

# 3.5 Student Perspectives on Disability Services

Thursday, July 20, 2017, 11 am - 12:30 pm

Through discussion and video, panelists from Molloy College (Erica, Kaitlin, Nicole), Tufts University (Benjamin, Ray), and Valencia College (Issac, Jesus) will share their experiences as college students with disabilities, including using accommodations, interacting with faculty and DS, building community, facing challenges, and creating successes. Students will discuss ways DS professionals can better outreach to students, enhance services, and help create a more welcoming campus for students with disabilities. The student panel will be moderated by Kim, a Texas Tech University grad student working with the National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD).

## Panelists



**Benjamin Hosking** recently graduated with a History B.A. from Tufts University. He has lived most of his life in Boston, but spent significant time in Australia. He became interested in film in the first semester of his senior year, and since then has directed two short films and produced four more. His documentary, "Day By Day," co-created with Ray Bernoff, covers the perspectives of artists living with disability. His narrative film debut, "Dancing on the Yellow Edges," depicts the experiences of two brothers with bipolar disorder. You can read more about these films at [benjaminhosking.com](http://benjaminhosking.com). Benjamin recently came out as early onset Bipolar I (rapid cycling), diagnosed when he was twelve.



**Erica Lengefeld** is a junior studying Nursing at Molloy College. At two years of age, Erica received early intervention to assist her language skills and began to speak at three-and-a-half years. By five years old, Erica showed signs of attention deficit, and shortly after was diagnosed and treated for ADD. Erica now holds the position of Co-Vice President of the Molloy Nursing Student Association (MNSA). She made Dean's list her first three semesters at Molloy and was inducted into the Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society (<http://deltaalphapihonorssociety.org>) in the spring of 2017. Erica is currently a member of L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Education, Awareness of Disabilities) where she spreads awareness about disabilities.



**Issac Thomas** is a blind student at Valencia College in Orlando, currently pursuing a degree in Business. Even though he is blind and can see nothing, Issac has completed some of the most visual courses like Business Calculus. He lives on his own with no academic or financial help from his parents. He maintains a 3.5 GPA and has been selected by two different honors organizations. He currently works at the Office for Students with Disabilities at Valencia College, helping other college students with disabilities. He looks forward to starting his own business and wants to continue helping other students succeed like himself.

## Panelists cont.



**Jesus Ramirez** is a sophomore student at Valencia College working on a Bachelor of Health Sciences degree. A Leukemia diagnosis in 2008 at the age of eleven steered Jesus toward a career as an Anesthesiologist. When a patient is going through such stressful, frightening situations, they just want a bit of warmth and safety and to be aware that everything will get better. As a 8-year cancer survivor, nothing will stop Jesus from solving any problems to get where he wants to be. As Plato wrote, "The first and greatest victory is to conquer yourself; to be conquered by yourself is of all things most shameful and vile."



**Kaitlin Batik** will begin her senior year this fall at Molloy College, where she is majoring in Education with a concentration in English. When Kaitlin was in first grade, she was diagnosed with autism. She plans to become a special education teacher when she graduates. At Molloy, Kaitlin is involved with multiple student activities, including ASL Club, Gaelic Society, Leadership, Education and Awareness for Disabilities (L.E.A.D.), and the Molloy Performing Arts Club (MPAC). She also likes writing and plans to write and publish young adult novels featuring autistic characters and characters with other disabilities.



**Kim Elmore** is a Ph.D. candidate in Technical Communication and Rhetoric at Texas Tech University. In her dissertation "Negotiating Voice," she analyzes public dialogues about autism research to find how they could be more inclusive of autistic individuals. Recently she interviewed disabled college students about their struggles and successes transitioning to college for a co-authored chapter, "What I Wish I Knew Then." Learning to live with depression, anxiety, and OCD since childhood, Kim identifies as Neurodivergent. She is the Coordinator of Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM), an online organization by and for students with disabilities (<http://www.dreamcollegedisability.org>).



**Nicole Tencic** is a senior from Farmingdale, New York who is majoring in psychology at Molloy College. She made this spring's Dean's List with a 3.8 GPA and was inducted into the Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society in 2015. Nicole is currently the president of L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Education, Awareness of Disabilities) where she helps spread awareness and advocates for the disabled throughout Molloy's campus (<https://life.molloy.edu/organization/LEAD/about>). Nicole became disabled from high dose chemotherapy at the age of seven years old while she was being treated for Leukemia. Currently, she is neurologically challenged as well as physically disabled, hearing impaired, and fine motor disabled.

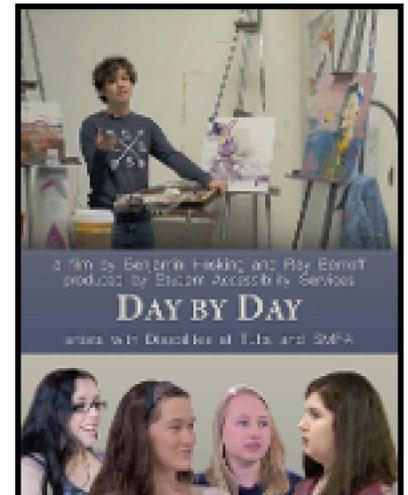
## Panelists cont.



**Ray Bernoff** is a senior in the production track of Tufts University's Film and Media Studies program. He and recent Tufts graduate Benjamin Hosking created the film "Day by Day," a short documentary about artists with disabilities at Tufts. He is the former executive photo editor of the Tufts Daily newspaper. He will continue to work there this fall as a staff photographer and LGBT+/disability liaison, but is currently interning at Arlington Community Media, Inc. as a news producer. He identifies as a gay trans man and trauma survivor with chronic pain.

## Featured Documentary

"**Day By Day**" (<https://vimeo.com/215418401>) is a short documentary on the perspectives of six artists with disabilities. They discuss how art and disability influence each other, as well as their lives. It was co-created by two filmmakers with disabilities, Benjamin Hosking and Ray Bernoff, in collaboration with Tufts University's Student Accessibility Services. During our panel session, we will show clips from the film about how the featured college artists with invisible disabilities have struggled and succeeded in their work and lives.



## DREAM Student Group



**DREAM** is a national organization for and by college students with disabilities, supported by the NCCSD at AHEAD. We strongly advocate for disability culture, community, and pride, and aim to serve as an online virtual disability cultural center. This fall we'll bring back our DREAM Mentor Monday series, roll out a new DREAM campus chapters program, open a DREAM Store, and more! We hope you'll stay in touch with us!

[DREAM@ahead.org](mailto:DREAM@ahead.org)

<http://www.dreamcollegedisability.org>

You can also follow DREAM on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr!