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## NAVIGATING BOSTON WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY: BOSTON MARATHON SURVIVORS & OTHER ADVOCATES SPEAK, SEPT. 29 AT SIMMONS COLLEGE

BOSTON (September 27, 2015) — In effort to boost awareness of the challenges faced by those with physical limitations in navigating Boston, Simmons College will host a panel discussion featuring two Boston Marathon bombing survivors, a double arm and leg amputee, and a prominent Boston disability rights attorney.

The event, “Navigating Boston: Accessibility for All,” is a part of the Friars Leaders Program takes place Tues., September 29 at 5:30p.m. at Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, Main College Building, Linda K. Paresky Conference Center.

Among the speakers are **Jessica Kensky** and **Patrick Downes**, who were both injured in the Boston marathon bombing; **Will Lautzenheiser**, a filmmaker and comedian who lost all four of his limbs due to an aggressive streptococcus infection; and **Carol Steinberg**, attorney, member of the Mass. Architectural Access Board, and president of the Disability Law Center.

The discussion is part of a semester-long Simmons course, “Navigating Boston: What does it mean to be accessible?,” taught by Simmons College Education Professor Jane Hardin. The course is designed to acutely raise awareness among the students through direct interaction with those with physical limitations, and first-hand engagement in experiential learning opportunities about this experience.

As part of the course, students will explore Boston as a person with physical limitations might, such as traversing the city in a wheelchair or with a cane. They also will seek to understand the various transportation, government, and political variables involved in making Boston universally accessible. Students will analyze ways to increase accessibility through policy enactment and consumer rating platforms for high or low performing businesses.

“We want our students to become critical consumers about what it means to be accessible,” said Hardin. “If we can understand the challenges in the lives of those with physical limitations, it makes us more compassionate humans and builds understanding. Good handicap accessibility is good for everybody.”

The “Navigating Boston” course is one of the 25 “Boston Courses” for first-year Simmons students related to the implementation of a new core curriculum at the College and the Friars Leaders program. Students will substantively engage with the city of Boston, develop their own understanding of leadership, engage in integrative learning across academic disciplines, and design key components of their course of study.

Founded in 1899, Simmons College (<http://www.simmons.edu>) is a nationally ranked

university located in the heart of Boston and the preeminent authority on women's leadership. It offers a transformative undergraduate education for women, and renowned coeducational graduate programs in nursing and health sciences, liberal arts, library and information science, social work, and business. Follow Simmons on Twitter @SimmonsCollege and @SimmonsNews.