

Disability Luncheon



Dana Quintana and her husband Alberto Quintana at the Disability Luncheon.

Dana Quintana, Clark College student, employee, and disability rights advocate, shared her story with Clark students, faculty, and staff at the Spring Disability Luncheon on May 16 in a presentation titled “Disability Rights: It’s Not All About Ramps and Restrooms.”

The free event is presented each term by Clark’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The purpose of the luncheons is to allow students and employees to hear inspiring stories, connect with faculty, meet new friends, consider different career paths, and identify community resources and potential mentors.

Quintana is a peer mentor in Clark’s Disability Support Services office. Last academic year, she held the same position for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Not so many years ago, Quintana says, “I was healthy. I was running marathons. Lifting weights.”

She had thrived in her nursing career, which was physically demanding. But after running the 2014 Portland Marathon, something changed. Her body was very sore. Months later, the soreness persisted, and she began to have health problems. Over the years, she has been diagnosed with multiple diseases and chronic conditions. Eventually, she retired from nursing due to her health.

For her safety, Quintana gets around in a wheelchair. She demonstrated that she can walk slowly with a cane, but it takes great effort, and she could collapse or faint at any time.

At Clark College, she advocates for people with disabilities, and she encourages them to advocate for themselves.

After retiring from a rewarding career as a nurse administrator in 2015, she embarked on a new journey, pursuing computer science and engineering as a second career, and plans to earn a doctorate in biomedical engineering.



Advice from Dana Quintana

Quintana encouraged students who would benefit from accommodation to contact Disability Support Services.

“You do not need a doctor’s note to receive accommodation. Hear my words: You are worth getting accommodation.”

“Part of advocating for yourself as a handicapped person is you must be forceful. You have to advocate. Do not ask. Tell.”

“The worst thing that can happen is being told ‘No.’ But if you don’t ask, the answer will always be ‘No.’”

Clark College Disability and Support Services

- *Web:* <https://www.clark.edu/dss>
- *Main phone:* 360-992-2314
- *Video phone for ASL:* 360-991-0901
- *Email:* dss@clark.edu

Photo: Clark College/Susan Parrish