



News from THE WALLACE GROUP

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**Minn. Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities**

**For Immediate
Release**

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U OF M's PIONEERING VETERINARY MEDICINE COLLEGE CITED AS 'INNOVATIVE EMPLOYER' BY GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

**Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities cites U of M College of
Veterinary Medicine for creatively utilizing the skills of people with disabilities**

Recognized for its work in employing people with developmental disabilities, the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota (U of M) was honored as an "Innovative Employer" by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council).

The college's Veterinary Medical Center for large animals employs Brian Rodrigues, who has a developmental disability, as an animal care assistant. He works with horses and cows, moving the animals, cleaning stalls, feeding them and assisting with other tasks. "Brian is my right hand man. He knows how to do the tasks and works with the same training as the student workers," said Hospital Crew Supervisor Sergio Gonzales.

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Large Animal Hospital Manager Sheryl Ferguson said Rodrigues is a huge bonus to her team and does a great job. “Brian provides service with a smile and definitely has pride in his work,” she said.

Companies and organizations engage people with disabilities either as direct employees or through organizations that provide employment services and training for people with disabilities. A recent survey revealed that there are now nonprofits serving all regions of the state that can provide such access to qualified employees.

A survey of employers conducted jointly for the Council and the Department of Employment and Economic Development found that in general work situations, people with developmental disabilities performed as well or better than other employees by every standard, other than speed.

The U of M’s Equine Center has a goal of becoming one of the top three research universities worldwide by 2018. It focuses on meeting the need for equine education, veterinary services, scientific advances and outreach programs related to horses.

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