucial in the development of self-

authorship. By validating beliefs about who they are and how disability is to develop their internal voice, a skill that Baxter Magolda (2008) mentioned as being crucial in the development of self-authorship. By validating beliefs about who they are and how disability is incorporated in their identity, students are encouraged to exercise their internal voice in order to request and receive accommodations, both in and outside of the classroom.

Building community is also an important means of exploring one's identity. Many students with disabilities have been isolated from other individuals with disabilities and have never had the opportunity to engage in discussions about their unique experiences (Olkin, 1999). Nor have they had role models from whom they can learn about their options.

Able-bodied parents, doctors, and other authorities have instructed them on how to act and how to think about their disabilities. Being able to interact with other students with disabilities provides exposure to alternative perspectives from which to make meaning of their own experiences. Peer mentoring programs can introduce new students to more experienced students with disabilities who can assist them in determining new ways of engaging with the world and thinking about their own positions in it. Organizations made up of students with disabilities, designed to enhance social interaction, raise awareness of disability on campus, or advocate for equity for individuals with disabilities, provide opportunities for students with disabilities to find their own voice,

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## Self-Authorship and Students with Disabilities

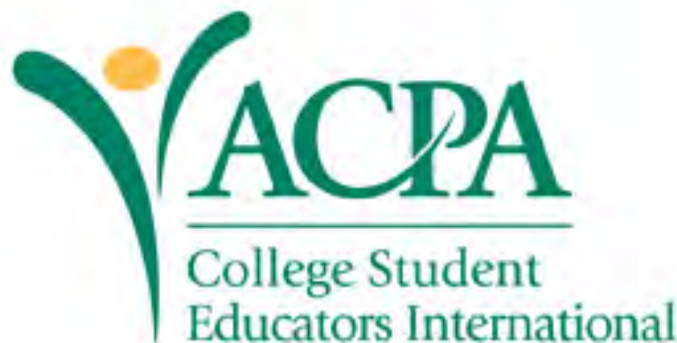
**Nancy J. Evans and Kristin A. Economos Iowa State University**

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recognize their own knowledge, and take part in experiences that will develop leadership skills.

Student affairs professionals can also encourage students with disabilities to be actively involved in the larger campus community. By doing so, students come to understand that they have interests and skills unrelated to their disability that are part of their identity. Involvement in campus activities, student government, interest groups, artistic performances, or recreational sports enables students to learn that there is more to their lives than their disability and that they can contribute in meaningful ways in many venues. They come to see themselves as complete people, learn how to engage appropriately with other individuals, and understand more about the world around them, all important

skills leading to self-authored lives. By providing student with disabilities with appropriate resources, education, and support, student affairs professionals can foster the development of self-authorship. When students with disabilities are supported and encouraged to self-advocate, to develop community, and to become involved in campus life, they begin to gain a sense of identity from within, instead of accepting the labels the external environment has placed on them. Developing their own sense of self and making their own decisions will enable students with disabilities to enter the post-college world with the confidence and skills needed to succeed in every aspect of their lives and by so doing make significant contributions to society as well as living full and meaningful lives.





# Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit

**Karen Myers, Saint Louis University**

*Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit* debuted at Saint Louis University (St. Louis, Missouri) on October 27, 2010 with over one hundred and fifty students, faculty, staff and community members in attendance to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The purpose of *The Ability Exhibit* is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities through respect for others, comfort during interactions, and awareness of disability issues. Using a multi-media approach to demonstrate respect, comfort and awareness, the exhibit offers suggestions for becoming disability allies and educators.

*The Ability Exhibit* began as a project by

graduate student Anne Marie Carroll in Professor Karen Myers' Disabilities in Higher Education and Society class. Karen (former SCD Chair and co-founder) was so inspired by Anne Marie's project that a team was formed under Karen's direction with Anne Marie as project manager, Kate Goedde, intern and AJ Friedhoff, graduate assistant to take the exhibit idea to a larger scale. The team gained sponsorship from the Saint Louis University (SLU) Leadership and Higher Education Department and the SLU Division of Student Development (under the leadership of Vice President, Kent Porterfield) with generous donations from the SLU Division of Information Technology Services and Logan

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"Participants test their disability knowledge through computer quizzes."

"Graduate student and volunteer, Tier Payne, instructs participants to use 'The Space Rope' -- a tool to help people understand appropriate distances in communicating with a people with visual disabilities."

## Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit

**Karen Myers, Saint Louis University**

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College of Chiropractic (Chesterfield, MO). *The Ability Exhibit* is comprised of 12 seven-foot banners displaying disability statistics; 20 panels depicting the disability movement, celebrities with disabilities, and person-first language; interactive activities including “Who do you know?” pegboard and the communication “distance rope”; computer quizzes; videos and slides about people with disabilities, disability law, and Universal Instructional Design, and tips for becoming an ally. In addition, the exhibit drew agencies supporting people with disabilities from across Saint Louis to educate the SLU community about inclusion of all people on campus, in the community, and in greater society.

“I am so impressed with my students’ conscientious efforts and genuine dedication

to this project and to disability education,” said Myers. “They are true educators and allies who are engaged in ensuring inclusion for all people. The students and volunteers did a superb job, and I look forward to sharing this exhibit with other colleges and universities for years to come.” Plans are underway to take the exhibit to other campuses. Disability education is *for everyone by everyone*, and disability awareness is an ongoing event. . All members of the campus community – administrators, faculty, staff and students, should recognize it as a shared responsibility. Teaching others about inclusion is not the sole responsibility of disability services or diversity and affirmative action offices; rather, it is up to each of us to model inclusive behavior.

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## Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit

Karen Myers, Saint Louis University

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As Baxter Magolda (1999) purports in *Defining and redefining student learning*, all domains on campus should be integrated, involved, and take responsibility in the learning process. Through respect for others, comfort during interactions, and awareness of disability issues, everyone can be disability educators and allies (Evans, Assadi, & Herriott, 2005; Myers & Bastian, 2010).

It has been twenty years since the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and almost forty years since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both of these laws protect against discrimination of people with disabilities by requiring equal access to employment, education, goods and services.

Americans have progressed in their attitudes and behaviors toward people with disabilities; however, there remain questions and concerns about appropriate communication, comfort level, and inclusive practices. When it comes to interacting with individuals with disabilities, people continually ask, “What should I do?” “How should I respond?” “Is it okay to say that?” “How can I become an ally?” It is our intent that *Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit* will answer some of these questions.

*The Ability Exhibit* is a welcoming, educational, and user-friendly experience for people of all ages. If you are interested in hosting *Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit* on your campus, please contact Karen Myers at [kmyers11@slu.edu](mailto:kmyers11@slu.edu).





## Disability Resource List

Shammah Bermudez, Delaware County Community College

Greetings from the Scholarship Committee! I am pleased to announce that a wonderful new resource is now available on the SCD website. Over the past several months, the scholarship committee has been hard at work developing a **Disability Resource List** for our members. The Disability Resource List is an extensive collection of educational materials related to the different areas of Disability. The list is separated in to different categories including types of disability, disability history, disability and technology, and disability rights. Resources include books, journal articles, movies, television shows, video clips, websites and list-serves. The purpose of the Disability Resource List is to have an educational resource for those working in student affairs and disability services. Whether you are just starting out in the field or are a seasoned pro, we hope you find this list helpful.

While the list is extensive, we understand that it is not possible to capture everything. If you look over the list and see that we missed something, or come across a resource that you think would be a valuable addition please feel free to contact me, as the committee will be looking to update the list a few times a year.

Special thanks go out to Dr. Nancy Evans and Ms. Val Erwin who worked extremely hard to compile, organize and format the Disability Resource List. I also want to thank Andrew Beverly our Webmaster for helping to get the resource list posted, and Kaela Parks, NASPA Disability Knowledge Community Chair, who was kind enough to collaborate with us and share her resources.

Best Regards,

Shammah Bermudez

Scholarship Coordinator

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## SCD SPRING NEWSLETTER:

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1, 2011**

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION: FEBRUARY 15, 2011**

**QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
DISABILITY'S NEWSLETTER?**

**Please contact Newsletter Co-Chairs: Dale O'Neill at [dmoneill@uno.edu](mailto:dmoneill@uno.edu)  
or Sarah Laux at [sarah.laux@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.laux@gmail.com)**

## **Contributors to the Winter Edition of the Standing Committee on Disabilities Newsletter:**

### **Nancy J. Evans and Kristin A. Economos**

#### **Authors of Self-Authorship and Students with Disabilities**

**Nancy J. Evans** is a professor and coordinator of the Student Affairs program within the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University.

**Kristin A. Economos** is a second-year master's student in the Student Affairs program and a graduate assistant in Orientation at Iowa State University.

### **Karen Myers**

#### **Author of Allies for Inclusion: Ability Exhibit**

**Karen Myers**, Associate Professor in Higher Education Administration at Saint Louis University, is a disability advocate, educator and consultant. She is one of the co-founders of the ACPA Standing Committee on Disability, serving as its first chair.

### **Shammah Bermudez**

#### **Author of Disability Resource List**

**Shammah Bermudez** is the Coordinator of Disability Services at Delaware Community College. Shammah serves on the Sustainability Committee for ACPA's Commission for Administrative Leadership as well as serves as the Scholarship Coordinator for ACPA's Standing Committee on Disability.