

Author: Delroy Coke, student at Camden County College from 2003 to 2010, attending Rowan University in the fall.

Camden County College

Blackwood, NJ

Submitted by Joanne Kinzy, Advisory Board member to the Camden County Division of Senior and Disabled Services

What does it mean to be a successful well-rounded student in college? It is also important to know that a college student can also have a disability. Before I attended Camden County College, I became an average student at Bancroft School in Haddonfield, NJ. As a student at Bancroft, I was tested by the different grade level in writing, reading, and arithmetic. But there were times that I had trouble staying focused on academics. Also, at the same time I became an active student which I was involved in student government, playing sports, and so on. Between classes, activities, and a job it became a busier time for me as a high school student.

When I had conversations with my parents they gave me a choice to either go to vocational school to learn a trade or continue to get my education in college. In the winter of 2003, I began my first semester at Camden County College; I was still a student at Bancroft during that time. My first college experience was overwhelming, the academic setting was difficult; the expectations in college were very high. I never adjusted myself in the college setting, doing homework, and I also felt overconfident as well. These every day high school habits were the norms of my early years of college.

Meanwhile, a year later in 2004 after I graduated from The Bancroft School, I began to make a life-changing decision. In order for me to become a more proficient student; I had to start adjusting to college academics very seriously. My confidence level had mixed results at the

same time. I began to have a relationship with my tutors Professors Martha Bachman, James Lawson, and Tony Smalldone. They were my influences to prepare myself for classes and exams. There were years that I made difficult choices to changing my habits and staying focused in school. Back in the fall semester of 2005, I almost decided to drop out of college and attend vocational school within the next year. This is similar from one of my favorite movies “Rudy, when he told his teammates that he quit the team, because of the University of Norte Dame head coach would not accept walk-on football players. In real life I was faced with the same pattern that Rudy was in. My tutors told me about the stories how their students with disabilities became successful during their experiences at Camden County and they never gave up on themselves.

After the fall of 2005 semester I began to believe in myself, to have good confidence in and outside the classroom. This setting didn’t change overnight; it took years and years to discover the mind and personality adjustment with college academics and activities. During my time at Camden County College, I met my expectations every year and worked harder to reach and attain my goals as well. Also, I began to make new friends in my classes and activities around the college. It was a great feeling to believe in myself.

At the same time, I took advantage of every opportunity that I could in college, ranging from taking an educational field trip to Spain to learning my reporting and editing skills for the college newspaper. These college experiences taught me how to become a better-rounded student. I have come a long way from being an inconsistent student to outstanding and determined college student. This year I’m graduating from Camden County College with an Associate’s Degree and transferring to Rowan University. I’m going to continue to have a good work ethic, to become confident person and serve as a citizen. This is why college students with various disabilities around the country have the opportunity to go college and make a career for

themselves in the real world after graduation. If there wasn't for the American with Disabilities Act it would be very difficult for anyone with a disability to receive any freedom or opportunity in the world. This is the reason I wrote my life experience as a successful college student with a disability, since it's the twentieth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This is more of our civil rights to live a great opportunity as a human being.