

Tracy Hill: a Graduation Success Story



FAU
DEPARTMENT OF
CURRICULUM, CULTURE AND
EDUCATIONAL INQUIRY
College of Education
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Every so often, a department is privileged to have a student teach us, as faculty, to stretch beyond what we thought was possible in our instructional repertoires. For the past two years, the Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry in the College of Education has been fortunate to be the academic home of Tracy Hill, who is receiving her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction on August 8. As a student who has macular degeneration and designated as legally blind, Tracy has opened our eyes to see beyond traditional limitations of what is possible for students who have the drive, the capacity and the institutional support to succeed.

As Tracy moved through several potential career options while her macular degeneration progressed, she felt a persistent draw toward community service, particularly in the areas of mentoring, teaching, and tutoring. When she became an instructor in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) she discovered her passion for teaching; she also felt a connection with many of the students she was teaching – experiencing life from a disadvantage perspective. Technology created a particular challenge for her, yet she knew that it was the way of the future and education. She applied to and was accepted into the Master's program in Curriculum and Instruction.

Tracy graduates with a GPA of 3.9, a record of high scholarly performance in all of her classes, in a primarily online program. Her success is due, in part, to the availability of Assistive technology, available through FAU Student Accessibility Services, which allowed her to read materials posted online. She had faculty members willing to spend time with her to understand how they might adapt to her needs and department staff who worked diligently with her to complete forms; all were inspired by Tracy's resiliency, determination, cheerful and generous spirit as she approached what many of us would have considered challenges. Tracy did not allow any obstacles to impede her journey and was determined to experience the degree program to its fullest. This determination included making the trip to Dublin on the annual Study Abroad experience in summer 2016, where she conducted research on Special Education Services there. While in Ireland, Tracy presented at the Trinity College Graduate Research Symposium.

Tracy's goals are to create a community Adult Literacy facility and seek a doctorate along the way. She has also answered the call to fulfill the needs of challenged individuals by becoming an advocate. She has presented at multiple conferences and forums advocating for greater awareness and understanding of visually impaired students.

"I hope never to lose the desire to learn and to effectively meet the needs of my community and our global society."
Tracy

We celebrate this significant milestone in Tracy's journey and look forward to being there with her for many more achievements in the future.



— Judy Somers, Ed.D
Instructional Designer
FAU Center for eLearning