

Accessibility at Arkansas State University: Access and Accommodation Services

JERRY DON BURTON

COPY EDITOR

Access and Accommodation services provides students with disabilities support and continues to work on improving that support.

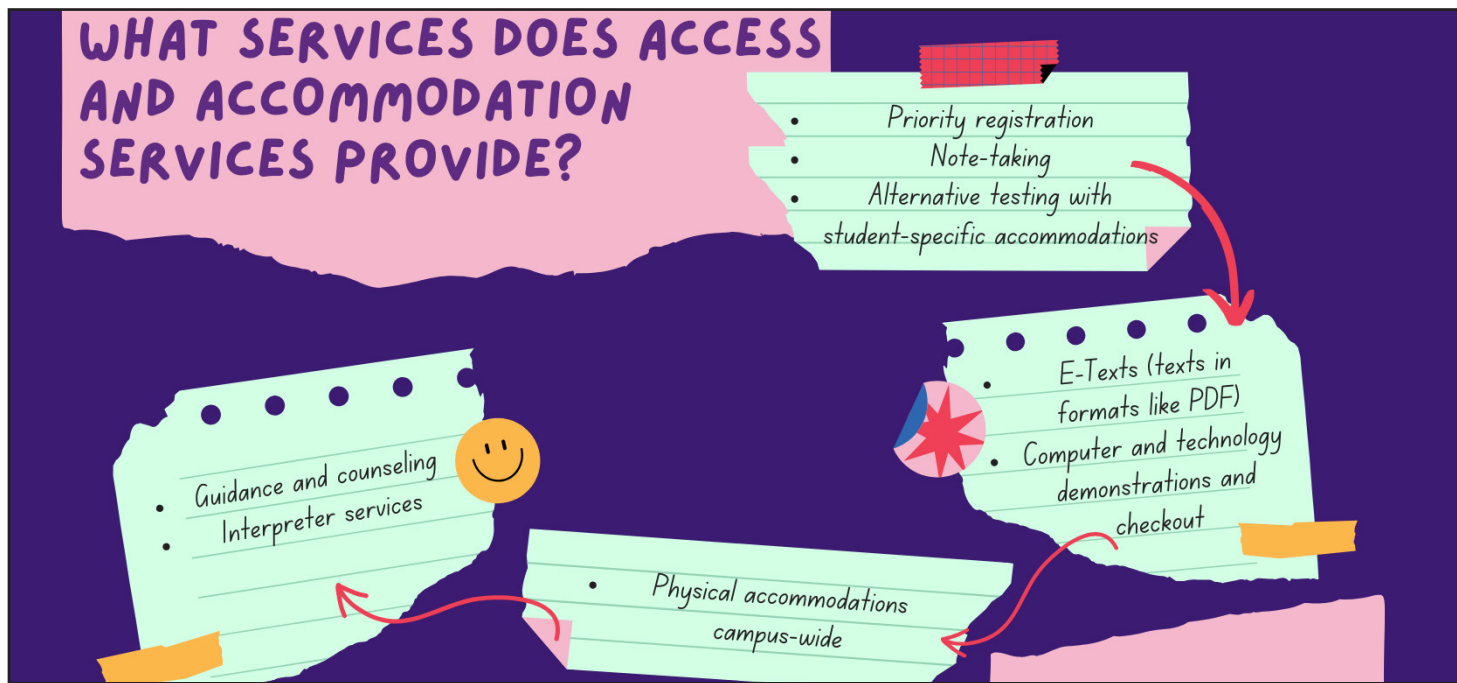
Blake Walker, associate director of Access and Accommodation Services (AAS), said while AAS is performing well, there is always room for improvement.

"The biggest thing we're working on right now is educating the campus community on why access is so important," Walker said. "Generally making them more aware of our services and educating faculty, staff and students on what kind of accommodations are there for them."

The associate director said AAS is working to help students understand what may qualify as a disability. He said some students may not realize that AAS can assist students with mental health disabilities and developmental disorders such as ADHD.

Sasha Jones, the physical accommodations specialist for AAS, said the goal of AAS is to make Arkansas State University accessible to all students. She said she wants students at A-State to feel accommodated.

Jones said AAS offers various avenues of support for students with physical accommodation needs. She said AAS offers a golf cart transportation



Graphic by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

An infographic explaining some of the services Access and Accommodation Services provides students. The office is on the second floor of the Reng Student Union, Room 2181.

program to help students get around campus, as well as disability parking, seating accommodations, wheelchairs, crutches and testing support.

Walker said 890 students are currently registered with AAS and receiving support in some way.

Walker said a recent accomplishment for AAS was getting a captioning policy approved. Walker said the captioning policy requires any video used for instructional purposes at A-State to provide captions. He said this policy helps make course content more accessible for students with auditory, visual and processing disorders.

Jones said AAS also offers services to accommodate students who need extended time or other help with testing. The physical accommodations specialist said students can meet with AAS and their professors to discuss what accommodations are needed and feasible for the course.

Walker said AAS works closely with housing to provide accessible housing options and accommodations for students in need. Every residence hall on campus has ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) rooms that are wheelchair accessible and have flashing fire alarms for students with hearing impairments.

Facilities Management is another close ally to AAS, Walker said. The associate director said AAS is working with Facilities Management to address faulty or missing power-assisted doors across campus.

"That is a problem that has plagued us for a while," Walker said. "They're just a hard thing to keep up because they get abused and if they're outside they sit in the elements. We're working on redoing all of those."

Jones said the accessibility of doors on campus is a major concern for AAS. She said she noticed a need for more power-assisted doors across campus but maintaining the existing doors is still a priority.

The physical accommodations specialist said the golf cart program transportation usually struggles early in the semester.

"It's a little rocky during the first few weeks of each semester, it's very busy and there's a high volume of requests so that's usually our main complaint," Jones said. "But it usually smooths out as we hire more drivers."

CONTINUED:
ACCESSIBILITY, 4A

African Student Association to host Culture Night Nov. 12

Immerse yourself in the vibrancy of African culture Nov. 12 at Culture Night, beginning at 6 p.m., in Centennial Hall. Culture Night invites students to embark on an exhilarating journey into the heart of Africa, celebrating the rich tapestry of traditions, flavors, and rhythms that make the continent truly remarkable.

Art in Taiwan Study Abroad info session scheduled

Earn a Fine Arts Visual credit in one of the world's most historic and beautiful countries this spring. A-State students will be able to experience a new culture while exploring the island of Taiwan. Join our in-person info meeting on Wednesday at 3:30 p.m., in Fine Arts Room 105.

Info session for SMART Scholarship for STEM students is Wednesday

STEM undergraduate and graduate students are invited to an information session for the SMART Scholarship on Wednesday at 4 p.m., in Room 147 of the Dean B. Ellis Library. More details are online at webapps.astate.edu.

BRIEFS COURTESY OF A-STATE DAILY DIGEST

THIS WEEK IN THE HERALD:

OPINION, 2A

- The sun has set on daylight savings time
- The ACT is not so smart

NEWS, 3A

- Office of Title IX educates students on domestic violence
- Student Activities Board brings the madhouse to A-State
- Think Tank focuses on importance of STEM education

NEWS, 4A

- FORVIS AIS Lab is opened for accounting students in Griffin College of Business

SPORTS, 1B

- Red Wolves offense overwhelmed Central Arkansas in charity exhibition, 112-77
- Fan Zone: Phi Delta Theta

ARTS & E, 2B

- "1989 (Taylor's Version)" will never go out of style
- A24: the only ones doing it right

LIFE, 3B

- Fuzzy Friend Adoption Fair at A-State
- This week's horoscopes

Communication studies program says "Hi Barbie!"

LAILA CASIANO

STAFF WRITER

Students interested in learning about womanhood, feminism and gender inequality can do so alongside Barbie in a new course offered next semester.

Sarah Mayberry Scott, Ph.D., assistant professor for the department of communication, will be teaching a new course in the upcoming spring semester based on the lead character of the 2023 film, "Barbie."

The course, titled "Barbie Unboxed: The deconstruction of a cultural icon through controversy and communication," will delve into topics such as social identities, seeing the evolution of Barbie as a doll through branding, marketing and public relations and its role in media, like Barbie's online presence and the recent live-action Barbie adaptation.

"The goal with this class is through the lens of communications, looking at Barbie the doll, the franchise Barbie and the "Barbie" movie," Scott said. "The branding of Barbie through the times and through the very first creation of Barbie."

With Barbie's contribution

to pop culture, Scott saw this as an opportunity to intermingle gender communications and adapt a new special course by dissecting Barbie's role and how it reflected and shaped our culture.

Scott hopes for students to identify communication concepts, theories and principles through this course by finding the best ways for engagement between herself and the students.

"Using whatever is something that appeals to the students, using that as the way to look at communication principles, makes it something that is going to be more interesting to learn," Scott said.

The Barbie course will count toward the women and gender studies (WGS) minor. Tabatha Simpson-Farrow, an instructor of composition and program coordinator for WGS, spoke on the importance of having this course be a part of the minor.

"Most programs offer limited course substitution so students may have more options than what is apparent when they first consider a minor," Simpson-Farrow said. "I hope this course attracts more students, but I also hope it helps other faculty to think creatively about their course offerings."

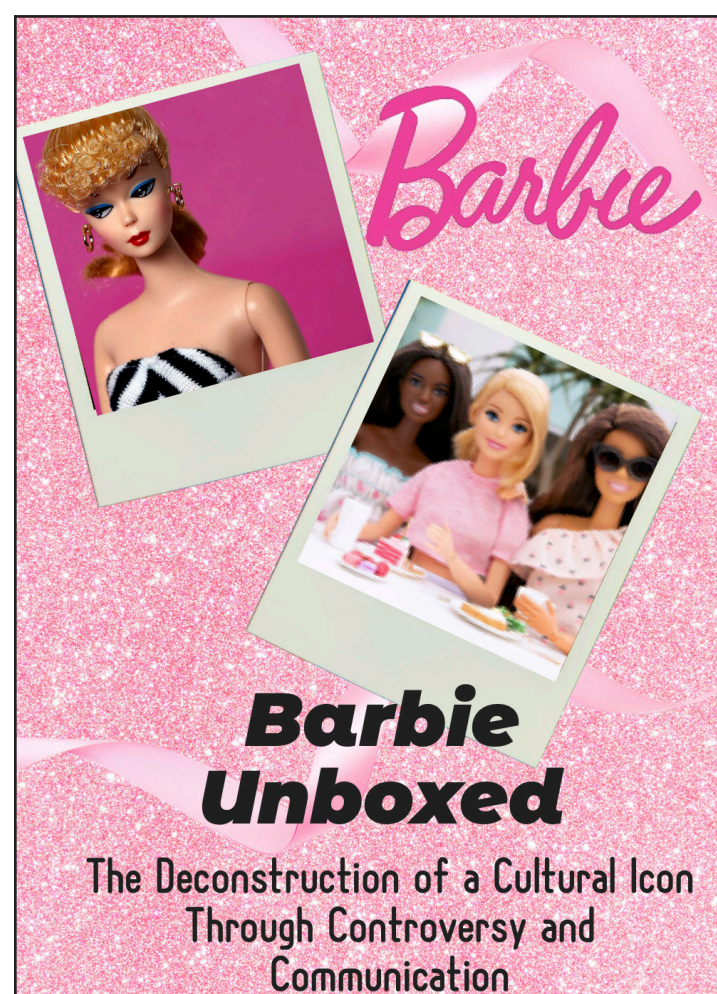
When discussing the special topic for the course, Simpson-Farrow said, "Barbie is a cultural icon that has impacted generations and this course provides an opportunity to explore this impact from an educational perspective. Plus, it just sounds like fun."

The posters promoting the new course can be seen scattered around campus, attracting students to enroll.

Aubrey DeFries, a senior communication studies major from Jonesboro, plans to enroll in this course after hearing its announcement through Scott. When asked about whether she'd be interested in enrolling in the course, she said, "I obviously said yes because I love the Barbie movie!"

DeFries shared their personal importance and impact Barbie had on her. "Barbie, to me, is a symbol of women empowerment. Barbie can be anyone and do anything," DeFries said. "Barbie shows people that you can still be hyper-feminine while dominating a male-dominant field."

CONTINUED:
BARBIE, 4A



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT
The promotional poster for the new "Barbie Unboxed" course. The class will be Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m., to 12:15 p.m.