

NEWS

Disability Services helps students overcome campus life problems

By ANGELA STUTTS
Staff Writer

A warm, breezy afternoon at the beach marked the day he would lose all feeling and usage of his legs when a final, careless dive into the warm ocean water would cause him to be disabled for the rest of his life.

USC student Chad Sloan was left disabled after an accident following his senior year in high school. Sloan said he couldn't imagine he would even get the chance to go to college because of his problem.

With the help of USC Disability Services, disabled students can learn and live in a close-to-normal environment and overcome some of the obstacles that they must face everyday, according to Debra Haynes, director of the academic skills program.

Students who come into the Disability Services office are searching for some relief from every day hassles that they must deal with, and USC can provide that relief in many ways, Haynes said.

Although applications for housing are accepted by the USC Housing Office, Disability Services works along with housing in order to make the necessary arrangements for certain individual needs.

"We decide together what is the most appropriate and least restrictive environment," Haynes said. "One that they can function in best."

There are eight spaces available for males and eight for females. While this seems like a small amount, the demand does not exceed this, said Haynes.

"A good number of our mobility impaired students live at The Pavilion Towers," she said. "They offer many conveniences for disabled people. They are acceptable."

Financial aid and vocational rehabilitation and sometimes Medicare and Medicaid can add to the financial burden that sometimes exist when it comes to housing. Haynes said disabilities are taken into consideration when grants and loans are given out.

Transportation for disabled students is comparable to the shuttle system offered to USC students. This service, however, is only for on-campus academic services. They do not pick students up that live off-campus.

There is a Columbia area system, "Dial-A-Ride-Transit," that will pick up disabled people and take them where they need to go for \$1.50 each way.

After getting on-campus, the majority of the buildings are "handicapped accessible." If, however, a class is scheduled where disabled people can't go, the class



Brooke Phippen/The Gamecock

There are many obstacles for disabled students on campus. Disability Services can offer help for any problem.

will be moved to where they can go.

USC Computer Services also offers many services for disabled students.

"Tom Morton in Computer Services has helped, even in our office," Haynes said. "He really stays on top of the technology and new things that are being developed."

If problems do occur, the staff in Disability Services is right there to help. "We find out what's going on in their lives," Haynes said. "If it's something we can't handle, we know who to refer them to."

Usually, Disability Services get to know the students on a personal basis, but if it's someone it can't handle, these students are sent to the Counseling Center. If it's job related, the students are sent to the Career Center.

Chad Sloan, a paraplegic, makes use of the new technology for the disabled. He has a chair phone.

"I kid him," Haynes said, "cause he has a mobile phone on his wheelchair. It's one thing to have a mobile car phone, but a chair phone is something else."

USC Disability Services can make a world of difference for someone who is limited to few options, according to Sloan.

"They've kept my disability from being a significant problem," Sloan said, "and I'm able to do things I never thought I'd be able to do after my accident."

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"It puts you in the role of being a victim all the time," Flynn said.

After arguing with the man at the car door for a moment, the two women managed to get into the car and leave.

"Many women who are raped become traumatized into a prison of fear, locking themselves in their homes, terrified the rapist will be waiting for them and rape them again if they venture out," Flynn said.

Flynn believes that women fear rape more than murder.

"For me and the women I have talked to, we would rather die," Flynn said.

Flynn said one way to possibly curb rape and assault is to enact stricter laws and enforce the ones already in place.

"We have to go after the judges who do not punish rapists" and get them off the bench, Flynn said.

"It is rape, and they don't understand unless they have been raped," Flynn said. "Men understand violence, punishment."

Flynn said education and networking among women are the keys to protecting women from rapists. Women must lead the fight to see that this is done, Flynn said, because it is "not just your body" that is damaged when a rape is committed.

"Some women never recover," Flynn said.



C.E. Holman/The Gamecock

Catherine Flynn, a rape counselor, was threatened near the Caffe Espresso during the summer. Restaurant staff contacted the police, but the assailant was not caught.

The police, who were called by the Caffe Espresso staff, arrived moments after Flynn and her friend's departure and arrested two of the men on charges of disorderly conduct when they became belligerent.

The man who attempted to assault Flynn escaped.

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on campus this year.

"I'm not aware of any that have occurred," said Steve Wright, spokesman for USCPD, adding that "if a rape occurred on Greene Street, that's city property, so it's not in our statistics."

The City of Columbia does not keep statistics on whether an assault victim is a USC student or faculty member.

Eileen Korpita, coordinator of USC's newly created sexual assault program and a Rape Crisis volunteer, said many students simply do not contact campus police.

"There are more people who contact Rape Crisis than contact the university P.D.," Korpita said.

Jordan agrees, particularly when the attacker is known to the victim.

"Victims are embarrassed," Jordan said. "They feel like it's their fault. They are afraid people will blame them."

Rape Crisis published a list of tips for summer travelers. The chances that a person will be raped are increased, Jordan said, because vacationers are spending more time with friends and family, which offers more opportunity for acquaintance rape.

The tips include planning a route, checking thoroughly the vehicle to be used and never traveling alone.

The network also suggests travelers keep a "Please Call Police" banner in the car and be aware of security at any hotel where they are planning to stay.

What to do if you are raped

1. Get to safety immediately.
2. Call 771-RAPE
3. Do not bathe or change clothes, doing so would destroy evidence.
4. Get medical attention.

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