

KATRINA S.O.S. (Serve Our Students)

A Response from – and for -- the Disability Services Community



Flooded campus view of Tulane University after Hurricane Katrina

In August, 2005, Hurricane Katrina descended on the Gulf Coast, leaving more than 1200 dead in its wake, and doing an estimated \$125 billion of damage. Among those whose lives were disrupted by the storm and its aftermath, thousands of college students were displaced, as colleges and universities across the Gulf Coast states had to shut down, some for months, in the aftermath of the storm. The higher education community responded by opening their doors to these students. Colleges across the country offered to take in students who were unable to continue their studies at their home institution, offering them an immediate, temporary place on campus. These host campuses were prepared to forego the paperwork, from admissions applications to housing requests. They simply said, “Come. We’ll work it out when you get here.”

As you will read in these pages, the disability services community did their part to reach out, as well. What would it mean for the disabled students who wanted to pick up their studies in a new and different place – but who came with no formal documentation and no chance of getting any in the foreseeable future? How could we help those students to adjust to life in a new environment, however temporary, and how could we make sure that they had the accommodations and support they needed?

Katrina SOS (Serve Our Students) was a response to those questions. The information compiled here has been housed on the AHEAD website since September, 2005. In the two weeks following the storm, experienced service providers from across the country offered up their experience and expertise. As you will see, there was no attempt to provide parallel construction in the information suggested regarding students with various disabilities. Each section was written independently by the folks credited, and the intent was to disseminate the information quickly. We didn’t care if it was pretty!

After all these years, AHEAD archived this information in this summer’s revamp of the AHEAD website (2018). Hurricane Katrina is behind us, but similar emergencies have (and will) continue. More to the point, the information gathered in response to Hurricane Katrina provides wonderful insight on how to reach out to students with disabilities through intake interviews. It reminds us to make the most of the information provided by the best, single source we have for how to help... the students themselves.

It was an honor to be a part of this joint effort.

Jane Jarrow
Editor
Disability Access Information and Support (DAIS)

Katrina SOS

S.O.S. - serve our students: a response to Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina is the worst disaster to hit the United States in 100 years. Not since the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 has there been such a toll in human life, and the damage to property is unfathomable.

A number of institutions of higher education appear to have been directly in the storm path and are likely to have suffered extensive damage. That means that thousands of students, including students with disabilities, will see their educational careers significantly disrupted -- a horrific blow to folks whose lives have already been devastated by this natural disaster and its aftermath.

Among these students will most certainly be students with disabilities. As is their experience in living with a disability, the impact of Hurricane Katrina on their lives could be even more complicated than for their classmates. Along with everything else that has been lost, many will have lost critical documentation of their disability and past history of services -- and may have no conceivable means of retrieving or recreating that documentation in the foreseeable future.

Institutions of higher education across the country are stepping forward to offer their help in providing a safe haven for displaced students, and a chance to resume their lives and their education as quickly as possible. As these students are absorbed into our campus communities, it is appropriate for the disability services unit to do its part in creating a welcoming atmosphere that will allow students who have already experienced so much loss to get on with their educational careers.

For students with disabilities who arrive on our campuses without formal documentation, it is appropriate to consider what options and alternatives we can provide that will allow them access to services and support through nontraditional mechanisms. Moreover, the successful integration of students with disabilities into host institutions will take more than a welcoming campus climate or disability services office. They will need help in orienting themselves to a new campus/community. They will need help in finding and maintaining their focus in the wake of their devastating losses. They will need the patience and understanding of those around them.

The membership and leaders of AHEAD have watched with growing concern over the past week as the situation in the Gulf Coast region has deteriorated. While many of us have offered both prayers and financial support to the recovery efforts, we cannot be on the spot to provide more active assistance to the thousands of people whose lives have been so significantly disrupted. We can, however, make every effort to be prepared to offer assistance to the students with disabilities who hope to move beyond this tragedy. This information has been developed to provide support to disability service providers in higher education who are likely to be the "first stop" on the long road to educational

recovery for students with disabilities displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The information and suggestions you read here have been contributed by active members of the DSS community in hopes of assisting colleagues in the task of supporting these unfortunate campus newcomers. We invite you to browse through all of the sections included with this information, whether you need them now or not, so that you will be aware of the resources available and can use them for yourself or others, as need arises.

The information compiled here was gathered quickly, in response to a perceived urgent need for support of both students and service providers. It is our hope that this information will be an active resource, continually growing with your contributions. If you have suggestions for content, if you have innovative ideas to offer, if you would like to add your name to those offering to share their expertise, or if you have concerns about anything presented here, please contact ahead@ahead.org

SWD – Students without Documentation

Our first concern in supporting displaced students will be to get them into classes with appropriate disability-related support. Because it is likely that they will have limited, if any, access to documentation either of their disability or of past services, it will fall to the DSS provider to conduct a thorough interview to gather the information needed both to establish eligibility and to assign appropriate services and accommodations.

It is a given that we may need to rely more on student self-report, rather than hard documentation in this circumstance. Within this section you will find suggestions of the kinds of questions that may be helpful for students from different disability groups, as well as general information on conducting a structured interview. You will note that these segments were compiled by different individuals, and there may be significant differences both in approach and format. The intent was to provide guidance, not specific instructions, and we hope you will find these suggestions useful in that vein. *Appendix A includes the following documents.*

Structured Interview as Documentation

Students with Mobility Impairments

Students with Visual Impairments

Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Students with LD/ADHD

Students with Asperger Syndrome

Students with Psychological/Psychiatric Impairments

Students with Chronic Health Impairments

SIT – Students in Transition

Getting the student duly registered for classes and for your services is only a beginning. Remember, all students displaced by Hurricane Katrina are likely to find themselves disoriented on a new campus and in a new community, especially after having suffered such a huge upheaval in their lives. For students with disabilities, who sometimes found navigating the system on their home campuses to be a little overwhelming, the orientation process will likely take a little longer and need to be a little more directed than for students without disabilities. The following information was developed to help disability service

providers think through what kind of help they can give to Katrina's survivors outside of traditional classroom/accommodation issues. *Appendix B includes the following documents.*

Students with Mobility Impairments
Students with Visual Impairments
Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Students with LD/ADD
Students with Psychological/Psychiatric Impairments
Students with Chronic Health Impairments
Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic and Hurricane Katrina

Innovative Ideas

This section is dedicated to sharing ideas that may help students in the recovery process. As the weeks pass, members of the DSS community are invited to send in strategies and reports of activities they have found to be useful in supporting displaced students now and in the future. All suggestions should be sent to [AHEAD](#). *Appendix C includes the following documents.*

Helping Students to Recreate Missing Documentation
Using Coaching to Support Displaced Students and Staff

Reflections

It is important that disability service providers not lose sight of the magnitude of loss, devastation, and disorientation that many of these students have experienced. While service providers may be enthusiastic about an opportunity to help the students move on and a chance to be actively involved, the students themselves may not be able to move on as easily, and perhaps we should not pressure them too much to share our immediate priorities for their recovery. The following personal reflections are offered simply to remind the DSS community of the broad impact such a tragedy can have on the lives of those it touches. *Appendix D includes the following documents.*

One Person's Experience of Hurricane Floyd
Gone With the Wind: Chronicle of a Survivor
Serving the WHOLE Student

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Students Without Documentation

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Professional Judgment: The Use of Structured Interviews as Documentation

We might expect relatively new professionals to be insecure in their ability to exercise professional judgment and to over-rely on external confirmation. Yet it seems that many seasoned professionals are also reluctant to trust their own professional judgment (or have difficulty believing that their judgment will stand up as legitimate in the face of lawyers, increasing accommodation costs, questioning faculty, and the other boogymen external to the profession).

Perhaps we need to focus on including the student's self-report, filtered by professional judgment, and our review of the documentation provided, if any, as critical elements of the student's documentation. If you consider disabilities to be chronic conditions calling for long-term self-management, then you must consult the individual with the disability as one of your "experts." Only through evaluating an individual's experience can we translate testing information into useable information on functional impact and mitigating factors.

Self-Report Filtered by Professional Judgment

The weight given to the individual's description will be influenced by its clarity, internal consistency, observed behaviors, congruency with available formal documentation results, and clinical narrative.

Includes successful & unsuccessful experiences with:

- barriers/problem situations
- accommodations
- adaptive devices
- assistive services
- compensatory strategies
- collateral support services

and students' description of their conditions as they understand them.

- identify condition:
 - formal taxonomy
 - descriptive narrative
 - exemplars
- cyclical or episodic nature of impacts
- known/suspected environmental triggers
- date of last evaluation
- date of original diagnosis

Interview Questions

How does your condition impact:

...You in Classes

- listening
- note taking
- speaking
- writing
- keyboarding
- sitting
- attendance

... On Evaluations

- tests
- papers
- oral reports
- group projects

... When Doing Out of Class Assignments

- reading
- writing
- calculating
- keyboarding
- library work

... When There Are Time Constraints

- timed tests
- deadlines
- class schedules

... Mobility

- manipulating objects
- transportation & getting around

... Diet

... Sleep

... Interacting With Others

Current & past treatments, medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations

Understanding past & current strategies; emphasis on effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the disability

Identify significant side effects or consequences of medication, or strategies that may impact physical, sensory, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance; interact with schedules; or interact with specific elements in the environment

The individual's narrative is a primary source for information on the context, impact, and

effectiveness of strategies and treatments

Information from health care professionals, previous schools, employers, etc. is used to understand and confirm the individual's narrative

(Culled from materials created by L. Scott Lissner, The Ohio State University)

Students with Mobility Impairments

Questions to consider:

Tell me about the helps/services that you received at your college.

What limitations do you have that affect you on campus?

How do you get around on campus?

What, if any, aids do you use to assist in mobility?

Do you have or need disability parking privileges?

Are you able to climb stairs?

What modifications do you need in your residence hall room?

Automatic door opener?

Roll-in shower?

Others?

Do you use attendant care?

What level of care do you use?

What services do your attendants provide?

Tell me about your ability to write. Do you use notetakers, scribes, or any testing accommodations?

Are there other classroom accommodations that you use?

What computer adaptations do you use?

Compiled by Larry Markle, Ball State University

Students with Visual Impairments

Questions to consider:

- What causes your visual impairment or blindness?
- Describe how your medical condition affects usable vision.
- Is your vision stable or do you expect more vision loss?
- Do you experience variables in your usable vision such as night blindness, vision fatigue, and good day-bad day effects?
- Are you legally blind?
- Did you have an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan in grade and high school? If so, what kinds of educational modifications and services were included in the plan? If you did have an IEP or 504 Plan, do you believe that you were just as responsible for your education as your classmates were for theirs?
- Are you receiving either SSI or SSDI based on blindness?
- Have you applied for vocational rehabilitation services from the state agency for the blind, the Veterans Administration, or another source? If so, do you have an Individualized Plan for Employment or another contract for these services?
- Have you ever enrolled in a rehabilitation and adjustment center for the blind? If so, which center?
- Do you drive a motor vehicle?
- Do you read standard print? If so, how many words per minute can you read? Does fatigue affect your reading speed and duration?
- Do you use a long white cane or a guide dog?
- Do you read large print? If so, what font seems to work best?
- Does high contrast make print more readable?
- Do you use any low vision aids such as magnifiers, a Jordy, CCTV, or other device?
- Do you read Braille?
- Can you write in Braille? If so, how, with a slate and stylus, Perkins writer, note taker with Braille keyboard, or some other device?
- Can you take notes independently? If so, how do you accomplish note taking?
- Do you know a blind person you consider to be a mentor?
- Do you ever avoid any activity because of the vision loss? For instance, some

people with visual impairments will stay at home rather than going out to a dark bar or crowded event rather than to learn alternative techniques in such situations. If so, what activities are affected?

- If a waiter in a restaurant hands you a print menu, and you can't read it, and then hands you a Braille menu that you can't read either, what conclusions might you draw from not being able to read either format? How would you handle not being able to read the menu?
- Have you any experience with finding, hiring, and managing employees such as readers and drivers?
- Can you read a standard computer screen without any adaptations? Again, can you do this for extended periods of time or is fatigue a factor?
- Do you use any assistive computer technology such as screen magnification, screen readers, or refreshable Braille displays? If so, what are the brand name and versions of the hardware and software that you use?
- How do you keep a schedule?
- Are you a member of RFBD, the Montana Talking Books Library, Bookshare, or other alternate format libraries? Which ones?
- Do you use a computer scan and read system? If so, which system do you use?
- How do you plan to access visually based instruction in your courses? For instance, how will you access items written on the blackboard, overheads, Power Point presentations, and other vision-based instructional aids?
- What alternative techniques will you employ in math, and science courses?
- What alternative techniques will you employ in laboratory work?
- Pretend that I am a professor. Approach me for accommodations. Start by describing when and where you will approach the professor. Then ask for accommodations.

(Compiled by Jim Marks and the staff at the University of Montana)

Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Suggestions for DSS staff

1. Locating services that haven't been provided on campus before, such as interpreters or speech-to-text services, may take time. It's recommended that the college/university begin lining up the requested services as soon as the student self advocates, and develop strategies for "documentation catch-up" later.
2. Documentation of a student's hearing loss usually includes a copy of the audiological report, a brief description of the severity of the hearing loss, a description of assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use, including the possible effectiveness of these devices or services in an educational setting, and description of the expected progression or stability of the hearing loss over time. While students should be encouraged to provide this information as soon as possible, it is possible that the documentation sources are no longer able to make it available. Sources for hearing evaluations include university speech and hearing clinics, hospitals, and private audiologists.
3. Although some students may be able to use different kinds of accommodations depending on the setting, interchanging them doesn't work for everyone. Assistive listening devices will likely not be effective for students with little residual hearing who usually use a visual means of accessing information (sign language or speech-to-text services). Speech-to-text services may work well for students with strong reading skills, but may not be appropriate for other students.
4. The classroom setting, class format, or instructor variables may have an impact on what accommodations are provided. For some students, it may be necessary to adjust the accommodations after the student has had a chance to see how these all interact with his/her communication needs.
5. Track the number of requests for certain accommodations. Encourage students who use the same kinds of accommodations to enroll in the same section of a class, when feasible. It may be possible to utilize remote services (i.e., captioning and or interpreters) if resources are not available locally.
6. The Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNet) has numerous resources that may be of help to service providers as they work with new students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Not only are many resources available online, but outreach/technical assistance staff members are willing to share information and resources. For more information, please go to the PEPNet website at www.pepnet.org

Questions DSS staff might ask incoming students

Hearing loss and communication issues

1. When was your hearing loss discovered?
2. Do you know how your hearing loss is described?
 mild moderate severe profound
3. Do you consider yourself deaf or hard of hearing?
4. Do you use sign language? If so, what mode?
 ASL (American Sign Language) PSE (signed English)
5. Do you rely on speech or lip reading?
6. Do you use any assistive technology?
 personal hearing aids assistive listening devices TTY
 alerting devices other _____
7. Do you have a cochlear implant? If so, in what situations is communication relatively easy? In what situations is communication more difficult?
8. How do you communicate in the following situations?
 - In the classroom?
 - With friends and peers?
 - With family?

Classroom/campus access issues

1. What kinds of classroom accommodations do you typically use? What had you already requested at the college you would have been attending this semester?
 sign language interpreters
 speech-to-text services (CART, C-Print, TypeWell)
 notetakers
 other interpreters (Cued Speech, oral)
 assistive listening devices
 captioned audio-visual materials
 testing accommodations
 other services _____
2. If you're using a sign language interpreter, what mode do you prefer s/he use?
 ASL (American Sign Language) PSE (signed English)
3. What have your past educational experiences been?
 mainstreamed high school/college/university with accommodations (what kind?)
 mainstreamed high school/college/university with no accommodations (why were there no accommodations provided?)
 residential high school/college/university for deaf/hard of hearing students
 mixed experiences (describe)

4. Describe what effective classroom communication means for you in one-to-one settings, small group discussions, and large lecture halls. How have accommodations been modified to effectively address these situations?
5. Describe how your hearing loss affects your participation in school and interactions with friends and family. What do you do to enhance interactions with others?
6. Do you have any other disabilities that might impact the accommodations you request?

PEPNet Regional Center Contact Information

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Students with Learning Disabilities or ADD/ADHD

Typically when documenting accommodation requests from students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorders, offices hope to find either full clinical write-ups, psycho-educational testing or both. Here are some questions that can help you gather information you can use as an approximation of what you may have received from the formal documentation.

One thing you get from the documentation is the credentials of the evaluator. So it may be helpful to ask the student about when and where they were originally diagnosed and what the most recent evaluation was like.

Did you receive services/accommodations at your last college? If so,
What was the office called?
What was it like?
How did it work?

Did you receive special education services in P-12? If so,
What was that like?
How did it work?
Did you receive service through graduation?

Do you remember when you were first diagnosed?
Who did the evaluation?
Do you recall anything about it (a particular task or how long it took?)

Have you been evaluated since then? If so,
(same as above)

Formal documentation will provide a diagnostic statement.
Did anyone give you a formal name for the condition?
How would you describe your condition?
What kinds of school-related tasks does it affect?
(reading, tests, writing, spelling, oral response ...)
Can you describe how it affects those tasks you identified?

Because diagnosis is related to impact, these questions flow into the next set of information that documentation should provide, a description of the current functional limitations. Additional questions include:

Has the way it has affected you changed over time?
Is it different in different subjects?
Are there better or worse times of day?

You also get a history or a description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications from the documentation process.

What accommodations were you using at your last school?
How were they arranged?

How much did they help?
What accommodation worked best for you?

Were there accommodations you requested that were turned down?
Did they offer an alternative?
Do you know why they said no?
Do you agree?

Did you receive accommodations on the SAT, ACT, LSAT, GRE,
MCAT ...? If so,
What accommodations did you receive?

What accommodations have you tried in the past (high school, work, elementary school...?)
How did they work?
Would you still like to use those accommodations?
Why or why not?

Have you used any medications?
Are you using any now?
How do they help?
Are they taken on a schedule or as needed?
Does your medication schedule affect when you should study or take classes?

Have you used accommodations anywhere other than school?

Accommodations to the side, do you have tricks or strategies you use to help you
when you are reading?
stay organized?
study for tests?
write an essay?
work on math?
keep focused or stay on task

How many hours per day/week do you typically study?

Student won't be able to answer all of the questions in detail but their responses should give you a good sense of what their disability is and how pervasive it is. It should also give you a gauge on how familiar students are with the system to see if the information rings true.

[Compiled by Scott Lissner, The Ohio State University, with input from Ruth Fink, University of Colorado (retired)]

Students with Asperger Syndrome

Among all the populations of students with disabilities, students with Asperger Syndrome may be the hardest to acclimate and accommodate post-Katrina, because their inability to express themselves verbally and respond to your questions is often an inherent part of their disability. Students with Asperger Syndrome typically have very poor eye contact, little or no affect and a flat tone or lack of modulation to their voice. Social skills are sorely lacking, as is the ability to interpret non-verbal communication. Most students with this diagnosis intensely dislike change and avoid it when at all possible. As a spectrum disorder, service providers will notice a wide variety in intensity of these symptoms.

If asked to make accommodations without the presence of documentation, service providers should consider:

- Extended time for tests
- Distraction free environment for tests
- Notetakers if distraction is a problem for the student
- Social skills instruction through counseling or groups
- Individual work with students and/or faculty members to assist with understanding assignments
- Accommodation for work/assignments dependent on groups (usually accommodated with an assignment for the individual student)
- Often a single housing assignment is requested/suggested

For additional information or assistance please contact Jane Thierfeld Brown, 860-570-5130 or jbrown@law.uconn.edu

Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

College students with psychiatric disabilities who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina may seek services from your campus Disability Services (DS) office. These students will not have access to their documentation or their mental health support networks. This calls for doing business differently. It will be important to provide these students with support, information and assistance with connecting with on-campus and/or community mental health resources. It will also be helpful for the DS Provider to know which mental health services have a sliding scale and/or accept student health insurance.

Documentation will take some time to obtain; you will need to use your professional judgment to determine if providing provisional accommodations is appropriate. (Provisional accommodations are provided on a short term basis, usually a semester, until the student can obtain adequate documentation.) Below is a list of questions to assist you with gathering information to determine eligibility for provisional services and next steps.

- Tell me about your disability. What were the diagnoses that were used to describe your conditions by a mental health professional? How long have you been treated for these conditions?
- What were the symptoms of these conditions and how did the symptoms affect you as a student? How have the symptoms of your mental health condition changed since the hurricane? Were you on any medication for these conditions? If so, which medications? Did the medications have any side effects?
- Tell me about the services and accommodations you received at your previous school based on the documentation you provided to the campus Disability Services Office.
- Tell me about the mental health support network you had in place at your previous school. How often did you see your psychiatrist, and/ or your therapist?
- What mental health services and resources would be most helpful to you now?
- What do you think about taking less than a full-time course load? This could allow you to have some extra time to set up a new mental health support network and get re-established on our campus? What barriers or concerns do you see to taking a reduced course load?

Once you have gathered this information, you should have enough information to determine if providing provisional accommodations is reasonable. If you do determine that provisional accommodations are reasonable, it is important to put in writing for the

student what accommodations you will be able to provide and when the services will end if you do not receive documentation. Encourage the student to contact you during this period of provisional service if he/she encounters any barriers to obtaining documentation.

(Compiled by Barbara Blacklock, University of Minnesota, and Linda Cooper, Marist College)

Students with Chronic Health Impairments

Some displaced college students will have medical conditions or chronic diseases that pose significant functional limitations in the educational setting. They may need immediate assistance beyond academic accommodations, physical accommodations and referral to numerous campus or community medical professionals.

These students will not fit your traditional operating model for service provision. They did not originally choose to attend your university nor live in your community and are being admitted to the university after classes have already started. They not only have lost their formal services and resources from their original institution, but also their informal support system from fellow students and friends which is often a critical element with their normal campus functioning. Although they may have “done everything by the book” at their home university’s DSS office, the students are likely lacking the documentation you require and information about your disability services. This is beyond their control. They did not have the opportunity for an early appointment at your DSS office to learn of services or documentation guidelines.

As a result of relocating to a new campus and community with little notice, the students may not know where to find needed medical treatment, medicine and supplies or therapy, which is essential to health and functioning as a well student. As a result, the DSS office may need to identify or even coordinate the provision of medical resources that are normally the responsibility of the student and the student’s family. The Student Health Service may become the primary medical facility for documentation and treatment rather than a medical center or physician from “at home.” Keep in mind that this disaster may have already compromised their health condition due to lack of medicine, therapy, medical services or living conditions immediately after Katrina. The continued stress from relocation, loss of financial resources, friends or family can continue to impact health conditions.

It is therefore imperative that the DSS office realize this is not business as usual. Documentation of the disability may not be readily available or may have been destroyed. Even parents or relatives, who could in normal cases provide background information or individual case history, may be unavailable or missing. Given these unusual circumstances, the DSS office must initially rely on information from the displaced student and consider immediate provisional accommodations until appropriate documentation can be reasonably provided. These students may have already experienced a lot of “red tape” or bureaucracy surviving this disaster and relocating to your campus; therefore, we must realize that flexibility and professional judgment of individual circumstances are paramount over normal documentation guidelines or program procedures. However, there should be a clear understanding of the services to be provided and the student responsibilities. The displaced student needs to know that the level of services or system for providing services may be different at the new institution. This must be clearly articulated to the student as it is easy for the student to assume that all university DSS offices are the same. Likewise,

any provisional services should be clearly identified as such.

For an excellent overview of students with medical and chronic disabilities in the academic environment, see the AHEAD brochure, "College Students Who Have Chronic Diseases or Medical Conditions."

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Sept. 6, 2005 (for AHEAD)

Tip sheet for working with students with chronic medical conditions

Outreach As you would with any other new/entering students to your campus, make sure that you publicize/disseminate info re: disability services and availability of support to all new visiting students. With student relocation likely to take place throughout the coming weeks, plan for continuing publicity/outreach. Ideas might include:

- 0. Working closely with the campus administrator/s designated to work with all Hurricane Katrina survivors
- 0. Creating a special link on existing DS (disability services) website re: welcome to all visiting students from other schools
- 0. Implementing an informal buddy/mentor system where current SWD (students with disabilities) could be matched with visiting students with similar disabilities for peer support

Teamwork Work closely with all other campus offices, and especially with Student Counseling Services and Health Services re: assistance for students with chronic illnesses. Since documentation from an existing clinician may be difficult or impossible to obtain, offer to establish temporary/interim documentation via health/counseling staff.

Ask the student Since it is likely that there will be no paper trail re: support services used at the previous school, use a simple template such as the one below for preliminary info gathering re: disability-related needs:

Disability Services Pre-Registration: Student Self-Assessment

- What is your disability and when was it first diagnosed?
- What disability-related accommodations have you used in the past – either in or out of the classroom?

- What accommodations do you anticipate needing this semester?

Be flexible Try to find a balance re: policies/procedures used at your institution vs. the previous school. On an interim, one-semester basis, consider “grandfathering” the accommodations used previously. Think outside the box.

Medication It is likely that students with chronic illnesses many not have access to their needed medications. Again, work closely with counseling and health services re: access to meds, re-writing of prescriptions, etc.

Clinician referrals Some students may need local referrals for chronic illness support such as physical therapy, counseling, specialists, psychopharmacologists, etc. Again, work closely with counseling/health services re: networking and referrals.

Insurance coverage Assist visiting students with obtaining and/or extending coverage of existing health insurance to new geographical region where interim school is located.

PTSD As trauma survivors may be more at-risk for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, be aware and observant re: signs and symptoms of PTSD with visiting students. Some excellent resources are the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (www.ncptsd.va.gov), the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (www.jhsph.edu/katrina), and the Harvard School of Public Health (www.hsps.harvard.edu/katrina).

Flare-ups Given the extreme circumstances and numerous upheavals and transitions that Katrina survivors have experienced, it is possible that students with chronic illnesses might experience greater frequency, duration and/or intensity of flare-ups of their existing chronic medical condition/s. Current therapy and/or medication regimens may need to be re-examined and adjusted. Consider reduced course loads and part-time-status as needed; provide additional accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Be supportive and flexible.

Stress management Support for the wellness model of attention to mind, body and spirit is crucial for all students – and especially for students with chronic illnesses where stress may exacerbate existing symptoms. Assist students in developing stress management plans which are responsive to their individual needs by utilizing existing campus services and offices. Work with physical education faculty for yoga and meditation workshops; campus clergy for spiritual support and guidance; offer free or low-cost mini-massages donated by local massage therapists; work with dining services to offer an evening or day of comfort foods. Remember to focus on the basics: nutrition, exercise and sleep.

Use the web When in doubt, use Google or other search engines for disability-specific

information. For college student health concerns, visit the American College Health Association website at www.acha.org. For comprehensive Hurricane Katrina support/resources info, visit www.networkforgood.org.

Expect the unexpected This list of ideas, suggestions and tips is just a little something to help you – and your new visiting students – get started on your journey together. All DS professionals (indeed, all educators) know that getting from point A to point B is a process that takes creativity, flexibility and a thinking-outside-the-box attitude. Be patient, kind, and open to new discovery, maintain your sense of humor, and expect the unexpected.

(Compiled by Susan Quinby, Barnard College)

Appendix B

Students in Transition

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Questions Specific to Students with Mobility Impairments

- * Do you know where the CIL is located?
- * Do you have a phone book with a list of attendant care providers?
- * Do you know where to get information about campus/town accessibility?
- * Can you find the accessible bookstores?
- * What stores, restaurants and theaters near campus are accessible?
- * Do you know about our clubs/support groups for students with disabilities?
- * Do you know who our liaisons are in:
 - Admissions
 - Financial Aid
 - Advising
 - Housing
 - Bursar/Cashier
 - Library (book retrieval)
 - Recreation

- * Have you contacted your VR Counselor and told them where to send authorizations for housing, books and tuition?
- * Do you know where to get medical supplies and medicines?
- * Have you asked that your prescriptions be transferred to a pharmacy here?
- * If needed, have you registered for Paratransit and/or parking privileges?
- * Are you registered for accessible transportation in the city?
- * Do you know how to get accessible seating for classes, theater performances and sporting events?
- * Are you set up to use early registration?
- * How do you arrange notetakers?
- * Do you know how to get your wheelchair, prosthesis or other devices repaired?
- * Do you know how to get a lab assistant?
- * Do you know how we arrange for accommodated testing?
- * Do you know the phone number for snow removal and elevator maintenance?

(Compiled by Sam Goodin, University of Michigan)

Questions Specific to Students with Visual Impairments

Do you know who to contact for:

- Orientation to campus and route to residence
- Local Vocational Rehabilitation
- Counseling
- Registrar
- Email account / computer access
- Student ID card

Do you know where to find:

- Accessible computer equipment
- Scanners, reading mach., CCTV
- Books stores, study supplies,
- Libraries and library assistance

Do you know how to access:

- Campus health services
- Pharmacy
- Banks / ATM
- Veterinarian
- Public transportation

Do you know what retail stores are available:

- Groceries
- Clothing (WARM clothing if coming to a northern school)
- VI/Blind products (talking alarm clock, canes, etc.)

(Compiled by Dan Measel, University of Michigan)

Questions Specific to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students:

- Do you know how to obtain class notes?
- Do you know how to request speech to text services such as CART, C-Print or Typewell?
- Do you know the procedures for requesting an interpreter? For classes? For small group or one-on-one meetings? For other events?
- Do you know what campus events provide interpreters or speech to text services without requiring a specific request for service?
- Do you know who to contact in case you need to cancel a service due to illness or absence?
- Do you know how to request closed captioning for videos and films shown in class?
- Do you know how to request transcripts or transcribing services?
- Do you know what adaptive equipment is available from the disability service office on campus?
- Do you know how to obtain assisted listening devices (FM or other ALD) for classroom use?
- Do you know how to obtain notification systems such as door knockers, bed shakers, and lighted fire alarms/smoke detectors for your residence hall room or off campus housing?
- Do you know how to obtain a TTY, videophone, or amplified phone for personal use?
- Do you know where TTY's and videophones are located on campus? In the surrounding community?
- Do you know the number for the state telephone relay system?
- Do you know the phone numbers or contact information for available video relay services in the area?
- Do you know about our clubs or support groups for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students?
- Do you know where to buy hearing aid batteries?

- Do you know where to locate an audiologist?
- Do you know where to find services related to hearing aid or cochlear implant maintenance?
- Do you know where to purchase or have maintenance performed on personal adaptive equipment?
- Do you know who our liaisons are with Admissions, New Student Programs/Orientation, Financial Aid, Housing/Residence Life, Cashier/Bursar, and Academic Advising?

(Compiled by Barb Chaffer, University of Michigan)

Questions Specific to Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

This information is divided by seven main issues to consider; even if this list is not exhaustive, DSS providers will have a topical basis on which to dialog with the student about his/her needs and knowledge.

1. Academic accommodations issues

Do you need or know how to get audiotapes, computer disks, and materials in alternate format, contact RFB&D to give them your new information, carbonless note taking paper, the procedure on campus for obtaining accommodations. Does the institution have a testing center vs. taking a test in the course room? Do you know how to get batteries for audiotapes and other school supplies, access spell checkers, calculators, laptops?

2. Medication and Therapeutic Issues

How much medication does student have? (i.e., how many pills do they have left?)

If using a stimulate medication and they will need more, do they have access to getting another script? If student is in another state besides Louisiana they will not be able to use the script that was written in the state of origin. They need a script from your state. This is true for any controlled substance medication that is prescribed, so this may affect students with psychological disabilities as well. Do they know where on campus or in the community they can see an appropriate health personal to get more medication?

Mental Health Services - Do they know how to access these services on campus or in the community? Do they know what type of insurance they have and what it may cover? Are there co-pays that they are aware of? Do they know how to contact their therapist or doctor of origin (given the situation, they may not be at their previous location)

Does the office offer support groups and if so does the student know how to access them?

Testing issues - If a student is considering going into law, dental or medical school and their testing is either 3 years old for ADHD or 5 years old for LD they will need to get reevaluated if they hope to get accommodations on these tests. Do they know how to access psychologists in the community who perform the type of evaluation that the student needs?

3. Technology Issues

What are the students' adaptive technology needs and do they know how to access these services on your campus? If some equipment that they were using is not available do they know how to use other programs or equipment? Do they know where they may be able to purchase or obtain computers, software and other equipment either on campus or in the community? Do they know where the computing centers are on campus, and is there any assistance available in case they should have questions? If they are using material in alternate format (e-text), do they know how to access and use these services?

4. Study Skills Issues

Do they need assistance with study skills, and if so, do they know the resources on campus that may be able to assist them, especially if they are preparing for a high-stakes test (GRE, MCAT, GMAT, LSAT, etc.)

Are they looking for prep classes to take (i.e., Kaplan or Princeton) and do they know how to find them in the campus area.

If they were using a "coach," can you help connect them to a "coach" either on campus or off campus?

5. General Study Aids that Might be Available on Campus

Does the student need a specific environment that may maximize their ability to study? For example, do they need a real quiet place, a bright place or a place that they can talk aloud or listen to music, etc.? Do they know how to access these different study environments that may be on campus?

6. Content Tutoring Issues

Does the student know how to access all the various tutors that may be available on campus (i.e., Writing Center, math, science and other subject tutors) and does the student know how to obtain tutors for whatever class that they may need them for?

7. Life Style Issues

Does the student know what other resources are available on campus or in the community that may enhance their acclimation to the new environment? For example, political affiliation groups, sexual orientation issues, Greek life, or other clubs that the student may have an interest in.

(Compiled by Stuart Segal, University of Michigan)

Questions Specific to Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

1. Do you know where the counseling or psychological center on campus is located?
2. If you need immediate assistance after hours, do you know how to reach the crisis hot line?
3. Do you know of other locations on and off campus where you can receive fee-for-service evaluations, counseling, and emergency services?
4. If you are living in the residence halls, do you know what the procedures are for receiving help from residence assistants and other university employees, such as persons in campus safety?
5. If you take medications, do you know where to get prescriptions filled?
6. Have you had prescriptions transferred to a pharmacy locally?
7. Do you need / have a letter of referral from your hometown doctor to see a doctor on or off campus?
8. Do you know who are the liaisons for students with disabilities in the following departments:
 - Admissions
 - Financial Aid
 - Advising
 - Housing
 - Library
 - Cashier's Office
 - Recreation
 - Ombudsperson's Office
9. Do you know how to arrange for in-class accommodations?
10. Do you know how to communicate with your instructors about your accommodation needs?
11. Do you have information about how to contact your instructors: phone numbers, email address, office hours and location?
12. Do you know about any support groups or student advocates for students with disabilities?

(Compiled by Virginia Grubaugh, University of Michigan)

Questions Specific to Students with Chronic Health Impairments

Do you know how to access:

- campus health services
- a local hospital
- a pharmacy
- public transportation

Do you know where to find:

- accessible computer equipment /an ergonomic work station
- books stores, study supplies
- libraries and library assistance

Do you know who to contact for:

- local Vocational Rehabilitation
- counseling
- the registrar
- an e-mail account / computer access
- a student ID card

Do you know what retail stores are available for:

- groceries
- clothing (WARM clothing if coming to a northern school)
- assistive technology products

(Compiled by Dan Measel, University of Michigan)

Recording for the Blind (RFB&D) and Hurricane Katrina

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic is in the process of determining how many of its individual and institutional members have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The RFB&D family extends its deepest sympathy to those who are suffering losses and is available to assist RFB&D members who have been relocated from their homes and schools and may require replacement materials. If you are an RFB&D member and have questions or needs regarding our services, please e-mail [**katrinahelp@rfd.org**](mailto:katrinahelp@rfd.org) and include your full name, member ID# (if known) and a way of contacting you, whether temporary or permanent. An RFB&D Member Services representative will get back to you as soon as possible.

Appendix C

Innovative Ideas

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Helping Students Recreate Missing Documentation

Krisie Orr of Texas A & M writes:

I just want to offer an idea that we are pursuing at Texas A&M University. We will work with students with disabilities without formal documentation based on our team approach; however, we want to go a step further. Since these students may want to pursue graduate work or transfer to another university, etc., we will work with our psychology training clinics and possibly some local psychologists to provide free learning disability and/or ADHD evaluations at some point during the fall semester. We will serve as the "clearinghouse" for these students and refer them appropriately so that they will be able to take documentation with them when they leave the university.

Both our Educational Psychology Department and our Psychology Department agreed to do free assessments on a case-by-case basis for students that our office identifies who have lost their documentation due to Katrina. We don't anticipate many, but are so happy to be able to provide students with another resource to support them through this tough time.

Using Coaching to Support Displaced Students and Staff

Students and staff from other colleges and universities affected by Hurricane Katrina have been displaced and many might be seeking a safe haven at your college or university during this semester or possibly next semester. For many of them, this might have been their first semester in their schools...they were full of the excitement and anticipation of their new campus, their new colleagues, and their new living arrangements. However for others, they may have left cities that they called home, their campuses, their colleagues, their homes, and their friends not knowing when they will return and where they and their family will live in the future. Many will need psychotherapy and counseling to deal with the post-traumatic stress, loss, and grief. And, for many, Life Coaching may be a way for them to move forward with their lives and adjust to their new situations.

Learning to look forward and to find their own creativity and resourcefulness can empower students and staff with the tools they need to adjust to their present circumstances and plan for their future. Empowered by coaching, they can remember that they are naturally creative resourceful and whole.

While many students and staff may want to work with a Life Coach who has gone through extensive training and practice in order to be certified, reminding students of the following suggestions and asking them the following questions based on a coaching philosophy can help service providers work with students and staff in order to help them adjust and thrive in their new situations:

Schedule plenty of down time.

Be sure to take personal time for yourself. Even though starting over at a new school may keep you busy, remember to take care of yourself and schedule gym time, reading time.

– What would it take for you to relax and feel rejuvenated?

Stay hydrated and fueled

Be sure and drink plenty of water and watch what you eat. More so than ever, your body needs the proper nutrition to function properly.

-How can you tune your body, so that you are at your very best?

Leave yourself plenty of time

Leave extra room to learn how to get around school and give yourself ample time to get to meetings, appointments and even leave time between classes. The extra time will allow you to strike up conversations and meet new friends.

-Is it possible to cut your class load by a couple of credits for a semester?

-How could you use the extra time to your advantage?

Get plenty of sleep

Don't overstress your body by not getting enough rest. Turn off the TV and loud music.

-What's important about allow your mind to quiet down before going to sleep?

Feel what you feel

You will probably experience a myriad of emotions over the coming weeks and months. Maybe you'll experience some anxiety and uncertainty that you normally don't feel. Switching schools mid-year is a big adjustment...new classes, new teachers, new campus, new friends. It's a lot to take in all at once.

-What would it be like to give yourself permission to have 'off-days'?

Stay flexible

Sometimes things are out of our control. Reacting to changing conditions is a ski. -How will staying flexible serve you now and in the future once your academic career is over?

Schedule study time

Pencil it in your calendar. Don't leave study time up to chance, as all the details of dealing with the move, transition and other fallouts may get in the way.

-What can you do to make study time a priority?

Congratulate yourself

You've made a commitment to yourself and are honoring yourself by staying committed to your academic future. That dedication and focus will pay off in spades down the road.

-How can you take a moment and pat yourself on the back for having what it takes to keep looking ahead?

Start building your community

Join a study group, club or other such program that will get you talking and interacting with students around projects that interest you. The sooner you have a network of people to tap into the better.

-How can you reach out to others and make an effort to be a friend, or assist in a project?

You are not powerless

Although life has taken an unexpected turn; you are still in control of how you react to change and uncertainty. Don't fall victim to thinking you have no power over the outcomes and results you create in your life. Keep your eye on the future.

-In what ways can this be viewed as a setback and not failure?

-How is this experience like a detour?

-How can you channel your energies and time into creating momentum that moves you forward?

You are well equipped to move forward in your life.

Remember that your internal resources and strengths have helped you to achieve your successes in the past, and they are still right here at your fingertips.

-How have you used these resources and strengths in the past?

-How do you plan to use them now and in the future?

You have choices.

You can make positive choices for yourself. While you may not have had control over what happened to you, you are at choice as to the perspective that you choose to take.

-How can you look at the glass as half full?

-What new opportunities are available to you now?

Linda Nissenbaum

Appendix D

Reflections

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One Person's Experience with Hurricane Floyd

Been There, Done That!

... Bonnie ... Dennis ... Floyd ... in the late summer and early fall of 1999, Eastern North Carolina was Hurricane alley. When Floyd came ashore on September 16, 1999, we simply couldn't handle the 20 inches of rain that came with it. As the water started to rise on the 17th, all but non-essential personnel were told to leave the campus of East Carolina University. When classes resumed, two weeks later, 2,500 students, faculty and staff who lived along the Tar River had lost everything. In the region, the estimated cost to rebuild was \$6 million and tragically, 47 people lost their lives. On campus, the immediate focus was making sure that members of the university community could obtain the assistance necessary to get their lives back on track as quickly as possible. The area mobilized and provided assistance in the form of food, water, clothing and shelter. Once the water receded, the area began the task of cleaning and rebuilding.

While in no way comparable to the devastation of Katrina, Floyd did provide the area the opportunity to look at how disaster effects what we do on a daily basis. From the Disability Services office standpoint, we became much more focused on assessing what the individual, in front of me at this moment, given what they have been through, needs from me as a service provider. Whether or not a student had proper documentation or the testing accommodation form in on time became of little concern. Questions we found ourselves addressing included: Do you have the medication you need? Is there accessible alternative housing available? Is your personal care attendant still available to provide you with service? Do you need financial assistance? There inevitably will be times when sticking to the policies and procedures manual will just not make any sense.

Difficult times often bring out the best in us; students affected by this tragedy will need your resourcefulness, creativity, flexibility and most of all compassion.

Provided by Liz Johnston, East Carolina University

Charleston – Gone With the Wind

Chronicle of a “Survivor”

Charleston – Gone with the Wind. That was the lead story from the London Times recording the events of September 21, 1989; the day Hurricane Hugo, a category 4 storm, blew through Charleston, South Carolina and my life.

Events such as Hugo leave an indelible mark on the victims who experience these storms. I remember the events leading up to, during and after the hurricane, forever changing the citizens of the “The Holy City” and my life. Storms such as Hugo and Katrina become a benchmark by which we measure time - before Hugo and after Hugo. In the same vein, Katrina will forever change the lives of the students who live and those who attend school in the flood-ravaged areas. For the short term, they will experience confusion and disorientation, and for the longer term – in time, hopefully healing.

As anyone who lives in hurricane country will tell you, the events leading up to a storm add up to anticipation and excitement. With a constant eye peeled to the Weather Channel, you are always watching the storm’s course and subsequently your own course of action. The decision to stay or leave brings several factors into play. It could be no money with which to run on, animals to tend to or a person with a disability who doesn’t travel easily. All of these things have to be considered. I stayed. If it was a mistake, I would soon find out in the middle of the storm’s fury. Mistake or not, it was one of the most frightening events I have ever experienced.

At first, the beginning of intense calm convinced me that the officials were wrong. Problem was it was too quiet. Around 10 pm the wind began to pick up and shortly after we lost power. That is when my sense of security began to wane. As the storm increased in intensity I heard the characteristic sound of a freight train. It was Hugo coming to call. Green lightening could be seen in the distance, which was actually the popping of electrical transformers. The horizontal rain and the wind made projectiles out of trash cans and shingles from nearby roofs. Thank god we never entirely lost phone service because that is what kept me sane. The fury that Mother Nature unleashed is imprinted very firmly on my mind and soul. Any sense of control my life had was seriously questioned. I was convinced once and for all there are forces larger than anything I could imagine.

In contrast, when the eye of the storm approached, the world became normal again. All was calm and there were even stars beginning to appear in the sky. I began to experience an increased sense of calm, which was false since the most aggressive part of the storm is the tail end. I was emotionally spent by this time and wished it would all end. Exhausted, I fell into a couple of hours of fitful sleep and awoke to a brilliant blue sky and quiet. The only sounds were a neighbor’s chain saw and news helicopters overhead. Now people began to emerge and inspect the damage to their homes. It must be similar to the feeling of surviving a battle in war. It felt like walking in a dream, aware of my surroundings but unable to speak. Everything was out of place. Trees down, houses destroyed, live electric wires hissing in the street.

You never realize the security you feel having electricity until it is gone for a prolonged period of time. When you lose power you lose your ability to cook, to refrigerate food, lights and a general sense of safety. Gone are the street lights and traffic lights -everything is now planned

around daylight hours since it is hard to maneuver in the dark. Of course, the National Guard and city officials imposed a curfew so unless you were visiting a neighbor's house, there was no going out after dark anyway. Forget about using money because there are no banks or ATMs. No Weather Channel or news of how the rescue or relief effort is going. Electricity has become central to our way of life, and when its gone life runs amuck.

We didn't experience nearly what Katrina brought in the way of destruction, floods and death. Magnify Hugo by 100 and you get Katrina. Slowly life did begin to return to a "new normal." Electricity returned. The National Guard troops left the city and the mess began to get cleaned up. Downed trees were removed and houses began to be repaired. On the surface life began to appear more normal. But it wasn't.

Try as I did to anchor myself in the life I knew before the storm, it was futile. It was hard to control the thoughts of what I had been through. For survivors of such a hurricane, sleep may be fitful and anxiety may manifest itself in the form of overeating. Little things can push you over the edge. Your sense of safety and center has escaped you. The name of your anguish is Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Just like soldiers who have experienced war, it hits hurricane victims. Our students are going through the same thing right now. The big difference between us and them is they also have a disability. The stress of dealing with life after Katrina will affect them in varying ways. They handle a lot already and the tendency is, many times, to hold it all inside. They have the stressors of their memory of the storm, losing their favorite possessions, and now they are dealing with a new school and starting classes late. A regular college semester brings a lot of stress, not to mention the emotional baggage they will bring with them. For some students, it may be just too much to process emotionally and intellectually. For others it may manifest in the form of an increase in breakdowns at points in the semester.

One thing is for sure, each student brings with them dashed dreams of a great semester at their school. We have to help them through this phase to find their own "new normal."

(Contributed by Marty Bledsoe, Wheaton College)

Serving the WHOLE Student

Thank you for including me among those whom you are polling for points to consider in serving students displaced by the recent hurricane catastrophe. My thoughts are basic and simple in the name of serving the whole person with a disability who comes to our OSD door.

The student may be "returning home to family, relatives and friends" and, indeed, even to our campuses and programs. The student may be from one of the stricken areas and temporarily or permanently displaced. The student may be coming to our OSD door because that has previously been a place of welcome and security and support. Whatever the case, the student has survived untold turmoil and is in need of more than the usual outreach and assistance.

-Campus and community networking: We need to be familiar with campus and community resources to address food, shelter, medical, financial, housing, counseling, spiritual and other fundamental needs of hurricane survivors. Additionally, communication and transportation concerns need to be attended to.

-Counseling for "disaster survivors": There is an initial and long-term need for meaningful support of persons. It will be a long and difficult period of grieving over many losses.

-Course load: Encourage or "give permission to the student to carry a lighter than usual load. He or she is already carrying at least three or more credits of "transition from trauma," which is a priority load that cannot be ignored or minimized.

-OSD Flexibility: We will need to exercise our best professional judgment and tap our tangible and intangible resources in all areas such as disability documentation, extended equipment loan, special advocacy with offices such as housing, parking, paratransit services, vocational rehabilitation, medical services, etc.

Social justice: We should initiate or join others in efforts to bring immediate and long-term relief to survivors whose lives have been permanently altered by the hurricane and its unspeakable aftermath. Their losses are incalculably profound and all-encompassing. Their grief and pain and anger defy description and empathy. We must all rise out of our petty silos and embrace the sorrow, giving what we can to their aid and comfort and, if possible, recovery.

-Lessons for us all: Among other lessons, this is a wake up call for better emergency preparedness, emergency evacuation, and post-disaster survival. We have much to do. We have much to be thankful for.

(Compiled by Ann Ito, University of Hawaii – Manoa)