

Oakland University Google Email Mail - FW: dorm living-inclusion

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Mary Beth Snyder <mbsnyder@oakland.edu>

FW: dorm living-inclusion

Mary Beth Snyder <mbsnyder@oakland.edu>
To: Lionel Maten <maten@oakland.edu>

Mon, Jul 28, 2008 at 4:31 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: Sharon Howell [mailto:howell@oakland.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2008 7:59 AM
To: mbsnyder@oakland.edu; Feldman, Rick; Rick Feldman
Subject: dorm living-inclusion

July 20, 2008

Dear Marybeth,

I hope the summer is going well for you. I'm in Maine. At the moment I am dealing with a broken ankle, complete with cast from knee to toe, so I am a bit slower than what I had hoped.

I'm writing to see what we can do to create a policy so that young people like Micah can live in the dorm. I read your letter to him after your conversation with him and was surprised by it. I think of you as a person of both vision and heart, and had expected a response that would put forward some ideas about how we could create a dorm experience for students in Micah's program.

After I thought about it, I remembered our original conversation about bringing Micah on campus. If you recall, you were opposed to the prospect initially, and advanced some of the same arguments that you did in the letter objecting to him living in the dorm. I appreciate that you were nonetheless open to working to find solutions that allowed the program to move forward, and I hope we can do so again. I believe the universally positive responses to the program thus far, from students and professors alike, demonstrate its value.

It seems to me that we have come to a natural point in the program to think about how we can extend the experience beyond classroom and campus participation to inclusion in dorm life. I can think of any number of strategies to get us to a place where we can move toward full inclusion. I would hope Oakland would see this as an opportunity to provide leadership in the state around inclusive education and the unique role universities can play in

assisting

young people to develop to their full potential. If we are willing to make accommodations for dorm living for students who could not hear warning sirens

or be able to move quickly without assistance, I cannot understand why it would

be appropriate to draw a line with students who have cognitive impairments but

have demonstrated that they are responsible, contributing members of the campus community.

For myself, I am committed to doing whatever I can to help create a more inclusive campus. Had I not worked with several of the young people in the program and seen the extraordinarily important role being at Oakland has played in their lives, I probably would not bother to try and find some way to

continue to support them. But my many conversations with the young people, their professors, and their fellow students have convinced me that inclusion not

only benefits students like Micah, it benefits all of our students who come into

contact with them. And it strengthens the larger community upon whom we depend.

So, I hope you are open to exploring how we might set up a policy for dorm living that you would be comfortable with on the campus.

I am hoping that we can at least open some discussion about what your reservations are, and see if we can find ways to address them. I'm willing to do

whatever you think is necessary to make the opportunity of living in the dorms

available to students. Ideally, I'd like us to find a way to initiate a pilot project

for part of the fall semester.

Please let me know what you think, either through email or give a call on my cell

—313-282-7669. It doesn't always ring out here due to spotty coverage, but at

worst I tend to get messages within a day or so of their being sent.

Looking forward to talking with you.

Shea
Shea Howell
Chair
RCJ