

Moving Beyond First Impressions: Disability Awareness Week

By Kaitlin Hartnett, editor in chief

During Disability Awareness Week (Feb. 4 to Feb. 8), Melissa Fletcher and Josie Hurka set up a booth in the tunnel to allow for more students to become aware of the different types of learning disabilities their classmates face.

"People think of disabilities as a bad thing," freshman Naomi Rogers said. However, she pointed out that people "can learn from people with disabilities."

Rogers is one of the students at Concordia who has a "hidden" learning disability. She said that it makes it difficult for her to process information. Rogers also said that she has to study more frequently to make facts, such as dates, stick.

"I used a lot of flashcards," she said. "But working with Josie [Hurka] has been great. I haven't fully used all the services they give, because I'm so used to using them, I don't want to overcompensate. I want to be able to do things on my own."

Melissa Fletcher, Director of Disability Services, said that students with hidden disabilities usually face two obstacles: overcoming the disability itself and skepticism from others regarding it.

"When the disability involves the functioning of your brain, people may think a student is either faking 'crazy,' that it doesn't exist or if they just worked a little harder, they'd be okay," she said. "Our role is to insure that these students have both equal access and an understanding of how to work with their functional limitations and that faculty and staff understand that as well."

Rogers said she appreciates all options available through the Dis-



Anne Nemo chats with Josie Hurka at the Disability Awareness table, which was set up in the tunnel earlier this month. Photo by Kaitlin Hartnett

ability Services office, especially the note-takers and the extra time given in class on tests.

"They're really understanding," she said. "Some students get exasperated and flip out on tests. It's good that people know that there is a reason for it."

At the display table in the tunnel, there was useful information and pamphlets that showed how to communicate with people that have disabilities. One major theme was the language used to describe a person that has any sort of disability, whether it is physical or mental.

A pamphlet, entitled "About Being Sensitive to People with Disabilities," says that language reflects society's beliefs, which is why it is so important to choose one's words carefully when working or interacting with students with a disability. Instead of saying the

"disabled" or "handicapped," people should say "a person who has a disability." It also says that they are people first, and their disability is only a small part of them.

"I also think there still is a lot of stigma attached to being a student with challenges—disability is not a bad word," Fletcher said. "It just means you have to do some things differently and figure out what works for you."

Rogers said that people need to understand that those with disabilities can do just as well as those without.

"People just learn differently," she said. "Once you get that figured out, they can get there. It just might take a little longer."

NEWS BRIEFS

By Tim Sailer, news editor

The spring 2008 census data has been released. Total university enrollment for this spring is at 2,236—the highest spring term enrollment. This is due, in part, to the increase in graduate students, especially with the new M.A. in Education.

Students can now minor in Urban Cross-Cultural Ministry. The College of Vocation and Ministry has joined with Urban Cross-Cultural College Consortium (U4C) to create a minor in which students will be completely immersed in south Minneapolis, working with the members and organizations in the community.

Chia Khou Vang will lead a lecture on the Hmong writing system, Phajhauj Hmoob, and its use in the world. The lecture is hosted by the Center for Hmong Studies and will be held on Thursday, Feb. 21 from 6-8 p.m. in the Buenger Education Center.

THE MENU: Friday, Feb. 22, 2008

BREAKFAST SPECIAL
*French Toast with Sausage
Patty*

COPPER POT
Clam Chowder

LUNCH ENTREE
*Orange Garlic Chicken
Chili over Rice*

LUNCH EXHIBITION
Quesadillas

DINNER ENTREE
*Baked Fish with
Angel Hair Pasta*
(served in the Union Station)

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS BRIEFS

BRIAN HEINEMANN, vice president for marketing and admission, will be leaving Concordia University, St. Paul to serve as director of financial aid at Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree, Calif. Heinemann began his work at Concordia University in 2002 as director of financial aid.

The University has begun an internal search for the dean of the College of Vocation and Ministry.

DR. STEVEN ARNOLD has served for the past six years as the dean. He has been appointed to serve as campus chaplain, which will be effective July 1, 2008.

Director of financial aid, **JILLIAN BROWN**, will leave Concordia University later this month to work as associate director of financial aid at Capella University in Minneapolis.

JACOB LACROIX now serves as the director of the Galilee Institute Planning, which will consist of project research and planning for university activities at the Heartwood Conference Center. He was working as associate director of admission and transfer admission counselor.

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