



Hunter College - Office for Access and Accommodations - Student Services

Helping Students with Disabilities Succeed since 1988

Issue 1, Spring 2005

Faculty and Staff Newsletter

April is Disability Awareness Month

"In honor of the historic contributions that members of the University community with disabilities have made to CUNY and to New York in general, we have declared April 2005 as CUNY Disability Awareness Month."

Dr. Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor

What is a Disability?

Under Section 504 of the **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** and **Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990**, a disability is defined as any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a his/her major life activities, (ii) has a record of such impairment, and (iii) is regarded as having such impairment.

Under the ADA, no otherwise qualified individual shall, solely by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

A Message From the Director

As the new director of Office for Access and Accommodations, I am pleased to introduce the inaugural newsletter of the Office at Hunter College. Since 1988, the Office for Access & Accommodations (*previously the Office for Students with Disabilities*) has been ensuring the academic integrity of Hunter

Hunter College as an institution while providing students with disabilities with the accommodations they need. As well as providing students with classroom and testing accommodations, our services to students include personal, academic, and career counseling. In short, we provide our students with a range of resources, which can be tailored to the particular learning needs and circumstances of the individual student.

Students with learning disabilities are often invisible, yet at CUNY students with disabilities are a fast growing population at CUNY. At present the number of students with disabilities comprises approximately twenty-five percent of the 9,000 college students with disabilities in New York State. At the Office for Access and Accommodations, we are very proud of these students, who despite their difficulties persevere and achieve their educational goals, their professional goals, and even become leaders in their communities. We celebrate this!

We also celebrate the dedication and "roll up the sleeves" work of our staff and faculty. As their contributions are oftentimes behind the scenes, they are an indispensable link in the chain to students

realizing their academic and professional aspirations. We will continue to count on your assistance when working with students as they meet their challenges. Many people, students and faculty alike, are not aware of the resources that Hunter College offers to students with disabilities. This and future newsletters aims to bridge that gap.

Each semester the newsletter will present current information on disability facts, service information, student profile, news, as well as concerns and questions expressed by the staff and faculty members at Hunter. We would like to maintain contact with those faculty and staff we know and meet those new to us.

Please feel free to email us, call us, or better yet, stop in and say hello! Our goal is not just to assist students, but equally as much to assist faculty and staff who assist our students with disabilities.

Regards,

Sudi Shayesteh, Director

Office for
Access and Accommodations

The goal of this newsletter is to create:

- A supportive academic environment where academic integrity is not compromise,
- Academic parity and success among students with disabilities,
- Deference for the comprehensive array of academic and auxiliary services and programs,
- A network of bridges, internally and externally, for students with documented disabilities at Hunter College.

Student Profile

Student Michelle Mantione Dances at the Kaye

By Don Cohen, *Counselor*

"It has been my dream to dance on the stage at the Kaye since I entered Hunter," Michelle Mantione, who is completing her junior year this semester, says with a big smile. Michelle's dream came true in mid-March as an integral part of the Hunter College Dance Company, under the tutelage of Dance Program Director, Jana Feinman. Now, this is not an unusual dream to fulfill for many talented young women and men here at Hunter, except when you momentarily realize that Michelle walks with a crutch.

Michelle, who was born with cerebral palsy, began dancing at the age of five and has since had a scholarship fund named after her for inspirational children. Fast forward 17 years. Under the supportive guidance of the dance faculty, Michelle has become the first student with a physical disability to become a CUNY BA in Dance. In the recent "Spring Concert," Michelle danced in two original pieces choreographed by fellow students.

"Over the course of the past year and a half, Michelle has learned a great deal about dance and has expanded her movement capabilities. In return, we have learned many valuable lessons from her," said Professor Feinman.

After graduation, Michelle wants to teach dance to children with disabilities. There's no doubt this will be Michelle's next triumph.

News Flash

Access & Accommodations Hosts Visitors from Japan

On March 22, Access and Accommodations hosted 15 special visitors from Japan's Tsukuba College of Technology (College for Deaf and Blind), Student Support and Disability Services' representatives, and faculty members from different colleges and universities.

This visit was organized by NETAC (North East Technical Assistant Center, National Technical Institute for the Deaf), and was to educate the Japanese delegates regarding Access and Accommodations' Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, its developmental process and provision of services that will serve as a model to help our Japanese colleagues to implement programs for deaf and hard of students at a post secondary level in Japan.

Disability Facts: Dyslexia

Reading is considered by many researchers to be the most complex function performed by our brains. Dyslexia—inadequate reading ability—was the first general term used to describe various learning problems that were eventually subdivided and categorized to describe different learning disabilities. Therefore, we might call dyslexia the "mother of Learning Disabilities" (Ronald D. Davis, *The*

Gift of Dyslexia, 1994). By now, over seventy names are used to describe dyslexia's various aspects, just as there are many different theories of what dyslexia is and what causes it. However, recent research suggests that reading is not the only activity where dyslexic symptoms surface.

Since people with dyslexia respond to confusion by becoming disoriented, any spoken or written symbols, such as those in writing and mathematics, can create symptoms of disorientation. A person with dyslexia may also show difficulties in organizational skills, time management and social skills.

Do You Have Questions?

In forthcoming editions, we would like to address frequently asked questions from faculty and staff. Your questions and our answers will appear regularly in the "Frequently Asked Questions" column.

Please send your queries to:
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