

OAE Connections

^{NEW}
 THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
 OF STANFORD'S OFFICE OF
 ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Teri A. Adams, JD

Welcome to the first edition of OAE Connections, the quarterly newsletter from the OAE! We will be bringing you new information about our office and our services, which we provide to students with documented disabilities. We also collaborate closely with our Stanford colleagues, including staff and faculty.

Among other topics, we will highlight coming Stanford community events related to disability and disability advocacy.

We very much encourage our readers to reach out to us with questions or requests for the OAE to present to your department or office, about our services. Our services promote equity and inclusion for all students with disabilities.

If you are interested in a presentation tailored to the issues of your department, whether administrative or academic, please call 650-723-1066 and request to speak to Carol Sutherland, or email her at csuther@stanford.edu. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule.



UPCOMING EVENTS

A Conversation with Haben Girma

- 4-6pm on Wednesday Oct 16, 2019
- SLS Russo Commons - Student Law Lounge
- Join wait list at oe.stanford.edu/rsvp

The Future of Disability at Stanford

- Held by the Stanford Disability Initiative
- 4-6pm on Friday Oct 25, 2019
- 1st Floor Conference Room of BEAM - Student Services Building 2

Disability Rights are Civil Rights with Paul Grossman

- 9-5pm on Friday Jan 24, 2020
- Location TBD
- Register now for a great Staff/Faculty professional development opportunity! Visit

<https://tinyurl.com/y5vjd37n>



The Next Step in the Evolution of Disability-Related Academic Accommodations

Constantly Trying to Improve the Process

Over the last two academic years, we have made a number of improvements in the way our students request their academic accommodations. The seminal effort was the launch of our online portal, OAE Connect, so that all accommodations can be seamlessly requested online. OAE Connect is able to populate course information that students formerly had to input, sometimes multiple times. For the benefit of faculty and academic staff, we have worked to standardize our accommodation language as shown on letters, in addition to launching supporting pages on our website to assist staff and faculty with implementing some of the more complex accommodations.

Next Steps

During this Academic Year, 2019-2020, the OAE is embarking on a new project to collaborate with faculty directly regarding how academic accommodations may be tailored for specific classes. This effort is designed to anticipate situations in which particular accommodations -- such as brief extensions on assignments or attendance flexibility -- may not be reasonable within specific classes because of the structure of the class. The question to be answered when deciding whether an accommodation is appropriate is whether implementing a particular accommodation will alter fundamental aspects (or "essential elements") of the class. Once we meet with academic departments and individual faculty members (as appropriate), we hope to be able to inform our students in advance when we are not able to support a specific accommodation due to the nature or the pedagogy of a particular class.

Ultimately, the goal is to foster an easier process for faculty to implement academic accommodations, while also creating a better understanding among the students of what is and is not appropriate. The determination and facilitation of academic accommodations is already a very individualized process; this project will take that specificity to a new level. We need your help with this process. If you have a class (or group or series of classes) for which you think this evaluation would be both applicable and helpful, please contact us to arrange a time to meet. Please contact Carol Sutherland at 723-1066, or email her at csuther@stanford.edu. Additionally, we will be reaching out to departments and courses where we think this is the most applicable.



Join Us:

A Conversation with Haben Girma

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

SLS Russo Commons - Student Law Lounge

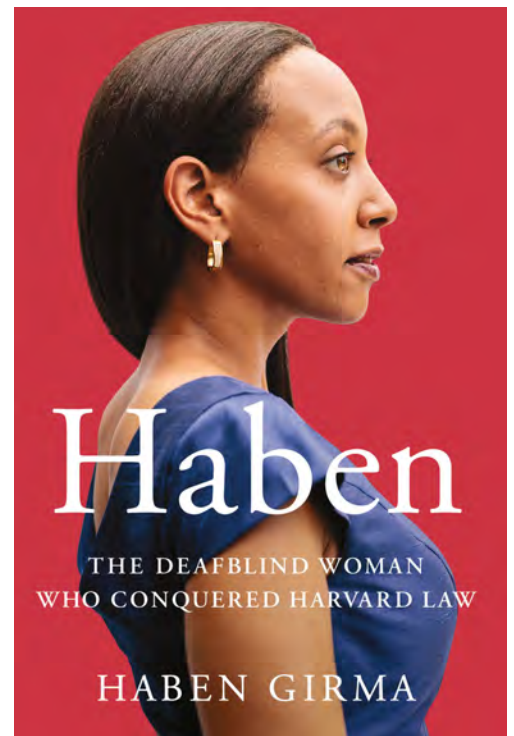
Haben Girma will be interviewed by Dr. Lindsey Felt, a Lecturer in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University. Join us and listen to her captivating story.

Haben, a Bay Area native and the first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, has earned accolades for her work as a disability rights advocate and activist. She has been listed in Forbes' 30 Under 30, received the Helen Keller Achievement Award, and was named a White House Champion of Change by President Obama.

Her autobiography, *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*, describes the complex history and joy of her Eritrean immigrant heritage next to her struggles with the bureaucracy of an American school system. She demonstrates an early and stubborn dedication to feminist ideals while adopting new technologies to facilitate her independence and autonomy. And through it all, Haben's warm, funny, optimistic voice is emphatic on these points: that inclusion is a choice; that disability is an opportunity for innovation; that in using innovation we can unlock pools of talent from an oft-overlooked community; and that personal stories can reframe difference as a powerful asset.

Books will be available for purchase at the event. Seats are limited so be sure to reserve your seat now. She is an engaging, intelligent and thought-provoking speaker that you won't want to miss.

Wait list registration at oae.stanford.edu/rsvp



Access matters: This event will have open captions and will be ASL Interpreted in a space that is wheelchair accessible.

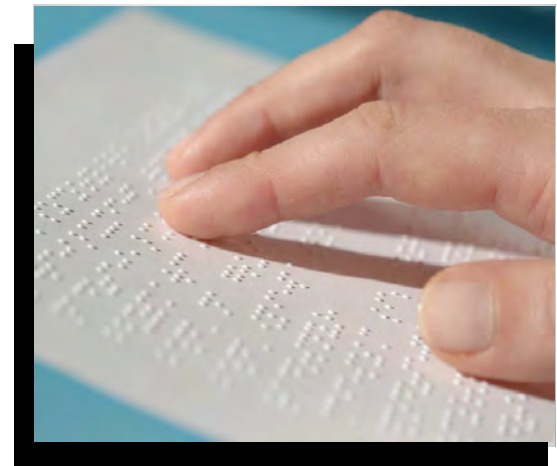


Faculty Spotlight: Accessibility Ally

Keith Schwarz
Lecturer in the Department
of Computer Science

Tell us about the work you did with the OAE.

I've been teaching here for around eight years at this point, and I've been quite impressed with how responsive and supportive the OAE has been in that time. In the Winter 2018-2019 quarter, I had a visually impaired student who needed significant extra support in one of my CS106B course. My head TA and I stayed in close contact with the OAE over the quarter, and the Office worked tirelessly, among other things, to convert my lengthy animated slide decks and diagram-heavy handouts into formats that the student could understand. I'm honestly astonished that the OAE was able to keep pace with the materials we were sending; these animations took a long time to create in the first place, and I can't imagine how many hours must have gone into converting them into tactile graphics. I have one pinned up in my office right next to my desk as a reminder.

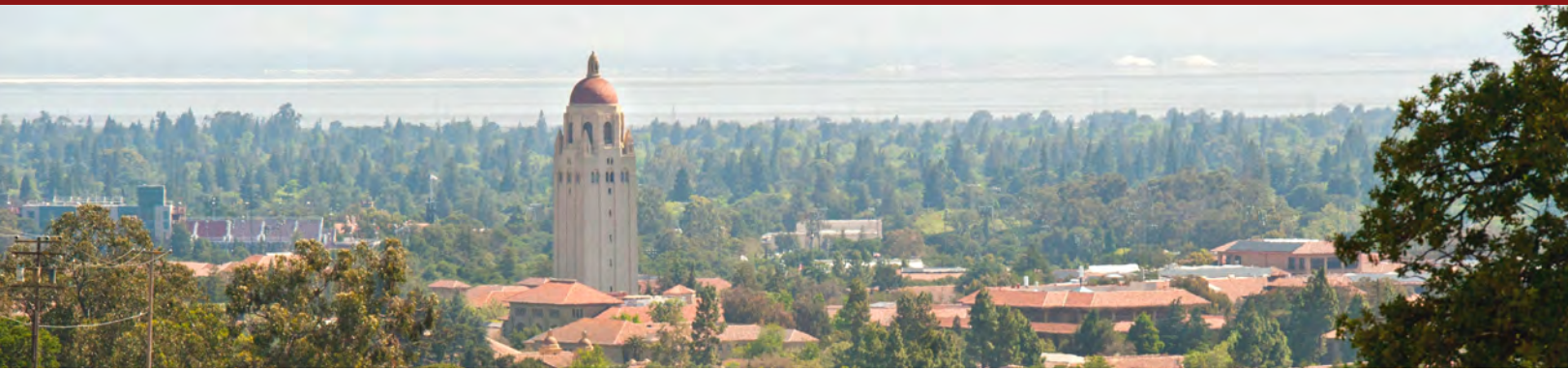


What parts of the process did you find challenging?

What was rewarding or surprising?

Having this student in my course exposed a number of major accessibility issues that we honestly had not anticipated when setting up the course. We were surprised to learn that the main C++ software development tool we ask students to use is incompatible with the two most popular screen readers (JAWS and NVDS). Many of the assignments we gave out were primarily visual in nature (for example, drawing fractal images or plotting data sets), and we hadn't realized that the payoffs at the end of those assignments were only available to sighted students. On top of that, our office hours system was designed so that section leaders interact with many students for short periods of time, and we had to develop a mechanism by which this particular student could get the extended support they needed. I was extremely fortunate to have, in addition to the support from OAE, an amazing head TA and a group of dedicated section leaders who volunteered to help out at every chance they could.

"I've found that whenever I've restructured or rearranged a course to support students from a wider array of backgrounds, the experience for all students in the course improves."



What did you learn about accessibility? What will you take with you for the future?

I have to give a huge thanks to Robin Cole for her patience, availability, and support over the quarter. We had a great chat once things wrapped up where we summarized important lessons and thought forward to the future. We now have a working software system that students with screen readers can use to write and test their programs over the quarter, and we have a wider array of text-based assignments available to draw from. We've started discussions about hiring TAs for our courses specifically to assist students who need similar accommodations, and the teaching team now has the institutional knowledge of how to make future student experiences easier and smoother. I've shared Robin's recommendations and advice about the services available - both those built into the tools we use regularly and the those offered through OAE - with the rest of the Educational Affairs group, and hopefully this will streamline things in the future.

I mentioned earlier how impressed I've been with OAE's support and responsiveness in the past, but this experience gave me a much deeper appreciation for just how phenomenally competent the Office is and how hard the folks there work to do right by students. I feel much more comfortable knowing just how much they have students' backs.

Did you find yourself having to shift the way you think about teaching computer science?

Absolutely. In many ways, teaching computer science is about helping people build metaphors they can rely on to understand how the code they write influences how the machine operates. I will be the first to admit that I hadn't appreciated just how heavily the analogies I'd been using relied on visual intuitions for concepts, and I'm looking forward to creating a wider array of explanations. In my experience working on diversity in computer science, I've found that whenever I've restructured or rearranged a course to support students from a wider array of backgrounds, the experience for all students in the course improves.

I should also stress just how much of the support came from our incredible course staff, most of whom were undergrads. We mentioned to them that this student would need extra support, and a huge number of section leaders pitched in to help out. One group of section leaders quickly found a working C++ development environment that's compatible with screen readers. Others quickly stepped in to offer assistance whenever the student signed up for help at office hours. My head TA met with the student weekly to get the programming assignments set up and answer questions one-on-one. We're incredibly lucky at this university to have students who care this much about supporting and encouraging one another. I could not imagine things working without their help. It's one thing to know in principle that we're fortunate to have these students. It's another to see it in action.

Are you interested in

Disability

at Stanford?

Advocacy



The ASSU (Associated Students of Stanford University) Disability Advocacy Committee works with Admin to advocate for community, a community center, accommodations, and more opportunities for Disability Studies on campus.



Power2Act is a community of disability advocates on campus who raise awareness about disabilities, host events related to disability and create a safe space for open dialogue and exchange of ideas within the Stanford community.



The Stanford Medicine Abilities Coalition (SMAC) is a new group at Stanford Medicine. The purpose of SMAC is to foster and advocate for the equal treatment and well-being of people of all abilities at Stanford Medicine.



SenseConnect seeks to advocate on behalf of the hearing impaired community at Stanford. We hope to provide resources to students passionate about hearing loss advocacy to support personal efforts to combat hearing loss.

Community



Kids with Dreams is an organization of Stanford students dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. Through its weekly programs, the organization networks Stanford volunteers with disabled youth to help with fun activities.



Medical Students with Disabilities and Chronic Illness (MSDCI) provides support and platform for advocacy for med students with disabilities and chronic illness.

Stanford has the Abilities Hub

The Abilities Hub, also known as the A-Hub, is a community space, that was launched in October 2017 after years of student advocacy for a community center. While it remains a space without a permanent location, A-Hub provides a place for disability-related student groups to gather, share information, hold events, and further their advocacy for access and inclusion on campus.

Academics



The Disability Studies Committee organizes events throughout the year that offer spaces for conversations about Disability Studies, as well as advocate for more academic courses that relate to disability.

Disability Related Courses at Stanford

- Introduction to Disability Studies and Disability Rights
- Perspectives in Assistive Technology
- Beyond Health Care: the effects of social policies on health
- Body Politics, Brain Training: Hype or Help?
- Caring for Individuals with Disabilities
- Topics in Neurodiversity: Introduction and Advocacy
- Topics in Neurodiversity: Design Thinking Approaches
- Dare to Care: Compassionate Design, Designing for Accessibility
- Developmental Disabilities: From Biology to Policy
- Disability, Gender, and Identity: Women's Personal Experiences
- Disability Law
- Disability Literature
- Diverse Perspectives on Disabilities: Healing, Illness, Stories
- The Cyborg Body: The Rhetoric of Disability
- The New Normal: The Rhetoric of Disability
- Women and Medicine in US History: Women as Patients Healers and Doctors

Accommodations



The Office of Accessible Education (OAE) works with Stanford students with disabilities and provides them with support services and accommodations at both the undergraduate and graduate levels

Stanford
Diversity and Access

The Diversity and Access Office oversees compliance with federal and state civil rights statutes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and provides disability-related access information to faculty, staff, students and visitors in the Stanford community.



Scan here to check out more at disability.stanford.edu