

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

OPTIONS student shows documentary on March 26

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Micah Fialka-Feldman always wanted to go to college, but many assumed he never would. Fialka-Feldman has a cognitive impairment which always classified him as special ed. After high school, many special education students move on to a basic life skills program. Fialka-Feldman wanted more. Through the OPTIONS program, he is taking classes and experiencing campus life. Fialka-Feldman was the subject of **"Through the Same Door: Inclusion Includes College,"** a documentary about his desire to attend college and how that happened. Fialka-Feldman will present it to the campus community on Wednesday, March 26 from noon-1 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge.

"It was fun having the camera follow me around," Fialka-Feldman said. He said the hours worth of footage the cameraman shot at his house, on the bus and on campus were edited down to 25 minutes.

Fialka-Feldman will show the film and be on-hand to answer any questions anyone may have. Many of his friends and peers will also be at the film to share their experience and what they have learned from Fialka-Feldman.

"I'm happy that I am sharing my story at the university. I haven't shown the video here before," Fialka-Feldman said.

Fialka-Feldman has shown the video before, though, all over the country. He shows it at various conferences where he speaks about his participation in inclusion education.

"The film is to show parents and teachers to give a chance for their kids to dream. If the kids want to go to college, they can," Fialka-Feldman said.

Fialka-Feldman has been sharing his story of success for years. He speaks at conferences all over the United States, showing a PowerPoint presentation and the documentary so others can understand his accomplishment.

Fialka-Feldman came to Oakland University in fall 2003 and since then, he has participated in courses to fulfill an Individual Education Plan through the Berkley Public Schools, where Fialka-Feldman went to elementary and high school. Once he completed that plan, he moved into the OPTIONS program, which is designed for students with cognitive disabilities who are capable of managing their time and schedule. Fialka-Feldman is one of five students in the OPTIONS program, which started in fall 2007.

The OPTIONS program checks in on his status and helps him arrange for classes and to accommodate his needs.

This semester, Fialka-Feldman is taking History of the Middle East and Holocaust Studies. At the beginning of each semester, he finds a classmate who can help with homework and studying. He often has special arrangements for test taking and homework, but he still completes everything required of him in the course.

In addition, Fialka-Feldman has gotten involved on campus in various student organizations. He is involved in Hillel, the Jewish student group, Alpha Phi Omega and Up 'Til Dawn. He also helps out at Lowry Early Childhood Education Center and works out in the Rec Center.

"Through the Same Door" received a 2006 TASH Image Award for the Positive Portrayal of People with Disabilities and was selected for the 2008 Picture This Film Festival in Calgary, Canada.

To learn more about the documentary, visit the **"Through the Same Door"** Web site. To learn more about Fialka-Feldman, visit the **Dance of Partnership** Web site.



Micah Fialka-Feldman will present his documentary, **"Through the Same Door: Inclusion Includes College,"** on Wednesday, March 26.

SUMMARY

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