Welcome to Disability Services located in building 200 of the Nanaimo campus. The disability services team is pleased to provide services to students, staff and faculty at Vancouver Island University.

This newsletter is designed to give you some of the information that you need to make your experience at Vancouver Island University welcoming and adaptable to your educational needs. In this ninth edition you can find information about services available on campus, community programs, the benefit to completing your taxes on time, and learn more about the amazing things people with disabilities are accomplishing in our community and worldwide.

If you have any questions, or suggestions for future newsletters please contact Disability Services by email disabilityservices@viu.ca.

Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass...It’s about learning to dance in the rain.

-Vivian Greene
If you receive Provincial Disability Assistance it is important to file your taxes every year. Filing your taxes can mean an additional $400 or more in annual income from various tax benefits. Despite the benefits of filing their taxes, as many as 20,000 disability assistance recipients are missing out.

**Filing your taxes may entitle you to $400 or more every year from:**

- GST credit
- Provincial Sales Tax Credit
- BC Carbon Tax Credit

Your taxes are also used to determine your eligibility for other programs including the child tax credit and the working income tax benefit. Your tax return also allows you to apply for important benefits like the Registered Disability Savings Plan grants and Bonds.

**Important notes:**

If you are on Provincial Disability Assistance, filing your taxes is important as it allows you to

- receive GST Credit, Provincial Sales Tax Credit and BC Carbon Tax Credit.
- These benefits are non-reportable, which means they will not affect benefits paid to you
- There are services available to help you file your taxes for free

⇒ Filing your taxes is quick and easy, taking as little as 30 minutes

**Tax AID DABC is available to help you prepare your taxes, and is available to work with you face to face, by mail, fax or email.** You can contact Tax AID DABC by phone at 604-872-1278 (in Vancouver) or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-Free) or via email at taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org.

![Piggy bank](http://taxaiddabc.org/)

**Don’t forget!**

Your tuition paid at VIU is a non-refundable tax benefit and may reduce the amount of taxes owing!

Your T2202A forms will be available for printing from your student record by February 2nd, 2016.
Vancouver Island University’s Health and Wellness Centre Now Open

Staffed by Nurse Practitioner Diane Middagh, and supported by Medical Office Assistant (MOA) Heather Carr, VIU’s Health and Wellness Centre is available to provide care for VIU students. Services provided by the clinic include:

- Biopsy, suturing and stitches
- Birth control and family planning
- Consultations
- Counselling
- Diagnostic services, laboratory services and referral to radiological services
- Education
- Gynecological services
- Laboratory testing, urinalysis, cultures
- Mental health and wellness
- Physical examinations
- Referral to other health care providers including diagnostic, treatment, procedures, and care
- Sexual health and wellness
- Specialist Care
- Well Woman and Well Man (education, health maintenance, preventive medicine)

Appointments are recommended, though there are a limited number of walk-in appointments available daily. The facilities are brand new, and feature accessible examination tables.

Hours: Monday to Friday 9 am to 3:30 pm
For an Appointment Call: 250.740.6620
Located in Building 200, Top Floor
Drop-ins Welcome
VIU Celebrates International Day of Persons With Disabilities

With over a billion people worldwide having some form of a disability, the message for the 2015 International Day of Persons with Disabilities rings loud and clear. Inclusion matters: access and empowerment of people of all abilities.

Vancouver Island University’s Disability Services team member, Denise Hook, put together a showcase of the various community support networks available on Vancouver Island for this annual event. This year’s event took place on December 3rd and featured 22 community groups, including:

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<tr>
<td>Nanaimo Mental Health and Addiction Services</td>
<td>Disability Financial Planning</td>
<td>Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs</td>
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<td>BC Schizophrenia Society</td>
<td>IDHHC</td>
<td>Diabetes Association</td>
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<td>Nanaimo Brain Injury Society</td>
<td>MS Society</td>
<td>Nanaimo Nitro Power Soccer</td>
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<td>CAYA</td>
<td>Nanaimo Association for Community Living</td>
<td>Special Olympics of BC – Nanaimo Chapter</td>
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<td>WEST</td>
<td>Supportive Apartment Living</td>
<td>Self-Advocates of Nanaimo</td>
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<td>Nanaimo Disability Resource Center</td>
<td>Nanaimo Food Box</td>
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A huge thank you to everyone who came out to support this amazing event.
International Day of Persons With Disabilities Continued...

With a record number of participants, 22, the benefits of the event were widespread. Community supporters, students and staff had the opportunity to learn about the various services available throughout the community for persons with disabilities.

The most positive feedback on the event came from the community supporters who came out to share their services with the public. The general consensus was that events like these are important as they encourage networking and allow knowledge of services available within the community to be shared with everyone in attendance.

One of the key observations from participants was the value that coming together as a community has, not only for those with disabilities and their support systems, but also for those community programs that exist to provide support. Being a part of a community and knowing what support services are available to help make day to day activities easier is a key component of enriching the lives of those with a disability.

Events like the International Day of Persons with Disabilities opens doors of communication between community partners, those with disabilities, their support systems, professors, and those who don’t have a disability themselves, but want to learn more about how they can support friends, family, classmates and neighbours.

A huge thank you to Denise Hook for all your hard work putting this event together.

It’s Not Our Disabilities, It’s Our Abilities That Count

- Chris Burke (Actor)
Welcome to VIU Advising.

Educational Advisors can help you achieve a more fulfilling educational experience through an advising relationship. While post secondary education can be one of life's most rewarding experiences, it can be a confusing adventure for some, and an intimidating process for others.

With an Educational Advisor you can:

- Explore career and post secondary options
- Choose or change your program or courses
- Select courses that will help you clarify your options
- Clarify your educational goals
- Develop your educational plans
- Explore the impacts of dropping a course
- Make a switch to a new program
- Get connected with appropriate resources

The Advising Centre is located on the top floor of Building 200 at Nanaimo campus.

Email: Send your questions to advising@viu.ca

Phone: Toll Free at 1.888.920.2221 ext 6410 or 250.740.6410

Educational Advisors are available for drop in appointments between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm Monday through Friday (Wednesdays from 10:30 am). Some 8:30 am, 3:00 and 3:30 pm pre-booked appointments are available. Please call the office to discuss availability.

We are your partners in learning. Connect early and often.

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it

-Henry Ford
Employment Workshop for Students with Disabilities

Hello, my name is Josh Drummond, I am a 3rd year student in VIU’s Bachelor of Social Work program and currently working in a practicum placement with VIU Disability Services.

I have previously worked at Nanaimo Youth Service as an Employment Advisor and would like to combine my existing experience with my new knowledge to hold an employment workshop for students with disabilities.

Canadians with disabilities face much higher rates of unemployment than Canadians without disabilities. In this workshop we will discuss targeting your individual strengths and jobs that suit you, when to disclose a disability to an employer, as well as general jobs application tips. If any of these topics interest you please join me on:

    Thursday, March 17 at 1pm.
    Location: Building 200, room 106.

If there are any questions regarding the workshop or employment in general I can be reached at practicumstudentviu@gmail.com

Spotlight on Braille

Braille was developed by Louis Braille when he was a teenager, and was based upon the Night Writing system created by Charles Barbier in the early 1800s as a way to allow soldiers in the field to communicate at night.

The Braille system that was developed by Louise Braille involved the use of twelve dots within cells, while modern Braille uses only six dots to allow a space small enough for the finger tip to easily cover.

Braille has three distinct levels that are used. Grade 1 Braille is very long and involves spelling out each word in its entirety. Grade 2 involves the use of words, and capturing one word within each cell. Grade 3 Braille is a form of shorthand that is used mainly in personal communications and journals.

Braille translators spend six months learning to transcribe into Braille before they are fully certified.

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You can do it!
VIU is building on opportunities for all students to access support. We now have a Learning Strategist, Success Coach and Peer Coaches available for all students on campus.

The Learning Strategist is available to collaborate with you to optimize your learning process. Creating a purposeful, goal-oriented plan can make your studies faster, easier, more enjoyable and create transferable career skills. Topics may include time management, organization, motivation, study skills, exam tips or be tailored to your own personal needs. Strategies and techniques will support your plan to create lifelong learning. Individual appointments and a variety of workshops are offered. You may register for the Thursday workshops or simply drop-in. Everyone welcome, anytime!

The Success Coach is available to collaborate with you to inspire you to become the student you want to be! Sometimes getting to a new place or achieving a goal feels like walking a board suspended 100 feet in the air between two buildings. A coach can inspire students to lower the board, discover insights and take action towards their desired future. Other students need to stop procrastinating and manage their time better so that they have far more energy and greater focus for what is important to them. What's so good about that is that students make progress towards their vision of a successful student. In collaboration with a success coach, students are encouraged to shift perspective, breathe and take deliberate steps towards their desired future.

Peer Success Coaches are seasoned students who have done some training and have volunteered to mentor their peers using a "coach approach". These students have successfully integrated into student life at VIU and have done well in their programs. These students can show you the ropes, talk about VIU resources and student life, how to connect with your professors and basically help you get connected on campus. They have also mastered some tools and techniques for studying and learning the material in their discipline, which they can pass on to you. Peer Coaches are trained and supported by the Student Success Coach from Student Success Services.

We are located in the Library Commons near the central stairwell.

https://www2.viu.ca/studentsuccessservices/index.asp
Spotlight on Chris Burke (Actor)

Born on August 26, 1965, Chris Burke has not let Down Syndrome control his life. Chris starred in the show, Life Goes On, as Corky from 1989 to 1993. The character of Corky holds the distinction of being the first depiction of a person with Down’s Syndrome on a network show. His role on Life Goes On earned him a Golden Globe nomination for best supporting actor in a series, mini-series or motion picture made for television in 1990.

After Life Goes On Chris had the opportunity to work on various other projects including the movie, Jonathan: The Boy Nobody Wanted. The Boy Nobody Wanted is based on a true story and focuses on the fight for the rights of disabled persons after a compassionate volunteer saw the potential in Jonathan and fought for the right to adopt him. Her battle was successful despite protests from Jonathan’s parents who abandoned him and refused a life saving operation being performed. Other roles include a recurring role in the show Touched by an Angel, ER and The Promised Land.

Chris works as the Goodwill Ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society and has been part of numerous public service announcements designed to increase public understanding of Down Syndrome.

In addition to his work as Goodwill Ambassador Chris uses his voice for another purpose. Touring the United States with his folk band, Forever Friends, as the lead singer.

Having down syndrome is like being born normal. I am just like you, and you are just like me. We are all born in different ways, that is the way that I can describe it. I have a normal life.
New and Exciting Apps to Make Life Easier

**Stepping Stones**

Recommended for: children and adults with autism, attention or auditory processing deficits, learning disabilities and anxiety.

Benefits: Allows users to customize daily routines (paths) using photos from their own device, as well as provides the option to use text-based instructions, or voice prompts. Stepping Stones allows for the creation of daily schedules that can assist in giving freedom and independence to their users.

Cost: $0.99. Available through the Apple App Store

**Hear You Now**

Recommended for: those with difficulties hearing, but aren’t ready for a hearing aid

Benefits: This easy to use app is perfect for those times that you are in a noisy environment, have difficulty hearing and want to remain in the conversation but struggle due to hearing loss. Ideal for use in restaurants, meetings, at parties and while watching television. Your headphones turn your Apple Device into an amplification device.

Hear You Now Developers want you to know that this app is not designed as a permanent solution. If you have consistent difficulties hearing please be sure to make an appointment to have your hearing checked by a professional.

Cost: FREE. Available through the Apple App Store
Kurzweil—Text to Speech Program Now Available to all Vancouver Island University Students

Vancouver Island University is pleased to provide the text to speech program Kurzweil to all students at the Vancouver Island University. Kurzweil is available at any computer on campus, and is also available as a free download to your home computer, laptop or tablet. The many benefits of the Kurzweil program include:

* Writing Strategies including word prediction, mind-mapping and editing
  * Text to Speech * Study Skills * Read the Web

Staff and students are given the opportunity to customize their reading experience, including the ability to highlight sections of the text being reviewed, set limits on how far to read, and add voice notes to the document for later use. Kurzweil also gives users the option to have their text read to them as they type it.

The value of Kurzweil doesn’t stop at reading and editing documents, you can use the Kurzweil Read the Web option to have your favourite webpages read to you.

For more information on Kurzweil visit the Student Success website at: https://www2.viu.ca/studentsuccessservices/learningstrategist/Technology.asp
Counselling Services for Students  
A Place To Turn When You Need Help

Professional, Safe and Confidential

Counselling Services offers free, confidential, and professional support to enrolled VIU students. Counsellors collaborate with students in a compassionate setting to clarify concerns, establish goals and explore resources for well-being. We offer a variety of services which can assist in the management of personal challenges allowing students to have the best university experience possible.

To set up your first appointment, drop by the Health & Wellness Centre on the 3rd floor of Building 200 or call 250 740-6416 from 8:30-4:00 pm.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the 2014/15 school year 708 students on campus were registered with Disability Services, with various levels of support provided by the staff in the Disability Services Department.

Out of those 121 graduated during the 2014/15 school year from various programs.

During the 2014/15 school year Disability Services assisted with over 1300 exams and quizzes including:

- 808 Mid-terms/Quizzes
- 541 Final Exams

Please remember! If you write your exams in Disability Services make sure to get those requests in early: One week ahead for midterms, 2 weeks ahead of time for Final Exams!
Missing Something?
If you’ve misplaced any items recently consider checking the Lost and Found, located in building 315 room 110. Found items can be turned in at the cafeteria, the library loans desk or directly to security in building 315 room 110. If checking the Lost and Found for your items please note that items often do not make it there until the end of the week, so you may need to wait a few days to claim them.

Services for Aboriginal Students
Located in Shq’apthut — A Gathering Place, the Services for Aboriginal Students Team is available to support Aboriginal students in making a successful transition to Vancouver Island University and to assist students to succeed in their academic endeavours by providing direct services and appropriate referrals. Staff are available to listen and support students with academic or personal concerns, and promote academic, cultural, recreational and social activities in partnership with Aboriginal Students. Celebration feasts, potlucks and community events are supported by Services for Aboriginal Students.

Location: Building 170. Tel: 250-740-6510. Fax: 250-740-6385 Email: sas@viu.ca
Phone, email or drop by to make an appointment

Awards & Scholarships!
The next deadline for submitting your application for the numerous Awards & Scholarships available through the Vancouver Island University is quickly approaching. Be sure to log onto your Student Account and complete your Scholarship, Award & Bursary Profile before March 31/2016 to be considered!

For more information on Awards & Scholarships contact the Financial Aid Department
Location Building 200, Room 205 Contact Information Tel: 250-740-6423 Fax: 250-740-6229 Email: FinancialAidInfo@viu.ca

Any questions or comments about our newsletter? Contact Disability Services by email at: disabilityservices@viu.ca
SPOTLIGHT ON HELEN KELLER

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 with the ability to see and hear, but lost both senses at 18 months of age after a serious illness. She holds the distinction of being the first deaf and blind person to receive a college degree. Keller graduated from the Radcliffe College, with the support of Mark Twain and Alexander Graham Bell.

Helen was a advocate for the rights of those with a disability, as well as women’s rights, being a member of the suffragette movement.

In addition to her political involvement, Helen was an accomplished writer with 12 books and articles published during in her life time. Her educational journey is depicted in the movie The Miracle Worker, a film and a Broadway play based on her autobiography, The Story of My Life.

Helen passed away June 1, 1968 at the age of 87. She left behind her a legacy of success in the face of adversity, and was the recipient of many honours including The Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal, and six honorary degrees.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

- Helen Keller
**Vancouver Island University’s Writing Centre**

Did you know that the Vancouver Island University offers all students the opportunity to improve their writing through the Writing Centre? This is a free service for all students and is available face to face, by appointment, or during drop-in hours, and even through online appointments!

Who can use the centre? All students of Vancouver Island University can use the services of the writing centre. The writing center is not only for students who have problems with writing but also for good writers who want to become better writers.

Who are the tutors? Tutors, who change every semester, are faculty from various disciplines. The English Department and International Education are always represented. Tutors have also come from the Criminology Department, the Philosophy Department, and the Faculty of Nursing.

Come for help at any stage of the writing process:

- Brainstorming and choosing a topic
- Developing a thesis
- Supporting and developing ideas
- Organizing your essay
- Revising a rough draft of your essay
- Citing sources and using reference material
- Improving sentence structure
- Understanding punctuation

Your responsibility:

- Bring your assignment sheet.
- Check with your instructor to become aware of expectations of the assignment.
- Know which citation system your instructor expects (e.g., MLA, APA etc.).
- Bring a PRINT-OUT of any writing you wish us to look at.

For more information call:

John Hill, Coordinator  
(250) 753-3245, Local 6191

The Library – Fourth Floor – Room 474  
Website: http://sites.viu.ca/writingcentre/
Hello there,

My name is Jaime Stephens and I have had the pleasure of working as the Work-Op Student within the Disability Services Department at the Nanaimo Campus this year. I am a third year Anthropology Major, with a minor in Journalism, and have thoroughly enjoyed my time working within Disability Services.

Working within Disability Services has given me the opportunity to share my experience with others, and communicate on a variety of disability related topics through the bulletin board and through creating this newsletter.

My involvement in the International Day of Persons with Disabilities event held on campus in December 2015 was a highlight of my academic career, and the lessons learned will be carried with me throughout my life.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff working in Disability Services for their support of me, and of all the students who are registered with them. My advice to everyone looking at attending VIU in the future, and current students alike is to get to know your campus and all of the services available to you. You might be surprised at the opportunities you will find.

Jaime Stephens

Disability Services

Disability Services are available through the Student Affairs Departments at any one of our campuses. Learn about accommodation supports by making an appointment with a Disability Services Access Specialist today!

We can help you with:

* Campus Orientation * Exam Accommodation * Note taking support * Tutors
  * Priority Registration * Alternate Format Texts * Interpreter Services
  * Assistive Technology * Grant applications

Nanaimo Campus, Building 200 - Second floor, Room 214

Phone: (250) 740-6446
Email: disabilityservices@viu.ca