

Graduation

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"They've been really influential in shaping my career goals and helping me be successful," she said.

What originally drew Tatomir, now 25, to Mt. Pleasant was CMU's reputation for being accessible to people with disabilities, and she said the university did not disappoint her.

"Staff made all the accommodations I requested," she said. "I heard it was a very accessible campus. It was very true - most every building is (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant, and there are Braille labels on all the rooms."

In addition, Tatomir's sister, Joanna, helped Rudy and Jennifer get around the campus daily until Joanna's graduation from CMU last year.

Joanna is now attending the University of Michigan, and Jennifer will join her in the fall to pursue not one, but two master's degrees - one in environmental justice and another in southeast Asian studies.

"It will probably take me about three years," she said.

Tatomir's ultimate goal is to earn a doctoral degree in anthropology.

Although her graduation and her move to Ann Arbor are steps toward her dream, Tatomir said her departure from CMU will be bittersweet.

"I have mixed feelings," she said. "I will miss being here. I had a lot of support from the faculty."

"And most of the students have been really accepting. Most haven't been exposed to people with disabilities. It's been a good experience for them and for myself."

Graduate to collect sheepskin accompanied by canine companion

By LINDSAY ALLEN
Sun Staff Writer

Jennifer Tatomir will walk down the aisle in Rose Arena Saturday, graduating with a near-perfect 3.98 grade point average and a degree in political science and geology.

But the Central Michigan University senior from Lewiston won't make the walk alone.

Tatomir will be joined by a companion who's attended every one of her CMU classes - her leader dog, Rudy, a graduate of Rochester's Leader Dogs for the Blind school.

"He's been to every class," she said. "He's been with me for seven years."

She also will be accompanied by Reed Wicander, her geology department adviser.

A former intern at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, Tatomir credits Wicander and Athena McLean of the anthropology department for their support of her academic pursuits.

CMU graduation

When: Saturday at 9:30 a.m.,
and 1:30 and 4:30 p.m.

Where: Rose Arena

Who: 3,425 students

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Sun photograph by KATHERINE JOHNSON

Jennifer Tatomir will graduate this weekend from Central Michigan University with a degree in political science and geology. Her faithful leader dog for the past seven years, Rudy, has been at her side during her classes.