



# The Power of Ambition, the Will to Persist, and the Shout for Success *by Kelly Kaveny*

Kelly Kaveny, now a senior studying computer science at CU-Boulder and graduating in May, was once a student who felt incompetent in reading and writing. Every day he would come home worried about his struggles. One day, he sat down with his father to ease his worries and in an attempt learn what was going on. Kelly's father told him that Kelly's disability had been with him from the time he was very young. However, his father did not know the name of the diagnosis. It remained a mystery from the time Kelly was in elementary school to the end of high school. Thus, it was difficult to find an effective treatment for his disability.

Kelly was placed in special education in the fourth grade because he had trouble keeping up in language arts and social studies courses. Since that time, he has had a few breakthroughs. He was finally able to read and write basic stories, but was still far below the average for his grade and age. With some practice, he got a little better, but even by the eighth

grade he was still at only a 5.1 reading level. Ironically, he managed to maintain good grades, even in his language arts and social studies courses.

When Kelly entered high school, he became very serious and started hitting the books as well as continuing to practice his strategies. Starting his freshman year, he attempted to take the hardest



classes he could. Although he faltered in some of his assignments and exams, he managed to succeed with a straight A report card. By the time he graduated from high school, he achieved a 3.9 unweighted GPA despite his struggles with reading and, to a lesser extent, writing. Kelly took five AP courses and was one of 33 students in a class of 600 to graduate with a high school Honors Diploma in 2002. Now in

college, Kelly is currently maintaining a 3.4 GPA in computer science and is set to graduate with his bachelor's degree in May.

Kelly not only tried to cope with his disability, but also worked to strengthen his abilities. Since he was young, he was always fascinated with numbers. He never really had any trouble with mathematics, nor did he struggle with any science-related subjects.

In the eighth grade, he took algebra, which benefited him in high school; and in high school, he took all honors math courses, working his way up to calculus. His undying motivation to strengthen his abilities has led him to his successes in college.

In addition, his mathematical talent has certainly facilitated his efforts in getting through a rigorous college curriculum.

Succeeding in academics was not the only thing on Kelly's mind. Since he was five years old, he has been an aspiring artist. He spent many hours of his childhood drawing and painting, and got very good at it by the time he reached sixth grade. At that point, he wanted to change direction.

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## The Power of Ambition, *continued from page 1*

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Emerging from his artistic talent was another interest. Music took over for the time being, and Kelly began to play the piano and even joined the middle school choir. He practiced his voice and the piano quite often and by the time he graduated from high school, he had composed 20 or so pieces and sung in the 2001 and 2002 Colorado All-State Choir. Because of this talent, music was also a consideration for his college endeavor. Since he did not want to neglect his mathematical abilities, he chose to study computer science, which did not stop him from pursuing music. He continued to compose and

took several courses in theory, orchestration, and music technology through the College of Music. He worked with Dr. Barnett, a professor in the College of Music, to compose an atonal piano piece called "The Abyss". In addition, Kelly worked with Samuel Estes, a former graduate student to create an electronic mock up of his original songs for Estes' upcoming album, which is scheduled for mass production and release in 2009. Kelly's future plans will involve interdisciplinary study and professional work in the combined areas of music and computer science.

Kelly's disability in reading and writing has not stopped him from succeeding in mathematics, science, art, and music the ideas of dreaming and achieving have been with him since the beginning. On that note, he says "any disability may lead to self-discovery of a new ability if we take the light in cultivating what we have, rather than what we don't have." Success is measured by how much self-integrity one has. It is also measured by how far one is willing to push him/herself to achieve any dream, whether it is to be an artist, a world-renowned composer, or even a software engineer.

## Fabricio Balcazar on Disability, Race, and Poverty *by Jim Cohn*

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Dr. Fabricio Balcazar came to CU-Boulder for the 11th annual Diversity Summit to speak on issues of disability, race, and poverty. Dr. Balcazar's presentation, "Race, Poverty and Disability: Living with and Overcoming Multiple Marginalizations," covered the elements of cultural fluency central to making CU-Boulder a welcoming climate for people with disabilities.

The central theme of Dr. Balcazar's presentation was that living with disability means more than managing limitations. It means dealing with a complex socially disadvantaged position in a culture that attributes abnormality to those whose

ability is outside the norm. This challenge becomes even greater for people of color with disabilities, especially those who live in or come from a "culture of poverty" characterized by a devaluation of education, chronic unemployment, destabilized families, dependence on social assistance, teen pregnancy, domestic and gang violence, and substance abuse.

Fabricio Balcazar is an associate professor in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has conducted research over the past 20 years on the development of systematic approaches for promoting the empowerment of mi-

norities and under-served populations, including Latinos with disabilities and their families. His presentation included research on the development and evaluation of approaches for promoting empowerment in Latino neighborhoods, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and career development leading to employment opportunities.

Disability Services, with generous co-sponsorship by the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, the Department of Human Resources, and the Graduate Teachers Program, brought Dr. Balcazar to campus to participate in this year's Diversity Summit.

## New Assistant Director Joins DS *by Karen Rosenschein*

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I am thrilled to be joining the CU-Boulder Disability Services Office as the new assistant director. For nearly 25 years I have worked in post secondary disability services in a wide range of roles—counselor, program coordinator, director, and ADA/504 coordinator—both here in Colorado as well as in New Jersey and Illinois. Working in different schools and different positions has given me valuable insight into the diverse is-

ssues that confront college and graduate students with disabilities.

I am honored to have the opportunity to work with such an energetic and dedicated staff. I am enjoying meeting the DS staff and look forward to working closely with all of them. I have long heard of the program's high level of commitment and service and feel proud to be part of it. I'm eager to meet with students in the coming weeks.

I grew up in Chicago and earned both my bachelor's and master's degrees at Southern Illinois University. I've lived in Boulder for 15 years, having gratefully moved here from the congested east coast. I have two boys: Michael, who will be starting college next fall, and Jake, who is moving on to middle school. My husband Alex is a financial adviser here in Boulder.

## You Will Need a Degree to Work Here *by Barbara-Jean Slopey*

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) has reached a milestone in the profession of sign language interpreting. After several years and much debate, the national membership came to a decision regarding a degree requirement in order to obtain RID certification for sign language interpreters. This will affect interpreters who work on campus at CU-Boulder, where we already require that our interpreters are RID certified within one year of their date of hire.

The meat of the motion that passed is:

- Effective June 30, 2008, all candidates for RID certification must have a minimum of an associate's degree.
- Effective June 30, 2012, all candidates for RID certification must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.
- Deaf candidates for RID certification must have a minimum of an associate's degree effective June 30, 2012, and a minimum of a bachelor's de-

gree effective June 30, 2016.

By June 30, 2006 the Certification Council will establish equivalent alternative criteria allowable in lieu of the educational requirements, such as one or more of the following: life experience, years of professional experience, and years of education (credit hours) not amounting to a formal degree.



## Intake In The Summer *by Merry Olivero-Wolf*

We are proud to announce that DS will be offering intake appointments for new students when they are on campus for one of the summer orientation programs. This is a great opportunity for incoming students to get acquainted with our services before the hustle and bustle of fall semester. Because so many important activities are planned for the general orientation program, the available spots for students

to complete their DS intake session are limited.

If you are interested in meeting with a disability specialist to discuss your accommodations, course selections, and DS services, you must submit your documentation of disability **before** your planned campus visit **and** have been notified by our office that your documentation has been received. Finally, to schedule the

DS appointment, please call our office on the **first day** of your orientation and let us know what time your **general course registration appointment** is scheduled (this will most likely be on Day 2, in the afternoon). We will then schedule your intake appointment with us at a time that does not conflict with registration. To set this up, or for more information, please call us at (303) 492-8761.

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## Making A Difference

Thank you for considering a donation to Disability Services. Your gift dollars help to fund important programs for our students, such as the Career Program for Students with Disabilities, scholarships for students, and the newsletter. Your contribution makes a big difference in the lives of our students.

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# Student Survey *by Raymond Carleton*

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We are excited to have completed our 2006 student survey. The number of responses was the highest in our history of student surveys. Students were given the option of filling out a hard copy or completing the survey online. Upon completion, students were entered into a gift certificate lottery where three winners were randomly chosen for \$50 gift certifi-

cates. The survey helps us further our understanding of our students' experiences on campus and how to better serve them. We incorporate a satisfaction rating scale which helps us learn what the students value and which services that are making a difference in their academic careers. For example, over the last year DS has offered test anxiety workshops,

which are reportedly having a positive impact. Also, we have received feedback regarding student experiences with professors in the accommodation process, which helps in our ongoing efforts to build partnerships with the faculty. Watch for detailed results in future newsletters.



## Disability Services Staff

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| Boyd, Karen, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Specialist..... | VP/TTY 303-492-4124    |
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