Greetings!

I’m Tina Vires, which rhymes with “fires.” I use she/her/hers pronouns and am proud of my Native American, Irish, French, African, and even Neanderthal ancestry. (Isn’t it astonishing how much we learn about ourselves and our intersectionality in this world where anyone may have DNA testing?!) Last September, North Carolina became my new home, as I most recently transitioned from a similar post at Georgia State University in Atlanta, which I now think of as the “concrete city.” I will never take green grass and trees for granted again!

Although originally from Indiana, I eventually headed south and earned an associate degree from Santa Fe College in Gainesville, FL; a Bachelor’s in Business Management from Limestone University in Gaffney, SC; and finally, a Master’s in Education, with a hyper-focus on postsecondary disability services, from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, IA. I’ve had the privilege and honor of advocating for and presenting on numerous topics surrounding disability and related awareness and inclusion at various local, state, and national conferences and events. My dream is for the presence of people with disabilities to be expected, normalized, and automatically included in the wonderful diversity of humanity.

Prior to two years in Georgia, I spent 14 years ensuring access for bright college students who happen to have disabilities in South Carolina—first at Limestone University, then at Winthrop University. Simultaneously, I’ve raised four amazing children: one who has a chronic medical condition, one who has a psychological disorder, at least one on the autism spectrum, and one who has ADHD, LD, ODD, etc. Each one as unique as the rest of us!

One of my biggest goals as a new Spartan involves simplifying processes to make it easier for students to connect to OARS and receive needed accommodations as quickly as possible. Another is for each semester to be better than the one before. These cannot be accomplished without your feedback. Please feel free to reach out to me and share your ideas and any suggestions for improving on our efforts moving forward.

I’m so excited to be here at UNCG; I’m a year in and have received such welcoming and warmth from the UNCG community that I feel like I’m on a honeymoon! I look forward to working with you as we let our voices be heard!
**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

Lisa Walker

Lisa Walker started at UNCG in 2008 in the Department of Nutrition and has since worked in the Office of Student Affairs. She currently works as the Assistant Dean for Research Finance and Operations in the School of Human Health and Sciences. She serves as the Co-Advisor for the newly formed Delta Alpha Pi International Honor Society, which is an honor society for students with disabilities. Lisa is also a member of the University Disability Advisory Committee as well as the Greensboro Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Lisa has always been an advocate, and first became a self-advocate as a result of her becoming an amputee in high school. Her own experience, outspokenness, and supportive attitude has contributed to her becoming an advocate for everyone, especially those with disabilities.

Lisa encourages students with disabilities to reach out and work with the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services and the Career & Professional Development Center. She also recommends students to not downplay the adversities they have overcome.

**RESOURCES**

DAPi: deltaalphapihonorsociety.org
University Disability Advisory Committee: hrs.uncg.edu/affirmative_action/#udac
Greensboro Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities: go.uncg.edu/r0vg4f

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**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

Makayla Bullock

Makayla is a senior pursuing a major in Information Science and a minor in Mathematics on a Pre-Engineering track. She hopes to do research in City Development, Smart City Initiatives, and more. She transitioned to UNCG from an environment that was not as diverse as UNCG’s campus and feels that this transition has helped her overcome a few of her identity challenges.

Makayla was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis (UC) two years ago. Ulcerative Colitis is an autoimmune disease of the colon where the colon attacks itself and ingested food, which results in inflammation and ulcers of the colon. Ulcerative Colitis can affect eating habits, create gastrointestinal problems, and contribute to the onset of other illnesses to the point of necessary removal of the colon.

Makayla is very grateful for her supportive family, friends, and doctors. She advises students with chronic illnesses or disabilities to take care of themselves and to realize that it is okay to not feel like yourself, but not to stay that way permanently, and to work towards finding the new normal for yourself. In her words, "Wallow if you must, but don’t let yourself get stuck here because there is more out there for you."
LOOK WHAT’S ROWING AT THE G

Helping Hand Project

The Helping Hand Project is a student group that uses 3D printing to print recreational prosthetic devices for children. The Helping Hand project started in Chapel Hill, NC. After the founder graduated, he created a nonprofit and there are now multiple Helping Hand Project’s throughout university campuses in North Carolina. This past spring, the Helping Hand Project planned a Disability Empowerment and Awareness event and helped plan the Helping Hand Project Spring event.

The Helping Hand Spring Event consisted of Helping Hand Chapters and Helping Hand Nonprofits coming together with children who received a prosthetic device from them. They played games and conversed with the children to make sure they were progressing well.

Helping Hand Project is open to new members. Students can join through SpartanConnect, and via any announcements sent through the Pre-Professional group. Prospective members do not need to have any experience or prior knowledge of 3D printing.

DID YOU KNOW

Student Corner

Did you know that you can set your accommodation letters up to be automatically sent to your instructors at the start of each semester?

Once you have established reasonable accommodations that are not subject to change, you may request that OARS send future letters at the beginning of each semester, without waiting for a new request from you. Simply send OARS an email requesting that your letters be sent to all instructors automatically. Should you need to make updates or changes just reach out and make an appointment, and we will be happy to help!

Did you know that you can receive adaptive technology virtually?

Students who have been approved to utilize adaptive technology can have the luxury to receive training virtually via Zoom or Google Meet. You simply reach out to OARS and schedule virtual adaptive technology training with our Adaptive Technology Specialist Sidney Fletcher.

Did you know that our campus has an honor society for students with disabilities?

Delta Alpha Pi International Honor Society (DAPI)—Zeta Phi Chapter is on our campus! Delta Alpha Pi International Honor Society (DAPI) presents an opportunity to change that perception by recognizing college and university students with disabilities for their academic accomplishments. In addition, DAPI facilitates development of leadership and advocacy skills, and provides opportunities for members to serve as mentors and role models. To apply for membership: Completed/signed applications and dues payment can be mailed to us or taken to the UNCG Office of Accessibility Resources and Services, Suite 215, Elliott University Center.

Did you know that OARS is now on social media?

Follow our Facebook page at: UNCG Office of Accessibility Resources and Services. Like our page, follow, and share! We are also on Instagram/Twitter at @uncgoars!

Did you know that OARS conducts virtual Town Halls to share information with students?

Watch your UNCG email and/or follow OARS social media for information on upcoming Town Halls.