

Putting a face on disability at Brevard College

By **Christina Bailey**
Contributing Writer

Disability is a label, which can encompass the mental and physical, severe or minor, and visible or invisible. Many want to share their story, but do not want the label of “disabled” attached to them. College can be an impossible dream for someone who is disabled. It is incredible when the opportunity presents itself, but it sparks more challenges.

I have a congenital vision disorder. It has affected every aspect of my life. My family and friends have always supported me, and there was always a team of resources to fall back on for support. However, family, friends, and teachers can’t follow you to college. When I set foot on the campus of Brevard and walked into the wrong dorm room, because I couldn’t see the room number, I had second thoughts.

The transition is awkward for everyone, though for some it’s just uncomfortable. When you transition schools, it’s an embarrassing, repetitive process. However, in college, not only must you inform all professors and your roommate of your needs, you also have to adjust your housing to your needs. Most people with disabilities have grown up with schools that had been pre-informed of their needs, and worked with their parents to have everything set for them. In college, however, instead of having your parent

or a teacher make all of the adjustments, you are thrown into the driver’s seat, even you may not know what will work for you or what you will need assistance with.

There are many resources on campus for any need, serious or minute. Debbie Roberts oversees assistance with special needs students. The majority of professors are more than willing to help in any way they can. It isn’t a very pleasant conversation when you have to tell a professor that you may have to leave, miss class time, or have to have aspects of the class adjusted, but they will not look down on you, they will try to lift you up. Many special needs students will go the full school year without mentioning a word to their professor. Yes, it is embarrassing, but it’s a necessity.

I asked students what they felt needed to be improved to make BC more disability friendly, and their answers were surprising. There are not as many ramps as some students would like, some doors are difficult to open, and desks are placed too tightly together, making crutches or wheelchairs difficult to maneuver. Debbie Roberts took notes as I mentioned student concerns and says that “she and staff are always evaluating how even the smallest things can impact students.”

The greatest concern of disabled students was attendance. If you have a disability that requires you to miss class time for doctor’s appointments, illness caused by a disability, or trouble getting

to class, absences can destroy your academic standing. It was also disappointing to hear that some professors were not as accommodating as students would like.

When I sat down with Debbie Roberts to discuss special needs students at Brevard and their concerns, there were many options that I had not even considered. The key is registering and informing your professors of your needs as early as possible. Most students are not even aware that there is someone to counsel them on the topic of special needs. Class schedules and lessons can be adjusted. There is constant contact between many departments to ensure that students’ daily needs are met, such as updates when the elevator in Jones is unavailable due to maintenance.

A disability can be an embarrassing topic, one that we may just want swept under the rug, but there is a need for students to inform those around them if they need assistance. Debbie Roberts has an open door policy, and there is never the wrong time to ask your professor, staff member, or a friend for help.

While not everything can be individualized, Brevard does its best to fit the needs of each student. The Brevard staff is constantly looking for adjustments needed to improve quality for special needs students, and it will be a continuous work in prog

Growing pains

Increased student population leaves little space for parking

By **Jesse Sheldon**
Staff Writer

With the second consecutive year of record breaking enrollment Brevard College is growing faster than ever. The classrooms and the cafeteria are busting at the seams; all in all, it’s good news for coming years.

But for us, here and now, we are suffering some “Growing Pains.”

With so many people on campus, parking has become a hot commodity, with faculty, staff, and commuter students all jockeying for spaces.

This in mind, it bears mentioning that there are a few parking regulations. First and foremost, if you are a commuter and have not paid your parking fee, today, Sept. 10, is the last day to pay. If you have not paid the parking fee and are caught parking on campus, you can be fined up to \$500. Also, if you don’t have a car on campus, remember to put in

your waiver before the end of the day.

Be aware that there are several spaces on campus that are restricted to certain members of the BC community. Faculty, Staff, and Mail spaces are outlined in yellow. These spaces are restricted to faculty, staff, and mail room personnel from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are caught parking in the spaces during these hours you can be fined \$30 per instance. This also is true for commuters who park in residence hall parking and vice versa.

The college has assured me that they are doing their best to try to accommodate everyone, but space and funds are limited. Students and staff are anxiously awaiting new parking spaces. In the meantime, remember there is overflow parking available in front of the art building and the Porter Center.

All in all, please be courteous and park only in your designated parking areas, and if worse comes to worst, use the overflow parking available on campus.

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