

Subject: Invitation to become a mentor and/or panellist for the DUC disabled community

Dear allies of the disabled community,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. We are writing to invite you to become a **panelist and/or mentor** for our initiative aimed at supporting disabled individuals in pursuing meaningful education and careers. As you may be aware, disabled folks are historically underrepresented in many innovational and change-making fields, and the Disabilities United Collective (DUC) is committed to addressing this disparity. DUC's mission is to provide support to disabled individuals by offering informational Q&A panels and a personal one-on-one mentorship program. We believe that by bringing together disabled individuals with shared experiences and mentors who have successfully navigated some of the challenges, we can create a supportive and inclusive environment for growth and achievement.

We are currently seeking panellists and mentors who self-identify as disabled or have a health condition, or are an ally of the disabled community to support our mission. There is no medical exam, paperwork, legal definition or disclosure of your specific condition needed to join. While we do not have a set definition for disability and health conditions, we recognize that disability and health conditions may include, but are not limited to brain injury, chronic pain, mental health conditions, sensory disabilities, communication disorders, physical and mobility disorders, and cognitive disorders. Here are the two key aspects of our program:

1. **One-on-one Mentorship:** In this [program](#) (Ubysey article linked), we pair a disabled UBC student with a faculty member, staff, or advanced student based on areas of study, type of disability/health condition, and identity. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to guide and support a mentee throughout the academic year. The mentorship will involve **at least three meetings in the school year (September 2023 to April 2024)** where you can discuss obstacles, answer questions, provide assistance, and build a strong connection. The dates, locations, and length of these meetings will be determined by the mentor-mentee pairs, and DUC will provide supplemental materials to support these interactions. Your expertise and guidance will be invaluable in empowering disabled students to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.
2. **Q&A Panel on Pursuing Graduate Studies with a Disability or Health Condition:** Building on the success of [last year's panel on pursuing law studies](#) (previous event brief linked), we are expanding our panel series to other professional and research study programs. We invite practicing professionals, scholars, and current students in these fields to **share their personal experiences and journeys** of studying or working with a disability or health condition. The panellists will **address pre-collected questions** from the attendees, including inquiries about program applications and disclosure of disability, work-life balance, requesting accommodations, and other relevant topics. Additionally, the event will provide a platform for free discussion and networking. Your participation as a panellist will contribute greatly to the exchange of knowledge, insights, and inspiration among disabled individuals aspiring to pursue

graduate studies. These events are **1.5-hour long** and are **scheduled to happen early in fall 2023 (exact date TBD)**.

We kindly request you to confirm your availability and interest in participating as a panellist and/or mentor by **August 15**. Should you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at ubcduc@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering our invitation. We look forward to the opportunity of working together and creating a more inclusive future.

Warm regards,

DUC Team