A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am thrilled to present the inaugural edition of the CLSC Gazette, a newsletter for the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program. CLSC is a two-year certificate program that provides young adults with intellectual disabilities access to a college education and the “college experience.” Through this program, students engage in opportunities to pursue their career and life goals. CLSC is an initiative of the Center for Disabilities Studies in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware and is administered through the UD Office of Professional and Continuing Studies.

In October 2010, the university was one of 27 colleges and universities in the country to receive funding to support a Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). Through this funding, we developed a new post-high school option for students with intellectual disabilities in the state of Delaware. As part of this grant, we hope to establish similar postsecondary education programs around the state.

The grant is led by the principal investigator, Laura Eisenman, Ph.D., associate professor in the School of Education and the faculty advisor, Beth Mineo, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Disabilities Studies and associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

The initial class of CLSC students is now concluding its first year of studies. This newsletter reflects examples of the students’ accomplishments this year. Thank you for supporting the CLSC students and sharing our pride in their success!

Best,

Brian Freedman

Program Director

Articles were researched and contributed by graduate assistant Allison Jacobus and undergraduate assistant Raissa Dempsey.
Our students have had a fantastic first year in CLSC. Students began the year with opportunities to learn about the campus and CLSC and are completing their first year with a number of internship and academic experiences.

In the fall, students spent time orienting to the University of Delaware campus and working together to gain skills to prepare them for their internships in the spring. Classes in the fall focused on goal-setting, career exploration, self-monitoring and communication skills. Students had the opportunity to work together to improve their skills in these areas and to begin thinking about possible career paths. Working closely with instructors and coaches, students developed a strong foundation of work-readiness and academic skills to pursue their goals in the spring semester. Students also participated in a number of clubs and events around the UD campus, including football games and concerts.

During winter session, students got a break from their busy fall schedules to reflect on what they learned and plan for the spring semester. With the help of instructors and coaches, students worked on interview skills and problem-solving. In Problem-Solving Savvy, students were challenged to utilize their problem-solving skills in different settings around the UD community. During Interview Skills, students videotaped and critiqued their own skills and the skills of their classmates to improve their interview performances.

At the beginning of the spring semester, students interviewed with a number of employers on the UD campus and in the community. Students were then placed in internships at a variety of sites, such as UD Grounds and Landscaping, Pet Kare, and the Food Bank of Delaware. With the support of experienced coaches, students have succeeded in building their skills and connecting with different employers.

Several students, including Michael Denny, Drew Netta, Andie Downes and William Edwards, also chose to take classes either on the UD campus or Delaware Technical Community College. Students continued their involvement on campus and created connections with other undergraduate students. Our students also enhanced their skills through one-on-one coaching, goal-setting classes and seminar experiences.

CLSC students have grown so much over the course of this year. We look forward to the fall semester with our new cohort and new opportunities for our current students.

We’d like to thank everyone who has helped make this a great year. Without your support and hard work, we could not have accomplished so much. Thank you!

Wendy Claiser, Debbie Bain, Max Kursh, Melanie Sipko, Joshua Donaldson, Michelle Finegan, Kira Moses, Sophie DeMesse, Chelsea Claiser, Deanna Pedicone, Mary Thomas, Blake Bossert, Linda Grusenmeyer and Mary Culnane

On behalf of everyone involved in the CLSC program, we would also like to thank the undergraduate coaches and mentors who have helped to support our students this year.

Jacqui Knee, Hannah Evans, Lauren Hennessey, Alex Reichl, Danielle Pascetta, Brittany Miller, Jenny Matlack, Alicia Crane, Taylor Potts, Erin Lawlor, Amanda Horowitz, Lisa Leonard, Beth McCabe, Carly Patrick, Juliana Sullivan, Jillian Rubenoff, Emily Tierney, Grace Wesley, Caroline Yeager, Courtney Gil, Francine Gebbia, Brittany Giganti, Alexandra Heller, Danielle Lopez, Marisa Ranauto, Deborah Thompson and Kayla Vanderbeek
INTERNETNS

This spring, our students had the opportunity to participate in internships around the UD campus and community.

Michael Denny interned at the Center for Disability Studies in the Dissemination and Advocacy Unit. He interviewed CLSC students and wrote an article for the CLSC page on the CDS website (see www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-adults-clsc.html). While he has found the experience to be challenging, this internship will help Michael reach his goals as a writer.

Jonathan Pote worked at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel located on the UD campus. He provided maintenance services around the hotel and pool area. Jonathan has enjoyed learning the “behind the scenes” work at the hotel and “flying solo” as his coaching supports were reduced over time. Jonathan is looking forward to new internship experiences in the fall.

Devon Dant interned at the Newark Natural Foods Cooperative and the UD Box Office. She was working to gain the skills she will need to work in a professional office.

Lazyra Cornish worked at the UD Alumni House. She hopes the job skills she gained will help her continue to pursue her career goal of becoming an accountant. Lazyra appreciates that the instructors and coaches who supported her in the program will not let her give up her dreams.

Simon Valenzuela worked at the UD Book Exchange and Newark Natural Foods Cooperative. Simon has enjoyed both of his internship experiences and says he learned that “you have to be precise and accurate” to complete the work.

Special thanks to the internship supervisors who participated in the program and supported our students.

Mike Loftus and Paul Glenn – UD Grounds
Flo Monroe – Newark Natural Foods
Tina Sheing – UD Box Office
Bill Dill – Delaware Book Exchange
Greg Caldwell – UD Courtyard Marriott
Michele Sands – Center for Disability Studies
Justine Talley Beck – UD Alumni Relations
Tracey Bauernschmidt – UD Alumni Relations
Ali Brown – Pet Kare
Brent Godwin – Walgreens
Jacque Williamson – Plumpton Park Zoo
CLASSES

CLSC offers students the opportunity to experience college classes on the UD campus. Michael and Drew both enrolled in From Page to Stage, a theater class offered by the University of Delaware Theatre Department. Michael wanted to get experience in theatre production to further pursue his interests in screen writing. Lazyra Cornish had the opportunity to audit an accounting class at UD. She hopes her experience in her class will help her pursue a career in accounting.

William Edwards

My class is small and diverse and my teacher is awesome...There are people from other countries and I am learning about their cultures...I love to meet new people and work in a diverse group. —William Edwards

Two students, William Edwards and Andie Downes, embarked on a new, rewarding experience this spring by taking classes at Delaware Technical Community College. For William, Karen Eliason’s Pre-Reading class was a positive experience all-around. “My class is small and diverse and my teacher is awesome...There are people from other countries and I am learning about their cultures...I love to meet new people and work in a diverse group.” William also credits this experience with improving important life skills such as prioritizing and problem-solving.

William’s teacher found him to be a wonderful asset to her class. His sense of humor, positive attitude, maturity and eagerness to exchange ideas with his classmates made the classroom environment conducive to learning and success. Mrs. Eliason notes that William’s confidence has grown since the beginning of the semester, as have his independent learning skills.

Andie, after taking a biology class this semester, is one step closer to achieving her career goals. She hopes to work with animals at a nature conservatory, and learned a lot of valuable information this past semester. She is grateful to her coach, Michelle, for helping her study effectively and communicate with her professor.

Andie, William, Drew, Michael, and Lazyra thrived in their academic endeavors. Their accomplishments serve as inspiration for their peers and future CLSC students. Mrs. Eliason shared an important message about the potential for achievement in the classroom and in the community, “With extra assistance, students with disabilities of any type can succeed! The extra effort they must invest to reach their goals earns respect from me and their peers as we observe their diligence. Their strong work ethic will be an asset as they continue their studies and eventually enter the work force.”

Thank you to the faculty who worked with our students this semester!

Allan Carlson
Karen Eliason
Arba Henry
Marysol Lavender
Rita Kinsley
CLUBS

Although our students had a busy first year with new classes and internships, they also became active members of the UD community by joining clubs on campus. Some joined clubs that appealed to their existing interests, and others found opportunities to try something new.

Best Buddies is a club that many of our students are involved with. This club helps foster one-to-one friendships between CLSC students and other UD students while also providing opportunities for community involvement and building leadership skills. One important Best Buddies initiative that students worked on this semester was the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign to eliminate the use of the “R-word.” They handed out t-shirts and stickers to members of the UD community, taking on roles of advocates and leaders.

Lazyra’s desire to have some fun on campus led her to take her first Zumba class. She had a great time, and would like to attend the class again. Devon enjoys playing cards and socializing with MAGIC: The Gathering Card Club once a week.

Matt is an active member of the UD community, participating in a number of clubs and activities on campus. He enjoys playing on the green with his “buddy,” working on goals, developing new friendships with his coach and exploring his love for the outdoors with his fellow Future Farmers of America members. Matt’s favorite part of CLSC and UD has been joining a variety of clubs and meeting new people.

CLSC IN THE NEWS

Our students’ experiences on Disability Mentoring Day were documented in the University of Delaware Messenger. http://www.udel.edu/udmessenger/vol20no1/stories/otg-disabilities-mentors.html

The importance of funding for TPSID programs, including CLSC, was reported on in the US News and World Report. http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/02/14/obamas-budget-leaves-funding-unclear-for-disabled-college-students

For more information or to receive application materials and program updates on CLSC, please contact: clsc-info@udel.edu or 302-831-2940.
TRANSITION CONFERENCE

On April 3, 2012, CLSC students presented at the Community of Practice Delaware Transition Conference held in Dover, Del. The Transition Conference is a yearly conference hosted by the Delaware Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for students aged 14–21 receiving special education services, their parents, educators and professionals. Students presented information about their experiences in the CLSC program with their family members and instructors in a presentation titled, “Maximizing Access to Higher Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.”

The students’ presentation included the performance of a skit to demonstrate the skills they have worked on in the program and a question and answer session with the audience. Max Kursh, internship coordinator for CLSC, observed, “The attendees really enjoyed Matt, Drew and Oliver’s skit, which demonstrated the problem-solving, communication and team-work skills they have learned over the past year.”

The students enjoyed their presentation experience. Drew Netta described the presentation as a "powerful experience." Drew loves public speaking and wants to be an advocate for people with disabilities. Drew states that he wants to show his own determination and “inspire students and ease parents’ worries.” He believes this program can help students achieve goals that “they never thought they could do.”

Many of the students had not had the opportunity to present publicly before. Lazyra Cornish felt nervous about presenting but found she was able to “let it flow” when it was her turn to speak.

Oliver Dynes felt a sense of pride after performing in a skit to demonstrate his problem-solving skills. He enjoyed working as part of a team with his classmates to prepare the presentation.

Geoffrey Steggell enjoyed taking part in the presentation and also meeting other advocates for people with disabilities at the conference.

Approximately 75 people, including parents, students and teachers, attended the students’ presentation. The audience responded enthusiastically and was impressed with our students’ presentation skills. Students and staff hope to repeat this positive experience next year!
CLSC COACHES SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Alex Reichl, Junior, UD Education Major

As a coach seeing this program progress from the very beginning, I am so proud of the growth of all the students and staff. I feel that this program is doing great things for these young people and I am truly proud to be a part of it. The students we work with all have special talents that make our experiences as coaches very interesting, challenging, but ultimately rewarding. I look forward to working with these students every day because they all bring something different to the table and it keeps me on my feet. To see the students reach their goals, whether short-term or long-term, is why I have a passion for this field and supporting people with disabilities.

Not only do I think this is an incredibly beneficial program for our students, I also think the coaches gain a lot as well. These students really look up to us as coaches and it really challenges us to be focused and work as hard as possible for the students so they can achieve their goals.

Lauren Hennessey, Junior, UD Education Major

As a peer mentor and coach in the CLSC program, I have gained knowledge, skills and practice to take with me in my future career goal of becoming an elementary special education teacher, and for that I am grateful. My experience in CLSC has allowed me to transfer material I learn from textbooks, research and the classroom and apply it to real work with students to benefit their growth and witness its effects.

I have also been lucky enough to work and collaborate with many people who have ample amounts of experience in their field. Everyone is always supportive and able to give their helpful suggestions and methods for coaching from their previous experiences. They are a helpful resource and have helped me progress in my coaching abilities.

My favorite aspect of CLSC is the one-to-one relationships I have built with the students through individualized coaching sessions. In these sessions, I get to directly see student progression in life skills through small steps of success that will help them reach their ultimate goals. Working together, we are able to tailor methods and techniques that work best for them through a person-centered approach. Every student is different, and I love that I have been able to observe new learning and progression each day. I have learned that motivation and determination are key for the students’ success.

Overall, CLSC has let me be a part of a reciprocal relationship in which I am able to apply my love and passion for teaching while also being taught.

I know I have learned a lot about teaching and adapting to different students’ learning styles. We learn to collaborate with the rest of the coaches and staff to find the best ways to support our students, and this is an extremely valuable skill. Overall, I feel CLSC will continue to grow and continue to be a program that really gives these young adults the power, motivation and skills to succeed wherever they want to in life.

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Overall, CLSC has let me be a part of a reciprocal relationship in which I am able to apply my love and passion for teaching while also being taught. I have learned so much from the CLSC students and feel we are all individuals who have grown and developed throughout our time together. In the rest of my experience at CLSC, I can only hope to leave as much of an impact on the students I work with as they have left on me.
Looking Forward to the Fall

We are excited to welcome a new cohort of students to CLSC in fall 2012. We are looking forward to meeting our new students and including their talents and aspirations in our program. New students can look forward to making new friends and gaining experiences on the UD campus.

Returning students will continue to build on their work experiences and explore their career and academic goals. Students will be pursuing different internships, developing interview skills and searching for jobs.

For more information about CLSC, visit us online at http://www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-adults-clsc.html.

If you have questions about the CLSC program, contact clsc-info@udel.edu or 302-831-2940.

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