



FIRST CLASS

Academy for Adult Learning graduates premiere group of disabled students

A Temple University program that opens a door to college life for Pennsylvanians with mental disabilities will graduate its first group of students next month.

On May 14, the inaugural class of the Academy for Adult Learning, an initiative of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University's College of Education, will graduate after spending four semesters on the main campus of Temple.

"This year has been very satisfying for us at the Academy for Adult Learning," said Kathy Miller, assistant director of training at the Institute of Disabilities and project manager for the Academy. "As is the case with all new programs, we had some 'growing pains' during our first year, but the students are wonderful and have exceeded our expectations."

The program provides an introduction to college for a select group of Pennsylvanians with mental disabilities, helping to familiarize them with college life and assisting them in building skills needed for a successful transition from high school to the working world. The program also strives to help students understand the importance of lifelong learning to career success.



Temple University's inaugural class of the Academy for Adult Learning will graduate in May and become on-campus interns to jumpstart their careers.

Group effort

Each spring and summer, Academy staff reviews applications from residents across the southeastern region of

Pennsylvania and selects 10 people with mental disabilities to participate in campus life at Temple University. They take classes, go to sporting and other special events, participate in student organizations and

become part of the campus community. They also attend weekly seminars featuring guest lecturers from throughout the university.

"It became a real team environment, as we had imagined

• Recruitment for the next Academy for Adult Learning class has begun. Anyone interested in becoming a participant or mentor should contact the institute at **(215) 204-1356** or visit the program's Web site at www.disabilities.temple.edu.

when we created the program," Miller said.

Mentors are also selected from a large group of Temple University student applicants and are carefully paired with each participant.

"This year, our mentors quickly acclimated to the program and developed great relationships with the students and each other," said Academy Program Coordinator Titania Boddie.

Career development, self-assessment and exploration are central aspects of the program, says Miller. Students are engaged in identifying themselves and what they can bring to the workplace, as skills, interests, values and work personality are all explored throughout the program.

"Students spend time researching careers and this year, we are very excited that all 10 students were placed in internship positions throughout the university, based on their career selections," she said.