

STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Connect with ARCA on Facebook

We want to keep you in the circle on division updates, disability-related content and helpful resources! Give our page a

Like and a Follow at:

<https://www.facebook.com/joinARCA>

IN THIS ISSUE

Connect With Us on Facebook 1

Fall Letter from the Student Rep. 2

Student Loan Repayment Information 3

HEERF and CARES Act Funding 4

A New Opportunity for Connection 5

VR Workforce Studio Podcast 7

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice By ThinkWork 8

CRC Exam Preparation 12

Call for Student Content 13



Fall Letter From the ARCA Student Representative

Dear ARCA Students,

I hope this newsletter finds each of you safe and well, and I hope your fall semester is going well so far! As we navigate another school year during the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope each of you have been able to seek support from peers, loved ones, colleagues, and faculty. Please know that ARCA is also here for you, and if there is any way we can be of support, please do not hesitate to let us know.

In June of this past summer, we hosted a webinar titled, "CRC Examination Preparation: What Examinees Need to Know." For those who were able to attend, we hope this programming was helpful in preparing for the CRC Examination. If you were not able to attend but would like to review the content discussed in the webinar, please feel free to visit ARCA's website, where you can watch previously recorded webinars under "Resources - Webinars," also found here. Similarly, as a reminder, our CRC Examination Resource Guide is also available on the ARCA website under "Resources – Student Task Force – CRC Study Material," which can be found here.

We are committed to offering more student-focused programming throughout this upcoming year, and we invite any interested students to reach out if you would like to collaborate and work together on such initiatives! Similarly, we are also working on outreaching rehabilitation counseling programs and local ARCA student chapters across the country to further connect with rehabilitation students and programs to ensure that ARCA continues to provide an important home to students within our profession. If you might be interesting in participating and working together on this initiative, please feel free to let us know as well!

We hope that your semester continues to advance well, and we are appreciative of your membership and continued support of ARCA! Here's to a great year ahead of us!

Sincerely,

Daniel Balva, M.S., NCC, CRC

Doctoral Candidate | Counseling Psychology | University of Georgia

ARCA Student Representative

Daniel.balva@uga.edu



Federal Student Loan Repayment Has Been Extended!

Student Loan
Repayment
Extended
Again!



By Alexis Duggan, M.S., CRC, LPC-A

President Biden has extended student loan repayment again. In case you had forgotten, interest and payments were set to resume on September 30, 2021 but now this has been changed to January 31, 2022. Another extension leaves me to believe that these loans aren't going anywhere. I mean think about it why wouldn't Biden just cancel them at the end of September? Why does there need to be another extension? In case you can't tell I have lost all hope in student loan forgiveness. I actually started paying on my student loans in April 2021 and my balance has decreased by about half! I had five student loans through FedLoan Servicing and I am on number four of five. My ultimate goal is to have them paid off by the end of this year and I am working incredibly hard to meet this goal.

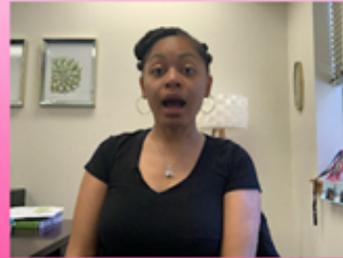
What does this whole extension mean for student loan forgiveness? Are you still keeping the faith alive? Do you have plans to tackle your student loan debt? For me personally I am tired of giving my hard-earned money to someone else and I want to tackle this debt so I can reach my financial dreams. It seems like I might be the only one who feels this way at the moment! Why do you think so many others have just given up on even attempting to pay their student loan debt? While I understand some people's balances are astronomical, anything can be accomplished with effort

You may not know this but FedLoan Servicing will actually stop servicing student loans at the end of their contract. While I'm not quite sure what all this may entail I do know that typically with new companies come new policies and procedures and I want my loans to be long gone before that happens! The student loan debt crisis seems to be never ending for us millennials and many people have truly given up. While my faith has dwindled in student loan forgiveness my mindset has broaden in my abilities to pay off debt and quick. Are you interested in learning how I've been tackling my student loans? Drop down in the comments and let me know if you want to create a plan to expand your own financial goals I'd love to tell you how I plan to get there!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLevziKQM38>

HEERF and CARES Act Funding

Fall 2021
HEERF & CARES
Act Funding
is Here!!



By Alexis Duggan, M.S., CRC, LPC-A

A few days ago, I was surfing on my universities homepage and I noticed that there was a message at the top regarding summer II HEERF and CARES Act funding. Since I was enrolled in both summer semesters, I decided to send an email to the person listed as the contact to ask if I could receive more CARES Act funding for the fall semester. Since I had been enrolled in the first part of the summer and had already received funding I was not eligible but I was told that another round of CARES Act funding would be given in the fall! In case you did not know HEERF funding is the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act that was enacted for college students due to the pandemic. HEERF provides billions of support in education through CARES Act funding for enrolled students

Now while I am not sure on how much you will receive this time around I do know that you have to apply for funds and the earlier you apply the better! I believe the requirements to receive funding will be the same as the other rounds of the CARES Act. For example, you need to be an enrolled student who is taking courses, have a need related to COVID, and apply for the funding. Also, I do not believe you receive the money right away as when I received the CARES Act summer funding it came a few weeks after classes started. You will receive the money however you typically receive your refund, which is most likely direct deposit so make sure this is updated with the correct bank account information.

This money will not go to any past balance that you owe to your university however, if you have a past balance contact your financial aid department and ask if there is any HEERF funding that can be used to take care of your current past due balance. Of course, I will update you as more information becomes available but be sure to reach out to your financial aid department directly on when you can apply for this funding and who qualifies. Will you be applying? Has your school released any information about HEERF funding? If so, drop down in the comments and let me know! Be sure to check out my latest video on the subject below!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuRoSU1BnMQ>

A New Opportunity for Connection, Wellness, and Exploration

Written By: Janet Petrino and Emily Boening
University of South Carolina; M.A. Counseling & Rehabilitation Program

With the increase of social distancing, social connection has largely moved online from virtual family movie nights to connecting on social media. Alcove VR offers a new home for individuals to maintain those important relationships based entirely within virtual reality (VR). While Alcove VR allows users to connect with others, it also gives users the ability to explore global destinations, engage the mind, and practice health and wellness in more accessible ways.

In the main room of the Alcove home, users can sit at a table and play several games. These games engage and challenge the mind with exercises for memory, strategy, logic, speed, and puzzle solving. Some of the games include Checkers, Chess, Memory Wall, and Matching Pairs. Within this area, users can utilize and develop their skills while keeping their mind engaged with the AARP Staying Sharp games. The gaming environments are relaxing and serene, adding a soothing tone. I (Janet) specifically enjoy the Tetris-style game called 10 X 10, where the player must strategically align blocks in columns and rows. This game is set within a scenic wilderness with peaceful background music. I find myself playing 10 X 10 for hours! The gaming table is great for young children who are developing their minds, as well as older individuals who are looking to sharpen memory and focus. This area is also useful for individuals who enjoy puzzles and games as a means of relaxation and entertainment.

Experiences from around the world are housed in the Virtual Travel room beyond the main area of the home. Users can choose from a myriad of international experiences using the globe in the center of the room or the interactive objects around its edges. From a hot air balloon tour over the Swiss Alps to swimming the Great Barrier Reef to exploring the beauty of Chiang Mai, there are hours of immersive experiences for users to sightsee on every continent and the ocean floor. I (Emily) deeply enjoyed swimming with sea turtles and seeing the monumental skyline of Dubai.

A New Opportunity for Connection, Wellness, and Exploration Continued

The Virtual Travel room offers great utility for individuals who cannot easily travel, those receiving palliative care and looking for bucket list experiences, and others who simply want to escape the living room without the exorbitant cost.

On the balcony, users can engage in a variety of health and wellness exercises, including meditation, guiding breathing, reading, and strength building. The meditation experience can be guided or unguided and users may choose from many environments with butterflies, crystals, beaches, waterfalls, gardens, rockpools, and rivers. The guided breathing exercises are designed to assist users in relaxing their breathing and work toward tranquility. This area also features a book about health and wellness that users can read through.

Finally, the strength exercises are varied to fit many levels of mobility, including chair yoga, barre workouts, tai chi, walking, and other strength-building exercises. I (Janet) personally enjoy the guided breathing area because it helps me to calm down when I am feeling anxious or stressed. The meditation and breathing exercises may benefit individuals with additional forms of relaxation techniques. Those who enjoy reading and want to explore the relationship between mind and body may utilize the information provided in the wellness book. Scaled exercises, like seated yoga, offer a new way for individuals with limited mobility to maintain physical health. Those who already practice or have wanted to try yoga or tai chi can do so in a calming and comfortable environment

We believe that Alcove VR is a great tool for multiple populations. Each area of the application has something to offer individuals in all stages of life and creates a calming, non-gamer atmosphere for exploration and growth. Alcove VR offers users an alternative way to virtually connect with loved ones, play familiar games, travel the world, and practice health and wellness. For questions regarding Alcove VR, virtual reality, or anything further, please email Janet Petrino and Emily Boening.

Janet Petrino at janet.petrino@uscmed.sc.edu or Emily Boening at emily.boening@uscmed.sc.edu.

Being Heumann with Judy Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of A Disability Rights Advocate



**VR WORKFORCE
STUDIO**

PODCAST

<https://vrworkforcestudio.com/being-heumann-with-judy-heumann-an-unrepentant-memoir-of-a-disability-rights-advocate/>

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice

By Kristofor Medina, Max Barrows, Nicole LeBlanc, and Karen Topper

December 2019

Members of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) and Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) had the opportunity to review a paper written by the National Association of State Directors of DD Services (NASDDDS) on informed choice and decision-making. This paper is our response.

Making decisions is not just about our skills. It is essential to take a close look at the amount and variety of opportunities being presented to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Always ask, "Are these the same possibilities available to people without disabilities?"

The system is eager to measure our capacity. We recommend focusing on assessing the ability of teachers and support staff to be effective communicators and providers of reasonable accommodations. A person's capacity to teach as well as learn is fluid and changes all the time. Whether or not we have disabilities, we learn from our mistakes and become more and more competent through our life experiences along the way.

"I would like to tell you what having autism is like when taking a trip into the community. It can be painful. People look at me with so much doubt that I have any intelligent thoughts. When in the community, we with disabilities stand out. I quietly watch all of society believe that we are empty spaces. What we really are, is full of intelligence."

—Kristofor Medina

Supporting us to state our desires works in our best interest and leads to getting what we need. We hope you understand that when our supports are strong, we are able to work toward our life's goals.

Disability Double-Standard

Often when a person without a disability makes a mistake, it's not as big of a deal in comparison to when a person with a disability messes up. Plus, there is the

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice Continued...

expectation that we must master certain life skills to get a chance to try certain things like working, dating, or living on our own. When we live in a world of low expectations, our hopes and dreams are stripped away.

“Presuming competence” is a popular term in the disability rights world. One of our favorite quotes by Rosemary Crossley is, “Not being able to speak is not the same as having nothing to say.” A lot of people believe that verbal speech is a showcase of the intelligence that people possess, holding onto the theory that if a person cannot speak verbally, then they can’t possibly receive information to process and understand. This way of thinking can be deadly to people’s growth personally and intellectually. It limits opportunity and decreases overall quality of life. Always believe in everyone’s intelligence and the amazing things that people can accomplish. You, yourself can provide support by just believing.

“I want people to move into the light by taking one step at a time. Think about what you want personally for yourself is the first step; that will provide you with direction. Always keep each person that truly supports you close by. It is important to not isolate yourself when trying to move forward with your goals. Talk to people representing your interests with confidence, be proud of yourself and many doors will open.”

-Kristofor Medina

Stop and Think- Is Guardianship at 18 Necessary or Are There Other Options?

The attitude of many educators is that students with disabilities need help and lack the capability to do things on their own. There is a “panic” when the legal authority to make special education decisions goes from parent to student. Parents want to stay in charge of education decisions. Often, this is not meant to limit a student’s self-determination, but is because parents may not trust the school system.

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice Continued...

How To Promote Supported Decision-Making

People need to be in charge of selecting who will be at their planning meetings. Too often this is not paid any attention. People with intellectual and development disabilities may not have as many friends as people without disabilities, and may be easy to influence. They often want to please the people on their team because they rely on them for everyday support. People may not have the self-advocacy skills to speak up for themselves. One way to explain this to self-advocates is to talk about the difference between what others think is “important for” you and what you say is “important to” you. Having a team meeting where a person does not get to select the members of their team results in the room filled with “important for” comments. This can easily drown out the “important to” comments. It is really important to have a neutral person outside of the agency help a person with planning.

Supported Decision-Making is Not a “Program”

Supported decision-making takes opportunities, skills, and practice for all involved. It is not realistic to think that every action staff take in a day will be empowering. Some days will be good and some not. We are dealing with human beings, their relationships, and outside pressures and influences. Although supported decision-making is not a program, states do need a system to train, monitor, and supervise staff to make sure that staff are continuing to learn and practice good supported decision-making strategies. This will keep the service system focused on our strengths.

Presuming competence is not about what we can't do.

It is about respecting people for their abilities!

Green Mountain Self-Advocates and Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

Informed Decision Making: It Takes More Than Practice Continued...



The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is a project of ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. ThinkWork! is a resource portal offering data, personal stories, and tools related to improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The contents of this brief were developed by our partners at Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR Grant # 90RT5028-01-00). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this brief do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

For more information:

Allison Hall

allison.hall@umb.edu

Institute for Community Inclusion

www.ThinkWork.org

CRC Exam Preparation



The ARCA Student Committee has created a comprehensive collection of exam resources for your CRC exam preparation. Click the link below to see that guide!

<http://www.arcaweb.org/resources/student-task-force/study-and-material/>

Happy Studying!



Submit Content To ARCA Newsletter!

**Interested in submitting essays,
student updates/accomplishments,
and content to ARCA's Quarterly
Student Newsletter?**

Be sure to email your content to our Chief Editor
for the Student Newsletter, Jessica Forsys, at
forysj20@students.ecu.edu

