

“You Can’t Stand With Us”: The Fashion Industry’s Effect of the Body of People with Disabilities

Caitlyn Pallas, TMD Major  
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Summary by Kari DiMarzio

TMD student Caitlyn Pallas was a sophomore at URI when she experienced a terrible fall that resulted in a spinal injury. Caitlyn is now partially paralyzed and uses a wheelchair. Caitlyn spoke to her fellow classmates about how difficult it was coming back to school and no longer feeling confident about the way she dressed or did her makeup. She explained how her disability had a huge effect on her ability to express herself and “fit in” on a college campus. From her experiences as a TMD major and as someone with a disability, Caitlyn became influenced to research the fashion industries effect of the body image of people with disabilities. Caitlyn’s biggest concern is that the fashion industry does not provide enough stylish clothing for people with disabilities. Caitlyn discovered that this is because there is not a large enough customer base for trends. Caitlyn wants to change fashion and disability by making them come together and develop clothing that fits the needs and styles of people with disabilities. Caitlyn explains how people with disabilities have turned to social media and modeling as a form of expression. More and more people are feeling comfortable with their disability and are using things like makeup and fashion blogs to help express their personality since it is difficult for them to do so through dress. Caitlyn hopes that one day the fashion industry will focus more on people with disabilities because they deserve to look and feel good too.