STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Jordan Richardson

ATLI congratulates Jordan Richardson on a successful transition from high school to college. Jordan is a 2008 graduate of Auburn High School, where he was an honor student and a National Merit semi-finalist. Jordan currently attends Auburn University as junior and is pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering. Way to go, Jordan! He currently averages a 3.6 grade point average and has a goal of earning an overall 4.0 upon graduation. One of his most recent campus involvements includes an independent study, completing research on network security.

Conversation with Jordan reveals he has accomplished many things because he is an advocate for himself. Jordan indicated that although he has a disability, he has learned how to use his strengths to take on the challenges that come along with being a college student. “My biggest challenge coming to Auburn was not having anyone to check up on me like they did in high school; I had to learn how to prioritize,” he stated while pulling out his cell phone calendar.

Jordan wanted to leave individuals who were in the transition process with a few helpful tips that have aided him over the past few years as he learned how to succeed in college (see box on left).

Jordan’s Top 5 Transition Tips:

1. Don’t let your pride get in the way; ask for help when you need it.
2. Don’t be afraid to meet with your professors; I’ve not met a professor who wasn’t understanding.
3. Don’t be afraid to take the minimum course load.
4. College is less structured than high school, so manage your time wisely by using a calendar to plan assignments, study time, and free time.
5. Be aware of large study groups; they can sometimes turn into a social group if there are too many people involved.
“CATTS”: Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists

ATLI is proud to announce a new program that will fund scholarships to train Transition Specialists that will serve the state of Alabama. The Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists, known as CATTS, will prepare secondary special education teachers in researched-based practices to improve the outcomes of high school youth with disabilities, specifically those from high need areas. The program is a master’s level degree offered within the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling in the College of Education.

The philosophy of the CATTS program is that all secondary special education service delivery should be approached through a transition perspective. This philosophy includes preparing scholars to become special education teachers with an emphasis in transition and collaboration, while integrating up-to-date research on better ways to prepare students for life after high school. Through coursework and a variety of experiences including actually working with youth in transition, scholars will be prepared to work in partnership with other professionals in the field of transition, as well as to serve students with disabilities. CATTS scholars will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to help students with disabilities successfully embrace adult roles and responsibilities. The program is co-directed by Drs. Karen Rabren and Caroline Dunn.

This new program has created much excitement within the Auburn community and other local educational agencies. Dr. Mabrey Whetstone, Director of Special Education Services for the State of Alabama, states, “We expect the graduates of the Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists program will greatly enhance the secondary special education services offered by this state, and that these CATTS scholars will continue to advance research and knowledge in the field of successful transition practices for students with disabilities.” CATTS scholars are ready to live up to Dr. Whetstone’s expectations and further this specialized training in the field of special education. First year master’s students and CATTS scholar Courtney Ingalls exclaims, “As a CATTS scholar, I am confident that I will be able to help the students I serve live a more satisfying life through the transition practices taught throughout the program. It is a wonderful opportunity to work with knowledgeable professors while also working directly with the community to help improve transition services.”

ATLI would like to take this time to welcome and congratulate all CATTS scholars and wish them well in their coursework. If you or someone you know may be interested in this scholarship program please visit education.auburn.edu/CATTS, for more information.
PROFESSIONAL MEET & GREET
ATLI Congratulates and Honors Ms. Diane Glanzer

Diane Glanzer is the Outreach Coordinator for the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI). She is a graduate of Trinity University in DC and has a Master’s of Technical and Professional Communication from Auburn University. As a college student, Diane began working with individuals with disabilities as a program manager for children with learning and developmental disabilities. She began disability advocacy and outreach in 1991, while working for The Arc in Austin, Texas. She later moved to Montgomery and worked for the A Plus Education Foundation before coming to Auburn in 2001.

Since coming to Auburn, she has devoted her time to many outreach projects throughout the state of Alabama as well as within the Auburn community. At ATLI she has taken on the responsibility of planning and coordinating the annual Alabama Transition Conference (ATC). Diane dedicates a significant amount of time every year to planning and coordinating the ATC. Although coordinating the conference is a large and timely task, Diane says that the dedication of the guests that attend year after year and their enthusiasm is what gets her “geared up” for the next year. Diane has been very pleased with the continued support from repeat guests at the ATC and is very encouraged by the trend in increased youth participation over the years.

ATLI has thoroughly enjoyed working with Diane over the last ten years. Her coworkers have described her as “responsible, innovative, and reliable.” Through the years she has continued to display the characteristics of a strong leader as well as a mentor for the graduate students at the Institute. A previous graduate assistant at ATLI said, “Ms. Glanzer has a special spark that motivates the employees around her to put forth their best effort and to always achieve greatness.” The graduate assistants state it is her kind words and her thoughtful manner of teaching that motivates them to excel.

Although Diane has been loyal to serving those in the education systems and advocating for persons with disabilities for many years, she will be retiring soon. After retirement, she hopes to stay connected with ATLI and help out when needed as she continues to enjoy working with her friends at ATLI. Diane is looking forward to visiting her family in Texas and has been pondering a video project for her mother-in-law who will be turning 100 this fall. While she has no definite plans after retiring, she is excited to see what unfolds! We wish Diane the best in her future endeavors and thank her for her years of gracious service to ATLI.
The transition from high school to adulthood can be a difficult and confusing time for many youths. Do you know all of your options after high school? These options include opportunities available to youth with or without disabilities after high school, such as a four-year college/university, a two-year technical or vocational school, a job, or vocation. Some students with a disability may wonder if these opportunities also apply to them, and the answer is YES.

As spring semester wraps up, some students, freshmen to seniors, may feel graduation is still a long ways to go or nearly impossible. However, graduation is not impossible as many students have proved when they decided not to give up but to graduate. In fact, The US Department of Education indicates that from academic year 1994-95 to academic year 2003-04, the graduation rate has increased and the dropout rate has decreased for students with disabilities. Although there are also different diploma options, according to the NLTS-2, 36.9% of students with IEP’s in Alabama graduated with regular diplomas.

Furthermore, the 2009 National Longitudinal Transition Study – 2 (NLTS-2) reported that 85% of young adults with disabilities who had been out of school for up to four years have been involved in employment, post-secondary education, and/or job training during this period.

It is important to know and understand all of your options, as well as who to talk to about them. Accommodations can be made whether you decide to continue with post secondary education or to get a job or start a career. Graduation can open the door to several opportunities after high school, so pursue understanding all of your options before you decide.

**Important Events**

**MARCH**

Transition Awareness Month in Alabama
7 & 8 - Alabama Transition Conference XXI
14 - 18 - Spring Break at Auburn University

**APRIL**

ATLI Congratulates Ms. Diane Glanzer on her Retirement
27 - Classes End at Auburn University

**MAY**

9 - Auburn University Commencement
17 - 20 - 5th Annual Secondary Transition State Planning Institute
24 - Auburn High School Commencement
27 - Opelika High School Commencement

**Newsletter Notes**

Do you have an interesting personal story to share about the transition process? Our newsletter staff would like to hear from you! Call 334-844-5927.

Archived issues of ATLI “Directions” are saved at www.auburn.edu/atli (click on “Publications”).