Alumni Spotlight: Eric Maly

Each semester OARS likes to shine a spotlight on one of our students. This semester we have chosen one of our UNCG and OARS Alumni, Eric Maly. Eric recently graduated from UNCG and went on to law school at Elon University. During his time as a student with OARS, Eric was able to improve his GPA, develop test-taking strategies, and better understand his diagnosis and abilities.

Prior to being diagnosed with ADHD, Eric had a rocky start at UNCG. However, he managed to come back from a low GPA and poor academic skills after being diagnosed. He says that being diagnosed was actually a good thing for him. Once he was diagnosed, he was able to better understand his weaknesses and get the help he needed to be successful in school.

Since graduation last May, Eric has been successfully meeting the demands of law school. He attributes some of his success to techniques he learned and used while at UNCG. He identified some of those techniques as relaxation tactics, test-taking skills, and time-management tools. Eric also revealed that one of his favorite techniques for test-taking, he discovered at OARS. When he would take test at OARS, he would use the white board in our testing rooms. He began to use the white board to write down his thoughts and work out difficult problems. This is a method along with other techniques learned while a student with OARS that he has carried over into the pursuit of his law degree.

Eric has always wanted to go into law, but was not sure which area he would focus on. Since being in law school he has developed special interests in contract law and criminal law. However, he says he would like to keep his options open and explore different areas through internships and networking opportunities. He is currently working on securing a summer internship in a DA’s office. Eric says that law school has many opportunities for

Do Something!! Get Involved!!
A Spotlight on the Office of Leadership and Service-Learning

One phrase students here at UNCG should never say is “I’m bored!” There are so many positive activities that students can become involved with here on campus as well as in the community. The words “Do something bigger altogether” can be seen all over campus and on our website. There is a place here on campus that can help students do just that! The Office of Leadership and Service Learning (OLSL) offers students the opportunity for life-time civic engagement through experiential curricular and co-curricular leadership and service learning initiatives.

OLSL assists students in developing a personal philosophy of leadership while gaining valuable and diverse experiences, empowering them to effect positive change and serve as citizen-leaders in a global community. The vision of OLSL is that every UNCG student will have the opportunity to realize his/her capacity to effect positive change in society and enhance a personal philosophy of leadership. There are community service, academic service learning, leadership, and peer education, conference, and scholarship opportunities to students through OLSL.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING:
• Explore your values, passions, and career interests
• Network with UNCG peers and community leaders
• Learn about yourself and others
• Practice and develop effective leadership skills
• Make commitments to social, environmental, and cultural issues
• Connect in-class learning with out-of-class experiences

Visit OLSL in EUC suite 216, learn about them online at osls.uncg.edu, or call the office at 336.256.0538.
If you were offered your own private virtual tutor for reading, writing, or foreign language assignments, would you take the offer? What if this virtual tutor could be downloaded to most any device? What if this tutor could read your text books out loud as you read along? How about if I told you that it can create MP3s of your textbooks so that you can listen to them on your long drives home on the weekend? Oh, and by the way, it’s free! This virtual private tutor is called Read & Write Gold. OARS purchased a University-wide license which will allow you to download it to almost all of your electronic devices free of charge. In fact all your UNCG friends can download it for free as well—even if they are not registered with OARS, so spread the word!

Read & Write Gold is software that has almost 30 different learning tools to help with reading and writing. An example of one of the awesome features of Read & Write Gold is that it can read documents out loud as you listen through speakers or headphones and follow along. It works with most any internet browser (such as Windows Explorer, Safari, Firefox, etc.) and can even read photos and documents directly from web pages. It reads word documents and pdf files as well.

Not only does it read documents out loud, it also translates files to and from Spanish, French, German, and many other languages. It also has some powerful tools to help with writing assignments. Imagine pulling up long research articles and having them read to you, then highlighting specific quotations, and inserting them directly into your research papers, all while it creates your citations page in proper APA/MLA style.

Some other tools you can look forward to using with Read & Write Gold include: planning tools to help you organize your thoughts, grammar tools to help you proofread your papers, a scan tool that allows you to scan chapters of books into the program and convert it to an MP3 file, and text-to-speech tools that allow you to dictate into a microphone while the program types what you say!

Read & Write Gold is a student’s dream come true! For a preview of what this program can do and tutorials, check out http://www.texthelp.com/north-america/our-products/readwrite. You can also receive hands on training in one of our Assistive Technology labs Tuesday-Thursday between the hours of 5 pm and 8 pm. Just contact our office to schedule an appointment. It is also available for free download by visiting Information Technology Services for all students or by visiting our office if you are a student registered with OARS. For more information and/or questions or concerns, give us a call!

The Modified Foreign Language Program in Spanish

Learning a foreign language is a tough task for many people. However, it is a requirement of almost all academic majors here at UNCG. Some students struggle to keep up with the demands of completing their foreign language requirement due to learning disabilities or other long standing difficulties with learning a foreign language.

The Modified Foreign Language Program is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, and is designed to meet the needs of at-risk foreign language students and help them to achieve their goal of successfully completing their study of a foreign language.

Students are provided options and accommodations for their special needs while agreeing to a rigorous commitment to the program.

The aim of the Modified Foreign Language Program is to help students reach their goals and meet their curricular demands. The objective of the program is to provide students with more individualized instruction along with academic advising, monitoring of students’ progress and help to understand their specific language and/or learning problems.

There is an application process involved and students must meet the appropriate criteria to become a part of the program. Application deadlines are March 15 for entry in the fall semester and October 15 for entry in the spring semester.

If this program sounds like something you are interested in, The Modified Foreign Language Program can be reached at 336-334-5655 or you can visit their website at http://www.uncg.edu/llc/languages/spanish/modifiedFL
While social interaction in college is widely a normal part of life for many college students, it can be difficult for some. The college environment has a tendency to be very energetic with so many different moving parts. This can be overwhelming for some students and can leave some students wondering how to make sense of it all. Research has shown that the social aspect of college is a vital component of a well-rounded college experience. However, developing strong social connections and healthy social circles can be a real challenge if you are a student dealing with social anxiety, autism/Asperger’s, and/or many other disabilities. Here are some tips to help manage your social life on campus:

**Stop. Think. Breathe**
When you begin to feel overwhelmed or triggered, or are just unsure of how to respond or react in a social situation, you must STOP. That’s right, simply stop. You may even need to say it out loud to yourself. You stop by taking a moment to remove yourself from the situation. Then give yourself a moment to think through the situation and possibly use breathing techniques or exercises to calm yourself down if necessary. Once you have had a moment to calm down and/or assess the situation, you can make the appropriate decision about how to proceed.

**Check in with Reality**
Most people have heard the term “reality check” and in this case, that is exactly what you are doing. You are looking at the situation to determine what is really going on in real life, and not what you perceive to be going on. It can be very frightening when you are unsure about how to interpret or perceive a social interaction. Take a second to scan the situation to detect if there are possibly clues as to whether or not this is a healthy and sincere social interaction or if it is a negative situation. For example, if you are uncertain if someone is being sarcastic or facetious, you can review the interaction to see if you detect any sarcastic tones or body language. Another example might be if you are unsure if a romantic interest is also interested in you. You should assess the situation and the person’s words and body language to determine if you should pursue that romantic interest. You might also want to think about whether or not what you are doing or saying to that person would be considered appropriate if it were the other way around. For example, would you want someone to walk you to your car after you ended the conversation and told them to go home and have a nice evening? Once you check in with reality you can have a clearer understanding of whether or not this social situation is appropriate for you.

**Build Bridges**
The opposite of burning bridges, this tip encourages you to build healthy relationships. You might have to challenge yourself and face some of your fears in order to accomplish this, but if you follow the first two tips, you may find it a bit easier to take the steps necessary to build great bridges. Some things you can do to build relationships are to join a club or organization on campus, volunteer to help with an event or community service project that you already enjoy or are interested in, or step outside your normal routine and do a group fitness class at the gym. The list could continue, but the main thing to remember is that you have to be willing to take the first step and lay the foundation for a healthy bridge to develop!

Hopefully, these few pointers can help improve your social interactions here on campus.
Many students report that taking tests is their least favorite task as a college student. Testing can be a source of stress and anxiety for any student, especially a student who needs accommodations. Here at OARS we attempt to alleviate some of that stress and anxiety by providing appropriate testing accommodations to those who qualify.

If you have testing accommodations through our office, you are welcome to utilize our office to take your exams. There are several benefits associated with taking your tests here at OARS including: a reduced distraction setting for testing, guaranteed extended time to work on your exam, and pleasant smiling faces to help you through the process! We ask that if you are planning on taking a test with us, please be mindful of our operating hours, our seven day request policy, and our tardiness policy, which can be found on our website as well as on the back of your faculty letter.

**Things to Remember about Testing with Accommodations:**

Before any student can take their tests with accommodations, they must be registered with OARS and meet with a staff person to help determine appropriate accommodations. In this meeting, students and staff will co-create faculty letters outlining their approved accommodations for the semester. Students will then give those letters to the instructors of classes for which they require accommodations.

OARS strongly encourages students to work closely with faculty to determine if the instructor is able to proctor tests. This is beneficial to the students because unlike our OARS staff, faculty are able to answer or clarify questions during tests.

If a faculty member cannot proctor a test, then OARS is prepared to do so. OARS is available to proctor tests Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please note that some students may have to schedule their test earlier or later in the day, depending on their class schedule, to accommodate their needs for extended test time.

In order to maintain the integrity of the testing process, it is very important that faculty confirm their students’ online test requests. If an instructor does not complete each request, then we are unable to determine if the instructor is aware that the student will be taking his or her test with OARS, if there are special instructions or provisions for the student during testing, or if the testing situations have changed. For example, a student may be allowed to use notes for one test, but may not be allowed for the following test. Without a completed online testing form, OARS will not know how to proceed with proctoring the test for the student.

**Important things to keep in mind:**

**STUDENTS:**

1. Communicate with, and explain to your professor if you need to request a change in the date and time of an exam FIRST so they will understand why the request is different from the class date and/or time.

2. The testing request system automatically defaults to the seventh day from the day you go into it and is set at 8:00. Please understand you MUST change it to the date and time YOU will be taking it with your professor’s permission.

**FACULTY:**

1. Please remember when confirming an exam request, only put down the number of minutes that you are giving the class as a whole. OARS will compute the extended time for the given student.

2. If your exam date or time changes for any reason this is the procedure you will need to follow:
   
   a. Send OARS an email with the new date and/or time.
   
   b. If you have already confirmed the original request, OARS can change it to your new one for you.
   
   c. If you have NOT confirmed the original request, you can select “edit” and change the date and time.

Once you have done that, click SAVE and then confirm the request once the change has been made. When a change is made, the system will notify the student as well as the instructor.

OARS DOES NOT PROCTOR EXAMS after 5 p.m. Please schedule all exams to be completed by that time.
How to Schedule & Take Exams

• Students set up their personal profile, then add each course they will be using OARS to take exams in on the OARS online testing site.

• Once the course is added, a “new request” link will appear to the right of the course name. Use this to schedule each exam at least seven days prior to the day of the exam. If you do not, you will not be able to schedule your exam times electronically.

• If, for some reason, you are unable to take the exam at the same time as the class, make sure you communicate this to your instructor prior to scheduling it for a different time or day.

• When an exam is requested, the system will automatically send an email to the instructor letting them know it has been submitted and the details of the request.

• It is then the instructor’s responsibility to “confirm” the request as is, or they are able to “edit” it if there is something incorrect.

• Without the “confirmed” request, OARS does not have all the pertinent information to proctor the exam properly. Maintaining instructors’ exam integrity is of utmost importance to OARS.

• OARS will send a reminder to the instructor to confirm and/or send the exam to our office.

• The student will come to OARS at the designated time to take the exam. All personal belongings are kept in a separate location, including any and all electronic devices, and the students are only allowed to take what the instructor has deemed appropriate on the “confirmed” exam request, i.e. notes, calculator, scantron etc.

• OARS proctors the exam and when it is completed, a copy of the answers is made and kept under lock and key until after grades are posted. This is to ensure that should an exam be misplaced or there are questions about how it was received, we can pull the copy and verify how it left our office and/or get a copy to the instructor so the student does not have to retake.

• Per the instructors directions, the original exam, along with a completed copy of the test request is either placed in a sealed envelope and the student delivers it to the address the instructor has requested, or it can remain in OARS for the instructor to pick up.

• All students are allowed a “one time” paper copy of the exam request per semester if they have not gotten their requests submitted through the OARS testing site at least seven days prior to the day of the exam. This means the student must come to the office, pick up a

We hope this information has and will be helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office.

“one time” paper copy of the exam request and fill out their information, then get it to the instructor to fill out their portion of it and bring it back to our office in a timely manner. Since this involves a lot of extra time and running around campus on the student’s part, it’s an option to be avoided if at all possible. Should a student not get a request into the system within the seven day requirement a second time, it will be their responsibility to make other arrangements with the instructor or take it in class.

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Eric has developed special interests in contract law and criminal law. However, he says he would like to keep his options open and explore different areas through internships and networking opportunities. He is currently working on securing a summer internship in a DA’s office. Eric says that law school has many opportunities for professional growth and development and one thing he loves about law school is that there are no labels! Everyone there is simply a law student, regardless of the presence of a disability or academic accommodations.

In addition to juggling seven classes, Eric serves on the honor council at Elon law. He indicated that the time management skills that were drilled into him at UNCG really help him stay on top of things. When asked if he had any advice for fellow OARS students, he said that “If you want to do something, such as grad school or anything else, 10-1 there is someone out there who has done it or is doing it. So you can do it too!” He says that he’s met several law students with ADHD and other difficulties, but they do not focus on the difficulty. They focus on the work! Once Eric finishes law school, he hopes to possibly work for a district attorney’s office or a private firm. He’s says he’s still figuring out his path.

Best of luck to Eric!
Help Wanted!

As most of you know by now OARS has expanded with the addition of a beautiful new testing area, thanks to the support of Administration. However, it has left us with a concern, no, let’s call it an opportunity. We now have a big blank wall begging to be decorated in some way. We all know that UNCG is home to so many talented and creative students and that is why we are seeking your help in designing a mural that will reflect the spirit of UNCG, the diversity of the campus and of course the wonderful students we work with here at OARS. If you have creative talents, or a vision of what beautiful work of art we could transform the wall into, now is your time to share. Please submit your ideas to OARS for consideration, and possibly win fabulous PRIZES! Of course if your talents do not run to the creative side, but you can stay within the lines when it comes time to lay paint to wall, we will need you as well. We are looking forward to seeing your imaginative ideas soon!!

Please submit your ideas to OARS by April 6 for full consideration. Let the creative spirits flow, and thank you for your help in further portraying the diversity and spirit of UNCG.

OARS and You: Working Together for Success

In accordance with The ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services works with departments across UNCG to ensure that educational programs and campus facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. In order to qualify for services, students with disabilities must provide our office with current, comprehensive documentation. Once qualified, students meet with OARS staff to identify reasonable accommodations which are then drafted into a Letter of Accommodation (also known as faculty letters).

It is the student’s responsibility to provide their instructor with this letter in order to receive accommodations. Although accommodations are determined by the OARS staff, the application of these accommodations can vary in the classroom depending upon the faculty’s teaching pedagogy. Our office encourages a collaborative relationship when discussing accommodations. If a student requests additional accommodations that are not indicated on their letter of accommodation, please consult OARS. Faculty are invited to contact OARS whenever there is a question about a student with a disability or their accommodations.