

# Disability Services Newsletter

SPRING 2011

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Welcome to Disability Services' fourth Newsletter. We are excited about providing you with valuable information that will help support your educational experience at VIU. We hope you will embrace the opportunity to submit stories about disability news, issues, websites, assistive technology, and upcoming events where students with a disability can be informed and supported.



We have had a few changes in our Disability Services Staff in the last month. Glenda Sharpe has retired and Meghan Earley has switched to part time. We have welcomed Denise Hook to a part time position and will soon be welcoming another full-time Education Counsellor, Mary Stasiuk.

Enjoy reading our newsletter and be sure to spread the word that having a disability is not a barrier to education! Nothing is holding you back!

## Welcoming, Valuing, and Supporting Students with Disabilities

The Nanaimo Campus team consists of Education Counsellors Meghan Earley, Debra Hagen, and Denise Hook, soon to be joined by Mary Stasiuk, along with Access Technician, Shirley Mahood and Office Secretary, Sheila Penny.

The Disability Services Office provides information, support services and reasonable accommodation in all of VIU's programs to students with documented permanent, and temporary, disabilities ranging from attention deficit, learning disabilities, chronic health issues, hearing and visual impairments, to physical disabilities and temporary impairments due to accident, illness or injury.

*"Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure."  
- George Edward Woodberry*

Visit us on the web:

[www.viu.ca/  
disabilityservices](http://www.viu.ca/disabilityservices)

## Let's Give a Big Warm Welcome to.... Denise Hook!!!

*Success is the  
sum of small  
efforts, repeated  
day in and day  
out.*

—Robert Collier

Hello all!

I am thrilled to be working at VIU in Disability Services. I have been working with children and adults with disabilities for thirty years in a variety of settings. I have a master's degree in special education and a diploma in visual arts. The majority of my work has been with children and teens so this is a wonderful step in my career in having an opportunity to advocate for people with disabilities in a university setting.

I have two children of my own: a twenty-one year old son and seventeen year old daughter. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoy rock climbing, mountaineering and mountain biking. Visual arts and cultural anthropology are additional passions.

Thank you to everyone for warm welcomes and training support..

Denise Hook



## In Case You Were Interested....



**Youth: Bridges to the Future** is a monthly newsletter designed to connect youth throughout BC and the Yukon. They cover a range of topics each chosen by their readers.

To receive these newsletters go to:

[www.bridgestothefuture.ca](http://www.bridgestothefuture.ca)

[www.facebook.com/bridgestothefuture](https://www.facebook.com/bridgestothefuture)

[www.twitter.com/MDCbridges](https://www.twitter.com/MDCbridges)

## A Student Perspective

Fast forward 30 years, after an interesting life I had done a lot of things others have not had the chance to do but it had taken its toll. I started back at school. I started with ABE to upgrade. It was not easy but I had help this time. Disability services was on my side. I had word recognition software, a digital recorder and even some tutoring. I discovered school could be fun and did well. I began to accept I could get to do this. I even saw a few A's.

This would not have happened without the help and support I received when I needed it. There is no debate that I think outside the box, or

tend to be an intense student but disability services has almost always been on my side to sort me out and help me move towards my dream.

Unfortunately I will not have the opportunity to complete my quest for a diploma but I am only a term away from getting a certificate from what is now an actual university. The personal satisfaction of earning A grades across several disciplines cannot be understated, nor can the amount of help from the disability services it took to get it for me.

I have gotten more than an academic education at VIU. I have learnt about

living with and dealing with my disability through the assistance, persistent help of the staff at disability services. This helped me break away from the fears of being different I had about myself, my poetry and my writing. Now when I see my books on the shelves of libraries and book stores I realize I could not have done it without their help.

I recently learnt that some of the members of that department are moving on or cutting back on their work here. This caused me to think does the institution realize what they meant to me through my difficult times? I hope so and wish them all the best in the future.

Just Ian



*Don't aim for success if you want it; just do what you love and believe in, and it will come naturally.*  
—David Frost

## Juried Art Exhibition.....



Anne Turner's artwork was selected by the Victoria Fine Art Festival from submissions by 35 artists across BC who have suffered from mental illness. The Victoria exhibition took place last November. The work was juried and artists were from a variety of backgrounds, some with masters and others self taught like Anne.

Anne is a student here at VIU and is working towards obtaining a Masters in History.

- **PERSONAL COUNSELLING:** Scheduled appointments and drop-in sessions for personal counselling on a wide range of issues.
- **CAREER & EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING:** Assist to identify a career direction or educational program which matches your interests, abilities, work values and preferences.
- **STUDY SKILLS COUNSELLING:** Support you in your academic studies with effective strategies for better time & stress management, exam anxiety, concentration and motivation.

Check out the website: [www.viu.ca/counselling](http://www.viu.ca/counselling)



## Academic Advising Services

- Clarification of career & educational goals
- Development of your academic & career plans
- Individualized academic support & problem solving
- Answers to your questions about VIU & your post-secondary options

Phone for an appointment: 250-740-6410 or email: [advising@viu.ca](mailto:advising@viu.ca) with your questions.

## Award Opportunities

### Scholarship Resources and Applications on the Net:

NEADS <http://www.neads.ca>

#### Student Awards

<http://www.studentawards.com>

#### Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

<http://www.Idac-taac.ca>

#### Canadian Mental Health Association

<http://www.cmha.ca/youreducation/funding.html>

For more award info visit [www.jobpostings.ca](http://www.jobpostings.ca)

### VIU Money!

- It's never too early to start applying for Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries. Look for applications online at <http://www.viu.ca/financialaid>
- Deadlines for Scholarship & Award applications are Jan. 15 & April 30.
- Deadlines for VIU Bursaries are Oct. 31 & January 31.
- On-line applications are available 2 months before the deadline dates.

## Disability Services

Academic Supports - Grants- Bursaries - Computers— Assistive Technology



Disability Services can help you access the following accommodations:

Campus Orientation

Advanced Registration

Interpreter Services

Peer Mentors

Attendants

Exam Accommodation

Alternate Format Texts

Financial Planning

Assistive Technology

Grant Applications

Note takers

Readers

Study Partners

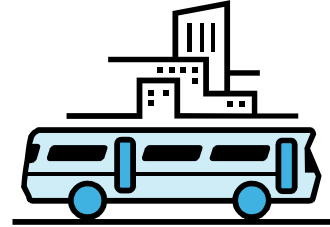
Tutors

## Need a Bus Pass?

Annual bus passes may be purchased for \$45 by people who are receiving disability assistance under BC Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities.

For more information call: 1-866-866-0800 (press 4 then 3)

or write to: Bus Pass Program  
9950 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria V8W 9R3



Visit: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/other.htm#bp> and the BC Transit Internet site:

## How Disability Services Helped Me

My mental health disability has both positively and negatively affected my life. It affected my self-confidence and I questioned my intelligence after my diagnosis. But, I was not going to let that stop me from living the life that I wanted. I have had to overcome many barriers, especially peoples' opinion of whether I could graduate from a post-secondary institution. However, I broke down those barriers, took a chance, and now several years later here I

am graduating with a BA in Creative Writing. Imagine that!

I chose VIU as my post-secondary institution because of their successful creative writing program and the great Bachelor of Fine Arts program they have.

I had a lot of help from Disability Services who hooked me up with Liz, my tutor. This accommodation helped me to improve my grades and to focus my efforts on my work. It also

allowed me to focus on improving my mental health.

My future goal is to have a job in the field of creative writing as an upper level employee in a book store or a publishing company. I'm excited that so many doors are now opened for me thanks to VIU and its great disability services team.

Jessica Bevan

### FINAL EXAMS

Thursday April 14 -

Wednesday April 27

The **FINAL EXAM** schedule is posted. Be sure to check now and get your **EXAM FORMS** in **EARLY...** to Disability Services so that you are guaranteed a space and needed accommodations.

EXAM FORMS MUST BE HANDED IN TO DISABILITY SERVICES

ONE WEEK AHEAD OF EXAM DATE TO RECEIVE NEEDED

ACCOMMODATION SUPPORTS

\* TWO WEEKS NOTICE WHENEVER POSSIBLE



## MyStudyBar – free software to support reading and writing



*Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by someone.*  
—Martina Navratilova

MyStudyBar is software which helps overcome problems that students commonly experience with studying, reading and writing. The tool consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, assembled into one convenient package. MyStudyBar is completely FREE to download and free to use.

MyStudyBar has a whole range of individual tools that have been designed to support the complete study cycle from research, planning and structuring to getting across a written or spoken message. MyStudyBar has 6 sections; each has a drop

down menu for a total of over 15 apps to choose from.

Examples include: Xmind for planning and organization; T-Bar for customising font and colour backgrounds; Lingoos for when you need a talking dictionary; LetMeType for help with text input, and Balabolka for converting text to audio. There's even a speech-to-text app which allows you to talk to your computer (for Vista/Windows 7 only).

You can use MyStudyBar straight from a USB stick (if, for example, you are using a machine that is not your own) or you can

install it directly to the desktop. .

A version of MyStudyBar is available for each of the common Windows operating systems. The main difference between them is that MyStudyBar for Vista/Windows 7 is able to take full advantage of the system's built-in speech recognition capabilities.

To find out more, download MyStudyBar or check out the tutorials, go to:

<http://www.rsc-nescotland.ac.uk/eduapps/mystudybar.php>

Debra Hagen



# How to Avoid Homework

If you put into action some of these strategies, you will reduce the time you spend doing homework. You're not likely to escape homework. Homework is a fact of life for those who make school a successful experience. But you can significantly reduce the amount of homework you have to do and ensure that time is better spent.

## Assess Each Teacher

Ask the teacher or ask fellow students what are the teacher's strengths? What kind of work does he or she assign and what sorts of assignments really count? Quizzes? Projects? Tests? When in the week does the teacher usually assign work?

## Establish Routines

If at all possible, study at the same time and in the same place daily. Whether you have assigned homework or not, preserve that time as quiet time. If you haven't got homework, research study skills, review or read for pleasure. Study important learning during day light hours.

## Use Your Planner

Write in appointments, meetings, practices, etc. Your time is important. Always record assignments as soon as they are given. Don't trust your memory. Chunk down larger jobs and write in deadlines for those tasks. Consult your planner often throughout the day.

## Know Where You Stand

Keep all notes, assignments, handouts, tests, etc. Keep it all dated and in order. Keep a list of grades for all assignments. Keep your binder neat.

## Visit Recent Learning

A few minutes of review time immediately after a lesson will save hours later that night. Memory degrades very quickly in the first few hours. Always use study time if it is given at the end of class, use lunch and use time on the bus for five minute reviews.

## Ask Questions and Ask for Help

Clarify instructions and restate what you've been asked to do. If you don't understand something, reassure yourself that confusion is a part of learning. Knowing you don't understand is far better than not knowing you don't understand. Form questions after you've studied and write them in your planner or on your assignment.

**Make Flash Cards** of the things you think will be on tests as you come to them. Definitions, terms, Vocabulary, Formulas and important dates —keep these handy. Recite the answers out loud often.

**Form a Study Group** for major tests.

## Study

Make it your business to research and learn new methods of study. Become a study expert.



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# Academic Support for YOU at VIU

## Accounting Tutorial Centre

Location: Bldg 250, Room 440

Business students have access to tutorial room 440, Bldg 255

## Library

(250) 740-6151

[www.viu.ca/library/index.asp](http://www.viu.ca/library/index.asp)

## Writing Centre

Free personal, professional help on writing activities.

Library, Building 305, Room 474;

4<sup>th</sup> floor

## Math Learning Centre

Location: Bldg 360, Room 303

Assistance from student-tutors selected from VIU science programs.

## Tutor Help

Check the campus bulletin boards or get a list from your Disability

Services Education Counsellor.

## ABE Learning Centre

Location: Bldg 205, Room 204

Assistance with preparation for ABE courses and program assessment testing. Check their website for more information: [www.viu.ca/cap/index.asp](http://www.viu.ca/cap/index.asp)

## Literacy Nanaimo

Information regarding assistance with basic reading, writing and math (250) 754-8988.

## Tech Support

Need to have your computer text read? Try one of these free screen readers:

Adobe Reader on your computer if documents are in PDF format or

[www.readaloud.com](http://www.readaloud.com)

<http://readplease.com>

Explore on-line English info

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu> OR

[www.etutor.usask.ca](http://www.etutor.usask.ca)

Do you have trouble organizing your thoughts? Try these:

[DropMind](#)

[Graphic Organizers](#)

Can't see text on screen? Try zooming in with zoom text

[www.nanopac.com](http://www.nanopac.com)

Need textbooks that are no longer copy protected?

Google: "project Gutenberg" and type in book title.

Publishes and posts electronic textbooks, course packets, readers for students at [www.etext.net](http://www.etext.net)

or

Want to learn to type?

[www.kidsdomain.com/brain/computer/type.html](http://www.kidsdomain.com/brain/computer/type.html)

[www.senselang.com/](http://www.senselang.com/)

## Computer Training for Individuals Living with Disabilities...

Nanaimo & Region Disability Resource Centre



Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre offers computer courses designed to meet the needs of the consumer. All individuals with disabilities can enter any courses free of charge. People will be assessed to determine current level of ability, personal goals and potential concerns, and a customized plan will be developed.

**The Basic Computer Skills Course** is a 12 week program in a classroom setting. Classes consist of up to four students per class and are held twice a week, for two hours at a time. There are a variety of time slots.

**The Internet Skills Course** consists of 6-8, 2 hour sessions with one-on-one learning with a caring and qualified instructor. Students may attend classes once or twice a week to better fit their schedule.

More information available online at [www.ndrc.org](http://www.ndrc.org),  
in person at 2-4166 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC  
or by email at [tutors@ndrc.org](mailto:tutors@ndrc.org).

If you wish to improve your computer skills this is a free and friendly way to do so.

I'm a student who is deaf and am in my first/second year of a BA in psychology at Vancouver Island University. My career goal is to become an audiologist and to support others that are going through the same barriers and obstacles that I've had to go through.

This is my first year at VIU, but not my first year attending a post secondary institution. I left high school with high grades in academic courses, but my first year of college proved to be incredibly difficult and eventually resulted in failing grades in some of my classes. In high school, classes are slow paced, teachers are flexible, and it didn't really matter if I missed a thing or two. University is, however, a completely different story. I attended a small community

college in my hometown after high school and was doing general science and psychology courses. I had only one interpreter, and that was it. To write notes, to pay attention to whatever the instructor was showing or writing, and to watch the interpreter all at once resulted in a lot of stress and worry. I ended up not being able to learn properly from missing too much information and receiving low grades. I eventually decided to drop out and work full time for a few years.

When I decided to make a second attempt at school I was, for good reason, apprehensive. However, after my initial discussion with Glenda and discovering all the assistance and tools that VIU had to offer, I turned from feeling negative to

feeling positive.

My first semester had five courses compared to three courses at my old college, two interpreters and a captionist to record the entire lecture. Needless to say, my marks went up and I was amazed at how easy getting through the semester was compared to my prior experiences.

I can say without hesitation that Disability Services has made my experience at VIU a positive one. The staff and my interpreters are all wonderful and helpful and I would not have been able to succeed as I have without them.

Stephanie Allan

*Our prime purpose in this life is to help others.*  
—Dalai Lama

## Goodbye Glenda!

Glenda Sharpe, Education Counsellor and Coordinator at Disability Services for many years recently retired and has started spending more time with her other passions – biking, kayaking, traveling, knitting and a brand new grandbaby!

Glenda started working at VIU in 1987 (she must have been a teenager!) and then with Disability Services in 1999. Over the years she has come to be admired and loved for her sense of humour, her energy, her commitment to wellness, her love of learning and for her desire to help all students reach their goals. Throughout her career Glenda worked with thousands of students and her compassion, extensive knowledge, organizational skills and attention to detail helped to ensure those students were as successful as they could possibly be.

We wish Glenda all the best in her future endeavours. One thing we know for certain – she will never be bored!



# Shq'apthut: Gathering Place

Located on VIU's Nanaimo Campus, The Gathering Place will be a center for ceremonies, celebration and learning while fostering understanding for Aboriginal Heritage. All students and members of the community will be welcome to share this special place.

As part of the fundraising for the second phase The Gathering Place will be selling soup and Bannock for 5 dollars .

Dates to keep in mind:

Tuesday, February 22

Tuesday, March 8th

Tuesday, March 22

Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 19th.

The grand opening is planned for April 6th, 2011. Please come and support this beautiful addition to our campus!



## Take Care of Yourself!!!

Did you know that too much stress for too long can lead to heart disease? And that laughing lowers stress and strengthens the immune system?

Take care of yourself! The Vancouver Island University Health and Wellness desk provides students and employees with health information and resources to help them lower their levels of stress.

Some of the resources that they offer are: walk in clinic hours and locations, blood pressure readings, free condoms, health resources, brochures, pamphlets, and BC health guides.

Visit the Health & Wellness Desk and help them to help you live a more happy and stress free life! Building 200—3rd Floor

We want to hear from you!  
If you have a story or artwork  
that you would like to see  
in our next newsletter  
be sure to email  
[disabilityservices@viu.ca](mailto:disabilityservices@viu.ca)

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Phone: 250.740.6446 (Reception) Fax: 250.740.6615 E-mail: [disabilityservices@viu.ca](mailto:disabilityservices@viu.ca)  
Mon./Tues./Wed./Fri. 9am—3:30pm Thurs. 10am—3:30pm Closed for lunch 12—1pm