Tutoring is All in the Family

If our new tutor Shannon Buchal looks a little familiar, it may be she reminds you of her mom, math tutor Dawn Buchal.

Shannon recently graduated from Gettysburg College with a double major in history and theater. She tutors students in history, research, writing, and technology. “When I was little I wanted to be a teacher,” said Shannon. “As I grew up, my focus shifted to museum work.” Museum work, especially creating displays and exhibits, allows her to help history come alive for people. She recently completed an internship at the American History Museum at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Locally, she has worked with the Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum in Poughkeepsie and Historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz.

Shannon focused her history studies on the American Revolution, World War II, and Islamic history, but she will be working with students in whatever areas they need. “I’m willing to learn alongside whatever they bring me.”

Can You Help Us Spread the Word? We Are Accommodative Services

Have you heard? Our office has changed its name to better reflect what we do and how we interact with students. Many students who might benefit from our services associated our previous name, Disability Services, with negative connotations. We know there have been students who did not seek services and accommodations to which they were entitled and chose not to disclose to teachers that they needed help or were registered with our office. Please help us spread the word by always referring to us by our new name Accommodative Services, and always including the following statement in every course syllabus:

“Students with disabilities who believe that they may need testing or classroom accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact The Office of Accommodative Services at 845-790-3631/SSB 303 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.”

What We Offer for Students

One-On-One Academic Support including, but not limited to, time management and organization, study skills, note taking, test taking, adaptive tech training, and academic advisement.

Workshops/Group Work based on student need: study groups can be customized for a particular subject or desired training.

Technology like CCTV, screen readers and magnifiers, speech recognition software, alternate text format, and self-editing software.

What We Offer for Faculty

Instructional Support: strategies are offered for effective disability-related teaching methods. In some cases, supplemental instruction of content material may be provided.

Early Alert/Electronic Progress Reports which allow faculty to provide early intervention warnings with specific feedback and suggestions that our professional tutors will use when they work one-on-one with students academically at-risk.

New Options for Sending and Returning Tests: Please note our secure testing envelope has a new option for test return. We can now scan completed tests and email them back to you. If you choose this option, please remember to indicate your email address, and always fill out all sections of the test instructions. You can also send your test by email to Linda Bertolozzi, bertoloz@sunydutchess.edu. If you submit by email, make sure you include instructions for administration and return of the exam.
When you’ve met one person with Asperger’s...

People who work with students with Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) have a saying: “When you’ve met one person with Asperger’s, you’ve met ONE person with Asperger’s.” There is a cluster of common AS traits, but the extent that AS shapes each person’s life and education varies greatly. We have probably all had students with AS, and have noticed that they have many qualities that can make them excellent students:

- Normal to very high intelligence
- Good verbal skills, including rich vocabularies
- Originality and creativity including a propensity for “thinking outside the box”
- Honesty and ingenuity
- Careful attention to details
- Strong work ethic, with particular attention to accuracy and quality of work
- Special interests that can be tailored toward productive work or hobbies—individuals with AS who have intensive knowledge in one or more specific areas can channel their expertise toward new discoveries and creations in their chosen field
- Keen senses allow some people with AS to see, hear or feel subtle changes in the environment that others do not, resulting in phenomenal powers of observation

But these talented people can also struggle with routine social, organizational, and classroom experiences. Many have:

- A tendency to say the “wrong thing” or appear awkward or rude
- Trouble perceiving the intentions or emotions of other people because they misinterpret facial expression, body language, and vocal intonation
- Slower than average auditory, visual, or intellectual processing
- Challenges with organizing, initiating, analyzing, prioritizing, and completing tasks
- A tendency to focus on the details of a given situation and miss the big picture
- Intense, narrow, time-consuming and sometimes eccentric personal interests
- Inflexibility and resistance to change and vulnerability to stress, which may trigger anxiety, depression, etc.
- Trouble fitting in—they may feeling they are on the “wrong planet”
- Extreme sensitivity—or relative insensitivity—to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or textures

Our office provides supports to help students with AS succeed—things like test taking accommodations, notetakers, adaptive technology (including recorders for lectures), and tutors for both subject content and time management skills. But on any college campus you can be sure there are students who have not been formally diagnosed. If you know or suspect students in your classes have AS, as a teacher you can take many simple steps to help them—you can provide priority seating, access to power point presentations or instructor’s notes in advance of class, behavioral guidance, and, if appropriate, a referral to our office. Our professional staff can also offer you guidance and classroom strategies for dealing with challenging or unacceptable behavior. Together, we can help all our students toward academic success.

DCC Career Ends with a Life-Changing Experience

Daniel Zuckerman, an active participant in programs and supports offered by the Office of Accommodative Services, graduated in December from the LAH program with a concentration in journalism. Dan was a student aide in Dean Carol Stevens office and a DJ with his own show, The Time Warped Hour, on Dutchess Radio. He celebrated his graduation with a life-changing trip to Israel through the Birthright organization. “Praying at the Western Wall and riding camels in the desert were some of my favorite activities,” said Dan, pictured here on a camel headed to a Bedouin camp.

Dan has started classes at SUNY Purchase. “I’ve chosen Purchase for its beautiful campus, artsy atmosphere, and of course its excellent journalism program.” Dan is working toward getting his own show on the Purchase radio station WPSR, and has already been assigned an article for the school newspaper. Good luck Dan!