DISABLED STUDENTS OVERCOME CHALLENGES

ELICOTER FLIGHT
Gregory Carey

Learning to take for college is supposed to be one of the most challenging and exciting times in a young student’s life. Some students may suffer from disabilities. Often, these disabilities cause difficulties and barriers that may be overwhelming. For others, it is another step in their physical disability. The addition of a physical disability can make it seem as if the obstacles and challenges already present in a college student are insurmountable.

Despite these limitations, many can make a college career possible. Some disabled students are capable of finding success. The definition of success varies from one person to another and individuals can find satisfaction in meeting what they believe to be a reasonable goal.

For Eric Gaffney, aviation-professional pilot senior, his success stems from a childhood passion. Through trends with his father and an encounter with an aircraft, Gaffney decided he wanted to become a pilot, despite being born without his right hand.

"I basically looked up and when coming in at OU, Gaffney said. "At first, I was in biology, but I wanted to do what I had always wanted to do, which was fly. I feel like that was what I was born to do."

The task of flying an airplane is not a simple one for Gaffney. To prove his capability as a pilot, he had to pass three special medical flight tests that pilots with two hands are not required to take.

He said he first had to prove that he could fly the airplane by himself, then that he could fly the plane from both sides and finally that he could fly with minimal flaps from one arm.

Today, he is mentally restoration free. "I overcome all the restrictions and no one says extra certificate is something that I write about everyday," Gaffney said. "It means I’m really happy to know that there is no difference between me and another pilot. I may have to prove a little harder and quicker, but if you never do, it is definitely nice to know I am restoration free."

Business junior Collin Dobie a pool attitude as he is discovering success.

"I know that there is nothing that can stand in our way. Do I want to have a big impact of what I do this semester? Do I want to stay above average? Of course, but ultimately I know that my success to do what I need to do, and I really believe that I can," Gaffney said. "I am very happy that I got up in my household and through my life that I don’t have any disabilities."

"I believe that I didn’t lose it on me, I lost it on my family and the people. But I’ve been able to overcome that and find success where I am where I have chosen to go to college."

"I understand that I have not, but I have to really understand the importance of support from those in my life."

"My overall success has to be a collaborative effort between me, the university and everyone around me," Gaffney said.

While some students have adapted to his challenges, some have not.

"To overcome the restrictions and earn those extra certificates is something that I smile about everyday. It makes me really happy to know that there is no difference between me and another pilot."

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Challenge
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

A long disability, often is
defined to adjust to a new
situation following injury.
A similar appeal to pub-
lic service and sympathy
was used by 61-year-old
Kathleen Montana in her
lobby meeting in weed.
Montana said he became
the week before joining
in the football team, and
discussed the BC’s
various causes and damages
she suffered in an injury.
Dave woolf pointed to the
area, preventing him to see
an electric wheelchair.

Beyond the physical
problems, which I do not
believe I will ever to be
well with, are financial issues,
Montana said. “Obviously,
I am not just like everyone
else physically, and I think it
would be a mistake to
assume otherwise.”

Initially, Montana feels as if it may be difficult for
disabled people to associate with people because
an average person may want to avoid offering some-
one with a head injury.

“The second, I think that people can overcome this
initial sensation after getting to know us and real-
izing that we are people just like them,” he said.

We Montana understands the feeling of unpre-
paredness and sometimes he finds it hard for
disabled people before suffering the injury.

“I can understand that many young, disabled
people do not go to college and are not exposed
directly to depression and helplessness, so I have
been in my role in mitigating my education and
staying somewhat active,” Montana said.

Psychological barriers are often a motivating and
discouraging barrier to face, but it’s part of the
effort to find happiness and success in the midst of
the struggle.

“It all comes down to how you perceive yourself
and what you are willing to do.” Montana said.

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Sooner State. For more information or to buy
your copy of Sooner State, visit our website at
www.mm.com or call (405) 325-4560.

Photo by Emily Wayman/Soonersports.com

Eric Sechrist poses with OU’s twin-engine Piper Saratoga.

Sooner sports coordinator for the Magnificent and
will soon begin training in the aviation depart-
monts long.

2010 OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL
FRESHMAN AND TRANSFER
SEASON TICKET LOTTERY
AUGUST 16 – 20

Sign up for OU Freshman and Transfer student season
tickets for the 2010 season will begin on August 16 through
August 20.

Season tickets can be requested at Soonersports.com or in
person at the OU Athletics Ticket Office.

TICKET PRICES:

Student season tickets are $165 and will be placed on the
student’s bursar account. There is a $15 processing fee for all
orders. Students will only be charged if awarded season tickets.

REQUESTING TICKETS ONLINE:

Tickets can be requested online at Soonersports.com 24 hours a
day during the sale beginning at 8 a.m. on August 16 and lasting
through 3 p.m. on August 20. A lottery will be held the afternoon
of August 19 if demand exceeds supply.

REQUESTING TICKETS IN PERSON:

Tickets can be requested in person by visiting the OU Athletics
Ticket Office, located on the South Plaza Level of Atp Avenue
Parking Garage. The OU Athletics Ticket Office will begin taking
walk-up window requests at 8 a.m. on August 16 and will
continue every business day until August 20 from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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