

Bringing down barriers adviser's goal

By Walter Stallings

Jim Hayes believes he understands the problems faced by handicapped students better than most administrators. He's been fighting these problems for nine years.

The new handicapped students adviser is in a wheelchair following an automobile accident. Hayes brings a history degree and experience as a TCJC student body president to the post formed under a federal grant Jan. 5. He is within six hours of a graduate degree.

"We are in the stages of catching up," he says concerning architectural barriers, one of the biggest problems facing the handicapped. "I don't believe there are any problems we can't solve."

Builders often ignore the handicapped in planning, or botch facilities in construction, he said citing a ramp in the Fine Arts Complex as being too steep for wheelchairs.

"Who controls this? Who is there to say this ramp is too steep? I don't know, but I intend to find out. I can see right now we are going to have to work with the community."

Other examples are too-high elevator buttons not in braille and crosswalk lights not set in a concrete base, making them difficult to reach from a wheelchair.

Along with architectural problems, Hayes says handicapped students face a form of prejudice. When he was looking for an apartment, only one complex in Arlington would allow him to widen the bathroom door to accommodate his wheelchair, though he offered to finance the job himself.

Also, he says some teachers on campus will not give an oral exam to the blind. Others forbid the blind use of tape recorders and some courses, particularly those with labs, are closed to the handicapped.

To help, Hayes is forming a pool of able-bodied students to serve as note-takers, readers and guides for the blind. They also will push wheelchairs.

Also the Library of Congress in Dallas will supply taped textbooks for the blind. Plans are being laid to attempt course alteration offering substitute

work for projects the handicapped cannot perform.

Efforts are underway to provide suitable campus housing for the handicapped. "Only Brazos Hall is now equipped, and it's a long way from the Fine Arts Complex or Swift Center."

Also elevator buttons in the Library

will be lowered, with braille buttons alongside.

There is a lack of recreation on campus for the handicapped, he said. "They are just like anyone else, they like to relax and have a good time. Yet, many can't go bowling, use the rifle range or go swimming because of the facilities. I don't yet know what the new

Activities Building will offer the handicapped."

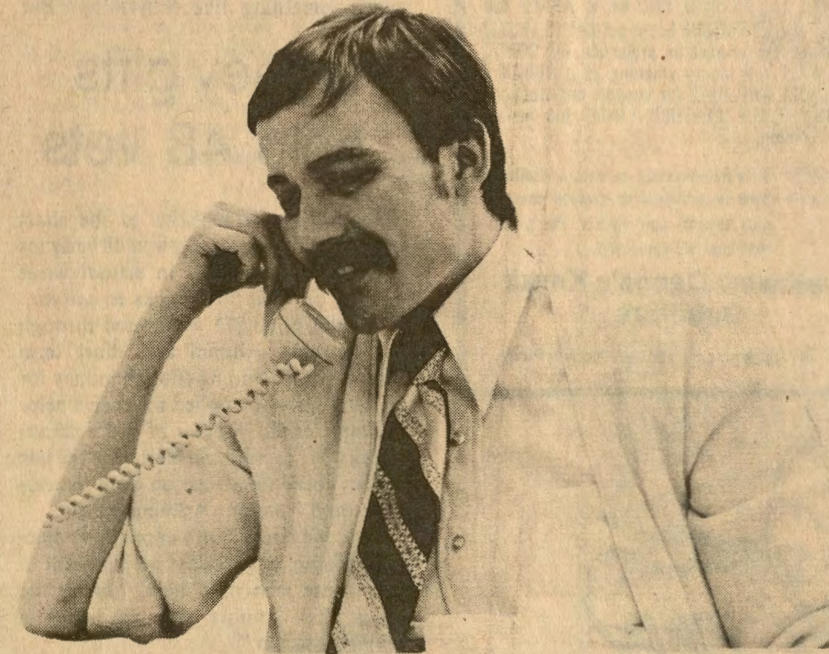
Hayes will be trying to design PE courses for the handicapped. "There are no courses at this time. We are looking at a lift to put handicapped students in the pool and are trying to find a way to allow them use of the firearms range." The range is in the basement of the PE Building with no entrance for wheelchairs.

One advantage Hayes sees in his job is the open attitude of the administration. "Architectural barriers are being removed daily. The administration put out \$19,000 to assist the federal grant in seeing the barriers are removed."

Counseling will be another important aspect of his job, Hayes said. "I will talk to every handicapped student that will come to see me. I want to show the handicapped individual what is available in the job field."

Hayes believes that all the handicapped need is a chance, and that they are willing to work for it. "The majority of the handicapped learn to live with what they have. When something comes along they take a realistic attitude. They are practical and enthusiastic. We all have our limitations. The handicapped even have an advantage here. They realize what their limitations are, while some others don't."

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JIM HAYES

Shorthorn: Stephen Vale

Course on disabled children cancelled

Teaching parents and teachers that disabled children aren't a problem but have a problem was the basis of a non-credit course designed by Drs. Randall Silverston and Jon Leffingwell of the education department.

However, the course scheduled to start last Tuesday folded due to lack of enrollment.

"Only four persons enrolled," said Silverston. "We had good coverage. We talked mainly to people and organiza-

tions that we felt were sincere about this."

Areas that the course would have touched included symptoms, causes and solutions of learning disabilities.

As a licensed psychologist, Leffingwell's role in the course dealt with the emotional problems of the child such as frustrations-acting out.

The causes of learning disabilities was to be the subject of Silverston's lectures.

Leffingwell said the course was

designed with parents' and teachers' needs in mind.

"Most of the kids discussed would be between the ages of six and fourteen years old," he said. "People tend to put labels on these kids, but there is a fallacy in labeling," he explained. "Once children are labeled as having problems with learning, they will modify their behavior to fit that role."

"We may try to start it (the course) again later this semester," said Silverston, "we just don't know."