

**National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
State of the Science Conference
Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities**

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Fairfax, VA**

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Conference Proceedings

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Prepared by:

New Editions Consulting, Inc.
6858 Old Dominion Dr., Suite 230
McLean, VA 22101

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Executive Summary

A State of the Science Conference on Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) brought over 60 experts in special education and disability research from universities and colleges, disability advocacy and parent groups, and representatives of agencies across the federal government. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of research needed to develop evidence-based practices that will encourage students with ID to pursue postsecondary education and indicate how to best support these students during the educational process. The one-day meeting held on November 6, 2009 was sponsored by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) in coordination with the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), both of which are in the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and was hosted by the Helen A. Kellar Institute at George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax, Virginia.

During the presentations and the group discussions there was a strong emphasis on extending the knowledge base about postsecondary education for students with ID by developing evidence through expanded research in areas such as transition from secondary to postsecondary education, individual student characteristics and abilities, program characteristics and standards, and student services and supports. In addition, research is needed to understand the key elements of a successful program that could serve for the development of best practices.

Conference participants suggested conducting longitudinal studies that determine the employment and lifestyle outcomes of students with ID who have successfully completed postsecondary education, guide future program development, and create more postsecondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities. In one of the discussion groups, the point was made that it is only when evidence is gathered through longitudinal studies, trials, and experimental research that employment outcomes can be shown for people with ID who pursue postsecondary education, independent living, and the development of social skills.

Welcoming Remarks and Conference Purpose

Dr. Dawn Carlson, NIDRR Program Specialist, opened the meeting.

Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.

Professor of Special Education

Helen A. Kellar Institute, George Mason University (GMU)

Dr. Behrmann welcomed conference participants on behalf of GMU President Martin to what he called a transformational event at a university that has seen its share of growth and change. In his 30 years of teaching at GMU, Dr. Behrmann has witnessed the growth of the student population from 9,000 to 32,000 students, along with funding for new

buildings and a campus infrastructure to support the burgeoning population. Today, GMU is one of the largest universities in Virginia. This type of expansion and transformation is indicative of the university's aim to be forward thinking and is the reason that the Mason Life Program for students with ID was founded.

GMU is considered one of the most diverse universities in the country, and the Mason Life Program is emblematic of GMU's capacity for diversity that is, according to the GMU President and Administration, enriching to the lives of all students and faculty. The Mason Life Program began three years ago with just three students with ID for the purpose of helping them become more independent, experience college life, and build vocational skills. Today, it has 30 undergraduate and graduate students and a residential program that enables students with ID to go to college just like their brothers and sisters. While the students are coping with the transition to college life, the university and faculty are finding ways to engage these students.

Behrmann was pleased with the opportunity this meeting presented to bring experts in the ID field together to discuss ideas and programs and to map out a future for students with ID that includes postsecondary education, thus expanding their lives and career options as they transition to adulthood.

Ruth Brannon, M.S.P.H., M.A.

**Delegated to authority to perform the functions of the NIDRR Director
Director of the Division of Research Sciences
National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation (NIDRR)**

Ruth Brannon welcomed the assembled community of educators, researchers, and stakeholders and expressed her interest in better understanding ID research topics and questions as they pertain to NIDRR's disability research agenda. Brannon noted the enthusiasm of the ED staff for the topic, marked by the presence of people from the Office of the Assistant Secretary at the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the OPE, the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy (OPEP), the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and NIDRR at the meeting. She thanked Dr. Dawn Carlson for his hard work and dedication in organizing the meeting.

NIDRR is a small agency located within OSERS that serves as ED's research unit and is funded under the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Act. NIDRR has a broad mission, which has enabled funding across the age-disability continuum for grantees in many disability categories and includes a history of funding research in ID. NIDRR's interest in funding research is to inform decision making and policy and to lay a foundation for choosing the most effective practices, thus maximizing the investment in the outcomes of people with disabilities. It is beneficial to NIDRR to understand issues of importance to practitioners, families, and policy makers deciding how to allocate resources so that its researchers can ask appropriate research questions and design useful interventions.

Brannon noted that it is now necessary to develop the evidence base to determine best practices. Such methods identify both the most effective methods to increase the numbers of students with ID seeking postsecondary education and the necessary research for developing practices that will lead to maximizing the independence, employment options, and opportunities for community living for people with ID. NIDRR is presently funding a project at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts, beginning a process of surveying programs of that nature to examine their characteristics and outcomes.

Presentations: The Higher Education Opportunity Act and the Federal Government's Role in Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Jessica Finkel

**Program Analyst, Title IV Aid for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), a crucial piece of legislation, provides access to higher education for students with disabilities through grants and loans as well as support of programs and research initiatives designed to improve the educational system. It has been reauthorized and amended several times since its passage, most recently in August 2008 with the enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), which made changes in the Title IV federal student aid programs. The HEOA now affords students with ID eligibility for three programs under Title IV, including the Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant. The final regulations appeared in the Federal Register on October 29, 2009.

The framework for this Act, which is pertinent to all students regardless of disability status, is based on elements of student learning at the program level and includes (1) consideration for learning styles, (2) course sequence and content, (3) how the program structure meshes with other elements in the school, and (4) methods for professional development.

At the institutional level, considerations for students include (1) recruitment and admissions policies and (2) support services for students. At the community level the focus is on transportation and the relationship with community agencies, such as VR and health systems.

Under the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTPP), any Institution of Higher Education (IHE) participating in Title IV must offer advising support and develop a curriculum structure for students with disabilities that includes participation in courses and activities with students without disabilities for all students who physically attend classes.

The statutory definition for a student with ID is a student with mental retardation or significant cognitive impairment who is/was eligible for free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Private/home-schooled students must go through a determination process in which the institution ultimately determines if the student's disability fits within the definition.

For students to receive Title IV aid, the school must apply for program eligibility and be granted approval from the ED Office of Federal Student Aid. The school must give a detailed description of the program, indicating the following:

- Satisfactory academic progress policy
- Length/number of credit hours in the program
- Educational credential/identified outcomes for all students in program
- Policy that ensures that the students are integrated with other students
- Evidence that the institution has notified its accrediting agency of the program

Given the lag time to collect the research data, ED cannot verify the quality of these programs and have an accrediting agency determine the best programs until more investigation is completed. At this stage, the only requirement of the program is to identify itself with an accrediting agency. Next steps will include additional research that will likely lead to program eligibility changes in the future and the inclusion of universal design for learning (UDL) and best practices.

Judy L. Shanley, Ph.D.

Education Program Specialist

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education (ED)

The HEOA Brings Opportunities Building on What we Know

The historical lack of transition programs to postsecondary education for students with disabilities makes it important for families to have educational opportunities now. The first step in addressing this need is to examine what is known about educating students with disabilities and use that information to create a foundation for applying knowledge in higher education settings.

Data collected by the OSEP Data Analysis System indicates that the population of students between the ages of 12 and 21 with ID who received special education services under IDEA Part B in 2007 represented 10% of all students with disabilities. This number creates a new pipeline of students who require accommodations and support for postsecondary education.

Creating successful models for CTPPs for students with ID requires a strong foundation of evidence-based practices that include the following elements: learning and core content; data and assessment; instruction; technical assistance; professional development; family, cultural, and community engagement; educational contexts; and continuous improvement. Shanley does not advocate special education in a higher educational setting, but does hope that educators will draw from what they know about educating

students with disabilities and apply and customize those techniques in a postsecondary educational setting. It is important to build on what is known in each of the areas mentioned above by reviewing the pertinent literature on the subject and utilizing available resources. When additional information is sought, understood, and put to use, OSEP and other resources can build on what is already known in each of these areas.

Shanley's presentation and an additional handout provided OSEP with resources to acquire information and find a network of professionals and peers:

- Personnel Development Program
 - Staff, forums
- Technical Assistance & Dissemination Program (TA&D)
 - Curricular materials and supports
- Technology and Media Program
 - Assistive technology
- Parent Program
 - Recruitment, Engagement, Dissemination
- State Personnel Development Grant Program
 - Professional development

Special education, education, and postsecondary resources – determine what will work and customize to one's own setting:

- ED – OSERS – OSEP
 - www.ed.gov/osers/osep
 - Training modules - <http://idea.ed.gov/>
 - www.tadnet.org
- Regional Educational Laboratories
 - <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/www.tadnet.org>
- Guide to US Department of Education Programs
 - <http://www.ed.gov/programs/gtep/gtep.pdf>
- Center on Instruction
 - www.centeroninstruction.org
- Faculty Development – IRIS Modules
 - <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>
- Association on Higher Education & Disabilities
 - <http://www.ahead.org/>
- Association on University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
 - www.aucd.net
- ThinkCollege
 - <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>

Jennifer Johnson, Ed.D.
Supervisory Program Specialist

Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) is responsible for the implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, known as the DD Act. The DD Act defines developmental disabilities as severe, life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical impairments which manifest themselves before age 22 and are likely to continue indefinitely.

The DD Act funds four national programs:

- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
 - Contributes to a coordinated and comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports
- State Protection and Advocacy Agencies (P&As)
 - Protects the legal and human rights of individuals with developmental disabilities
- National Network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Services (UCEDD)
 - Provides leadership through interdisciplinary training, continuing education, community services, research, and information dissemination to tie research to practice and improved services
- Projects of National Significance (PNS)
 - Discretionary grant programs with Commissioner setting priorities. Recent programs include family support (360 grants for families, military families), and youth leadership projects

Developmental Disabilities Councils (DDC) are responsible for funding and supporting participation in postsecondary education programs. These programs either work toward systems change or advocate for inclusive curriculums and services. Examples of a few DDCs and a brief description of their purpose are listed below:

- Wisconsin DDC
 - A joint effort between local school systems and the University of Wisconsin for students ages 18-21 to attend UW, live in the dormitories, and learn independent living skills. Students either take university courses or courses at a nearby technical school; most have part-time jobs on campus.
- Illinois DDC
 - The Council is underwriting a summit to inform and educate higher education administrators about opportunities in the reauthorization of HEOA and to challenge them to be ready to apply for demonstration grants.
- Massachusetts DDC
 - Partners with MA Advocates for Children in a collaborative project to implement the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment pilot program, which provides opportunities for students with disabilities, ages 18-22, to participate in inclusive college programs. Six pilot programs were funded by the legislature in the second year.

Other initiatives in support of postsecondary education include:

- P&As, which do considerable work in the area of education and are presently upholding the transition rights of students with disabilities.
- UCEDD
 - Funded mini-grants to implement a disability training network for the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) that provides training and technical assistance to TAMUS faculty and administrators.
 - Funded education for adults with disabilities through the extension program at the University of Missouri.
 - The Center for Disability Resources at the University of South Carolina provides training and technical assistance to three local universities in South Carolina.
 - The ICI at the University of Minnesota promotes specific intervention strategies to retain students, ages 18-30, attending community colleges.
 - The Center for Disabilities at the University of South Dakota provides disability services on campus.
- PNS focuses on youth projects and access to postsecondary education and does work at the national level in postsecondary education and transition:
 - Project TRIAD (Training, Resources and Information for the Advancement of Degrees), Institute for Disability Studies, University of Southern Mississippi – assists youth transitioning from school to adult life in accessing postsecondary training opportunities.
 - Incight Consortium (Oregon)—Emerging Leaders Northwest – conduct trainings related to secondary and postsecondary education. Emerging Leaders Northwest also seeks to increase the number of youth with developmental disabilities who transition to postsecondary education or employment.
 - National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN)—National Youth Information Center
 - Institute for Educational Leadership—National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD-Youth) – publishes “Guideposts for Success” focusing on “School-Based Preparatory Exercises.”

Current grantees supporting participation in postsecondary education programs include collaborative initiatives in Kentucky and Tennessee that bring together the DDC and the university center in both of those states.

ADD funded a National Consortium in 2008 to enhance postsecondary education opportunities for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities through a five-year cooperative agreement, awarded to the ICI at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. The consortium (of university centers) is built on the principles of:

- Equal access to postsecondary education programs;
- A more age-appropriate option for youth and young adults ages 18 – 22;
- Postsecondary educational experiences generally leading to better outcomes; and
- Inclusive learning and social experiences.

The UCEDD program is designed to impact both current and future practices. With this in mind, the program varies the type and availability of postsecondary education programs and services, considers how to improve practices, and capitalizes on its expertise in the network.

Given that one size does not fit all, ADD takes a varied approach in funding grantees, looking at a wide variety of strategies to support postsecondary education programs. This includes focusing on youth and young adults, faculty and staff, and family members.

Presentations: Non-governmental Organizations and Stakeholder Interests in Postsecondary Education for Students with ID

Stephanie Smith Lee
Senior Policy Advisor
National Down Syndrome Society

This conference would have been unthinkable 30 years ago before changes in the field opened and expanded opportunities for young people with ID. At the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), it is not just the parents of young adults who are interested in educational services; NDSS now hears from parents of preschoolers as well. Young adults are also voicing interest in educational pursuits.

The factors leading students and families to ask for postsecondary education options include improvements in IDEA that have led to access to the general curriculum, universal design for learning, technology, and improved health care. Young people are no longer institutionalized; they are living at home with their families and making friends with whom they want to continue on to postsecondary schools. Students with ID now have options, including living independently in residential settings while pursuing postsecondary education and socializing with age-appropriate peers while improving employment and independent living outcomes.

NDSS has developed an Inclusive Transition and Postsecondary Education Initiative designed to improve public policy, promote federally-funded projects, and increase public awareness. Among the federal projects are model demonstrations that identify effective practices and convince administrators on college campuses that they too can implement postsecondary education programs. The NDSS initiatives in New Jersey and South Carolina offer model demonstration programs that encourage state system-wide change.

The fact that families with young adults with disabilities do not have the same opportunities to save for college also makes addressing funding issues critically important. Medicaid, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are all examples of programs that can be barriers to families saving for and funding higher education. NDSS has been instrumental in the introduction of the ABLE bill: HR 1205 & S493, which allows families to save without depriving

them of their benefits. But while some sources for funding higher education for children with ID exist, acquiring that funding is difficult.

The NDSS initiatives at the state level serve the important function of bringing people together to discuss these issues and impact other levels of funding. NDSS has also been involved in partnerships for states systems' change through organizing government affairs committees in key states where they develop their own priorities. For example, developing postsecondary opportunities is the priority in Ohio and Tennessee.

Through a generous donation from the Rizzio family, NDSS was able to establish a demonstration program in New Jersey using a task force of experts to research and analyze existing programs and policies, examining their key components and desired outcomes. This process enabled the state to fund two programs for three years with ongoing technical assistance. In South Carolina NDSS developed a partnership with the College Transition Connection (CTC) and set up a task force similar to what was done in New Jersey. An invitation-only roundtable funded by the DD Council, UCEDD, NDSS and CTC was instrumental in developing an interest from state agencies and colleges and universities, and as a result four programs have been funded in the state. CTC continues to collaborate with NDSS and provide technical assistance.

Lee listed the following strategies for success:

- Organize a planning group with parents, self-advocates, and disability leaders
- Involve UCEDD, DD Council, VR and DD agencies, Higher Education, Special Education Director, PTI, and others in the Task Force
- Identify funding sources such as: State DD Council, grants, donations
- Hold a statewide roundtable/invitation only conference
- Develop a request for proposal (RFP) for model funding and award dollars to one or more models
- Continue involvement with monitoring and evaluation, technical assistance and networking, and model replication

The research implications of the HEOA indicate that, now that there is a definition for a comprehensive program in the Act, most programs will want to qualify by meeting certain academic, career, technical, and independent living instruction standards. It also raises questions about how best to support someone in learning independent living skills, provide academic enrichment to meet the needs of the student, and provide inclusion in course work and other activities. While each individual program will have the freedom to develop criteria that work for them, the setting of standards will be necessary.

Model demonstrations funded under the HEOA will give preference to partnerships with other agencies (such as VR), inclusive housing (if housing is offered), and the involvement of students studying special or general education, VR, assistive technology, or related fields. The model demonstrations must provide individual supports and services for academic and social inclusion in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of postsecondary education. The demonstrations must also use person-

centered planning in an effective, respectful way. Other supports that have significant research implications will also be offered.

There will be a model demonstration coordinating center for evaluating protocols and quantitative and qualitative methodologies to measure student outcomes and program strengths in: academic enrichment, socialization, independent living, and competitive or supported employment. Lee indicated the importance of getting a start on this research before the center is functional.

George Jesien, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Association of University Centers on Disability

Postsecondary education is the new frontier for people working in the disability field, and the meeting model of bringing together people from consumer and advocacy groups, universities, and government agencies to develop synergy that will move the field forward much more rapidly is laudable. On the other hand, the more than 20 years it has taken to go from demonstration projects to legislation and finally to services in every county in this country is lamentable. Postsecondary education for students with disabilities has not received enough investment. However, there is now a national interest in working models that are increasing in number and quality, providing an infrastructure and resources upon which to build better postsecondary education options.

There has been tremendous investment in preschool, elementary, and secondary education opportunities for people with disabilities, yet the normal developmental milestone of postsecondary education through which the majority of people pass has not received the same attention. The vast gaps in employment for people with disabilities show the impact of the lack of a postsecondary education: it is a marker and predictor of later success in life.

Barriers to postsecondary education for students with ID include low high school expectations and inadequate preparation. Faculty attitudes and academic culture that expect and accept the diversity of learners on college campuses is lacking. Faculties at colleges and universities have not been provided with technical assistance and have little knowledge of how to diversify learning presentations to meet a broad scope of needs.

According to a GAO study, rates of students with disabilities in postsecondary education are beginning to rise from 9% in 2000 to pockets of increase with a 20% growth in the state of California from 1999-2007 and a 40% growth in New York in undergraduate and graduate schools. Parents are pushing this movement forward. They want their children with disabilities to have a college experience like their other children. A University of Iowa study indicates the more inclusive the program, the higher the interest among parents. They prefer their children to participate in college courses, live on campus, and balance career training and life skills instruction.

In 2003, the National Council on Disability (NCD) came out with recommendations including, “formation of a National Technical Assistance Network to assist faculty and disability support programs in postsecondary education settings to provide effective practice models, training of faculty and support personnel, and technical assistance to programs and people with disabilities.” NCD also recommended a commission to resolve the transition issues from secondary to post-secondary education. This country is not doing a good job of launching its adolescents into adulthood and providing the services and supports that are necessary.

The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) published three practice guideline recommendations that have moderate support from the evidence. They are:

1. Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations;
2. Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry; and
3. Increase families’ financial awareness and help students apply for financial aid.

Jesien would like people to think about the expansion of demonstration efforts and how to spread those demonstrations across all 50 states. It is necessary to identify what really works, the evidence base behind it, and then make programs available. There is clearly a need for research to establish that base of knowledge and its evidence, and he hopes that this afternoon will help to establish the priorities in this area.

Building on existing disability infrastructure to move these programs to scale through UCEDDs, DD Councils, and disability organizations is an opportunity for resources in state governments to move systems forward. The DD Councils exist in all 50 states, and if they all take this on as a high priority there would be engagement at the highest levels of state government. Postsecondary education for students with ID has become a real area of interest for the 67 UCEDDs throughout the country.

Why UCEDDS:

- They are rooted in a university system: they understand the university culture and restraints in moving systems and processes and have close ties with organizations throughout the state. They can be a hub of activities to engage other partners in multi-site research projects and datasets that can be aggregated across states.
- They have extensive experience with a wide range of disabilities across the lifespan.
- They have experience in research, program development and training, and technical assistance.
- They have close ties with families, community partners, and state agencies.
- They can serve as a hub of statewide activity that is responsible to local needs yet tied to overall national effort.
- Building on an existing infrastructure is much more cost effective.
- They create potential to move the field forward in a much more effective way.

Higher education plays a critical role in improving the outcomes of students with disabilities and has an even greater impact for students with severe disabilities. Being part

of campus life, taking classes and learning to navigate a world of high expectations leads to the development of skills necessary for successful adult life.

Michael Weymeyer, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
University of Kansas

Dr. Weymeyer spoke as a representative of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), which was founded in 1876 and is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization of professionals and of citizens who are concerned about people with ID. Their mission is to promote progressive policy, sound research, effective practices, and universal human rights for people with ID.

Like other national and international organizations, they are involved in issues pertaining to policy and practice. Examples of their focus:

- Annually AAIDD collaborates with a number of entities including Arc, United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), AUCD, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), and the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) to produce a set of legislative goals representing priorities for a consortium. The legislative goal for 111th Congress, The Disability Policy Collaboration, is to enhance adult education, vocational training, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning opportunities for students with disabilities, particularly students with intellectual and/or multiple impairments.
- The Arc & AAIDD Position Statement on Education:
 - Provide access to regular curricula and extracurricular services and experiences with peers of the same age without disabilities, including access to postsecondary education.
 - Include transition into employment or further postsecondary education.

AAIDD's role is collaborative and as such it partners with other associations, in particular with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, to further the efforts in the field. Among their unique contributions are the research that they promote and the products they have developed to move the field forward. One of those products is the *11th Edition of the Terminology and Classification Manual*. The most important change this new manual emphasizes is to leave behind the term mental retardation and to utilize the term intellectual disabilities. The change in the name is in keeping with the 1992 definition of ID, which introduced the alignment of the AAIDD terminology and classification system with international systems (which looked at the person-environment or person context-fit) and thus removed disability from the person to the gap in the person's capacity and the context in which that person must function.

To put this way of thinking into action, the Association has developed and distributes a tool called the Support Intensity Scale (SIS), an instrument that enables the determination of support needs (types, intensity and duration) for successful function across multiple

environments. The current adult version (ages 18 and up) is relevant for designing supports that would enable people with ID to be successful in the context of postsecondary education. This is an important research role, but also a measurement tool to determine the efficacy of interventions to promote personal capacity. The functional model is aligning not only with ways to think about disability; it is also a movement away from deficit-focused notions of disability and an alignment with a strength-based focus. It is a tool to enhance that person's strength and capacity through universal design and access. This closes the gap between the person's capabilities and the design of supports so that they are most effective in enabling a person to function.

Overview of Current Research on Postsecondary Options for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Dawn Carlson, M.S., M.P.H., Ph.D.
Rehabilitation Program Specialist
NIDRR

Two literature reviews were provided for participants. The first represents the literature through 2001 by Neubert, Moon, Grigal, and Redd and gives a historical overview of the development of postsecondary education programs and typography of the programs in existence.

The second review, a draft produced by Dawn Carlson from NIDRR and Christine Domzal from New Editions, aimed at outlining the field of postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. The review delves into the ecology of postsecondary education for students with ID. It surveys the literature of individual characteristics and abilities of students with ID, the characteristics of postsecondary programs that serve them, and the surrounding structures that are legislative and political in nature, and includes laws and social forces that drive many actions in this field. In terms of the scope of inquiry, it starts with descriptive studies, proceeds to small intervention studies, and finally searches for more complex multi-site, multi-year, and multi-method approaches. This review, however, found that most of the work in the field occurring between 2001-2009 took place in areas of description and position papers with small samples. The purpose of the literature review was to give the most recent information about the state of science in the field of postsecondary education for students with ID, and direction and encouragement for the afternoon discussion.

National Survey of Postsecondary Options for Individuals with ID

Debra Hart, M.S.
Director, Education and Transition
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts

Meg Grigal, Ph.D.

**Senior Research Associate
TransCen, Inc.**

The Consortium for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Postsecondary Education (NCIDD-PSE) is a large training and technical assistance initiative that involves UCEDDs that, along with the National Center, have been in existence for only one year. They are now able to offer five mini-grants to look at postsecondary options throughout the country. These state-level grants must go through a UCEDD, which will serve as the lead partner and applicant. As a result of the information collected, students and their families will have choices about where to attend school.

The National Center on Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities is funded by NIDRR and has a research mandate to perform a national survey and secondary data analysis on data from the American Community Survey (ACS), the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2), and RSA 911 data.

There are presently five different ways that students with ID can “access” college:

- Dual enrollment
- School system sponsorship
- College initiated
- Adult agency initiated
- Student and family initiated

Ideally, students with ID can access college in typical ways, such as orientation, financial aid, disability services (though this may differ for students with ID), integrated courses, etc. In postsecondary education, there are no course modifications (that is a K-12 practice), only accommodations. The major differences are seen in entrance criteria and the level of support that students with ID need to be successful. In addition, many students are auditing courses, alleviating the need to modify classes.

The current programs for students with ID vary significantly at each institution; however, the programs follow one of three models:

- The substantially separate model is program-based and takes place on a college campus, but has its own structure and does not integrate academics or campus life.
- The mixed or hybrid model has a program base with separate life skill courses, but students are supported in taking academic courses and in accessing campus life.
- The inclusive individual support model has no program base; students are a vital part of the college community and take classes that relate to a career goal like anyone else in college.

The National Survey 09 Outreach Methods

The survey was done in a formal survey manner online with hard copy made available and follow-up email. The survey was completed by existing postsecondary program personnel, local school district personnel, higher education personnel, and disability

services personnel with a response rate of 58.3%. Grigal and Hart surveyed 250 programs that have been funded across 41 states and included 2-year (38%) and 4-year (51%) colleges and tech/trade schools (12%) from all three of the college program models. They also identified transient programs that were in existence from 2001-2003 and no longer exist. They have recently added another 28 programs yet to be surveyed.

The goal of the survey was to develop a census about what programs exist around the country. Given the many different types of programs, they designed an instrument to be as broad-based as possible. (Note: In their PowerPoint presentation is a map that indicates the types of programs surveyed and where they are located.)

The last time the survey was done there were more 2-year colleges than 4-year institutions, and in the intervening time the number of tech/trade institutions has doubled. Many of the dual enrollment initiatives have been the impetus for the next tier of 4-year college-initiated programs. These dual enrollment programs appear to be bridging the gap into postsecondary programs for students for ID.

Data analysis will answer the following questions and build on existing programs:

- When the question was asked, “does the IHE provide programmatic services for students with ID not provided to other students?” 65% answered yes. The new data must be analyzed to determine how they differ, what they consist of, and how the institution pays for the services.
- Over half of students access courses through the typical registration process. They now need to determine how IHEs overcame barriers.
- Academic advising – what training do advisors need? What support do these students need to achieve academic goals? Get a 4-year diploma? There is also a plan to provide professional development.
- Need access to disability support services - 54% of colleges surveyed are providing disability support but can build in additional supports. Modifications do not ask colleges to change; they ask for new means of access to add to existing college opportunities and support what college already is.
- Residential options – One-third of the programs do not provide any residential options and another third do not provide options to students with ID. They now need to determine who is and who is not providing service. This will be a process of its own as the demonstration projects roll out and colleges start to show greater flexibility. There is a need for greater access to integrated residential options.

Some of these questions were asked in surveys in 2003 and 2007. In 2003, the number one challenge was parent expectations. This has changed in the 2009 survey with the listing of challenges below:

1. Funding
2. Students accessing paid employment – was not previously on the list
3. Parent expectations
4. Student academic skills
5. Student self-determination skills

These VR data show a strong correlation between higher education and employment. There is a need to get VR to the table to work toward giving more students with ID opportunities to receive a postsecondary education.

- Youth who participated in PSE were 26% more likely to leave VR with paid employment.
- They earned a 73% higher weekly income.
- Individuals need greater access to PSE supported by VR.

For more information, review the Web site: www.thinkcollege.net.

Programs and Models of Postsecondary Education for Students with ID

Molly Boyle, M.A.
Project Coordinator
Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)
University of Massachusetts

The key practices of the work that is being done at the ICI at the University of Massachusetts on a student level are:

- Person-centered Planning
- Universal Design
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Self-determination

The program has been working with local and/or regional cross-agency coordinating teams on multiple levels to establish creative and collaborative funding and competitive employment.

Molly Boyle highlighted an OPE project on Equity and Excellence in Higher Education and indicated that it demonstrated how to develop the key buy-in of faculty on community college campuses through professional development courses on how to provide good teaching. A universal course design improved access for students and benefited all faculty and students, not just students with intellectual disabilities. More information can be found at www.eeonline.org.

Boyle showed a video of students and programs that are part of the Conclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative, which provides students with needed individual supports as they transition out of high school. Educational coaches, either hired by the school district or the college are trained to promote each student's self-determination and self-sufficiency while navigating the college experience. These coaches play a critical role as they help students prepare for the responsibilities of their college experience and eventually their adult lives. This program is a partnership between the school districts and the community colleges. A major goal of this initiative is to make sure that students are

engaged in paid employment before they leave school. Partners also help students find work that is aligned with their coursework. This program has demonstrated that students with ID can continue education at the college level, advocate for themselves, become lifelong learners, and work at inclusive paid employment.

The PERC Project (2005-2009) examined dual enrollment programs using a mixed hybrid model to document activities and outcomes.

- 2 States
- 5 College Sites
- 36 High Schools
- 112 students
- 95 different typical college courses
- 89% desire further education

PERC Student Employment Data

PERC Students worked an average 18/hrs per week

NLTS2: 43.8% worked 5 hours per week or less

NLTS2: Only 17.6% worked 15-20 hours per week

PERC students earn average =\$7.90/hr

NLTS2: Only 15.2% earned over \$7.00 per hr

NLTS2: 50.9% earned less than \$5.15 per hr

Dedra Hafner, Ed.D.

Director, Cutting Edge Program

Courtney Moffatt, Ed.D.

Edgewood College

The Cutting Edge Program is now in its second official year at Edgewood College. Dr. Hafner referred to changing the culture when the program began, which means not just changing the postsecondary education system, but also changing the entire educational system.

Edgewood College is a small college founded with a mission of social justice and community involvement, a philosophy supportive of programs like Cutting Edge. While colleges say they serve people with disabilities, they usually do not serve all people with disabilities. Hafner indicated that to create more supports for people, they looked at universal design, employment internships, and housing on campus as key components for developing full inclusion and supporting students in a cost-effective way.

There are 12 students presently in the program with a waiting list. Knowing that they wanted to serve all students with disabilities, there is great diversity among the students. They include individuals with Autism, Down Syndrome, brain injury, ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome, Cerebral palsy, Epilepsy, and other cognitive disabilities. Some of these students have even applied to four-year colleges and are taking courses for credit.

Inclusion on college campuses usually refers to academic inclusion, integrated student housing, supported employment, and access to normalized recreation and social activities. At Edgewood College students audit courses with backup and are taking one to four courses, are involved in recreation and social activities, and five of the 12 students are living on campus while three others are living in independent apartments.

Parents indicate that they are looking for this kind of experience for their children. Hafner and Moffat really listen to what the students are saying and support them in whatever they choose to do. They also have peer mentors, students on the campus who facilitate inclusion and interaction. This gives the students with ID the natural support of their peers in academic as well as social matters. They also have graduate students, usually studying special education, who have an opportunity to work in their field while mentoring.

Heidi Graff, Ph.D.

Director

George Mason University LIFE Program

The Mason LIFE Program is a transitional and postsecondary program serving students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at George Mason University. Additionally, it is a supportive apprenticeship for human service studies students. This gives students, majoring primarily in special education, a practicum of working with and learning from Mason LIFE students. There are four components to Mason LIFE:

- Academic Program
- Residential Program
- Internship Program
- Research Program

The Mason LIFE students are between the ages of 18-23 and stay at the university for four years. The program is a non-categorical program and therefore accepts students of varying abilities who want to experience college life without receiving a degree. Each student has his/her own personal program that is based on study interests. All students who audit courses take a course in auditing support while students who live in residential housing take a course in residential support. Core components of the program include community access where students travel by learning how to read bus and Metro schedules and learning independent living skills such as cooking and time management.

Mason LIFE students represent part of the diversity on campus and as such the university recruits students from different cultures and geographic areas. The students are able to join clubs, manage teams, rush and join sororities, be a part of student government, and work on campus. Students in the program work at jobs in the student postal service, child development center, library, fitness center, and also have jobs ushering and doing data entry.

The program builds friends within the university environment through the Best Buddies Program where Mason Life students are matched with college students to build one-to-one friendships. This is also part of the process for recruiting student volunteers who become mentors as they grow into the program structure. A majority of Mason LIFE students also participate in the Special Olympics Program.

Of the 17 graduates, seven have gone on to internships and 70% are employed in retail, pet care, mail services, advocacy at The Arc and an agency called Service Source. The internship program was started for students who were unable to find employment and is called their graduate program. During an additional 1-2 years, students focus on employment, are assigned a job coach, and work in the competitive employment field. The program also tracks outcomes related to other student activities on campus as well as tracking research and dissemination. There have been two dissertations completed within Mason LIFE as well as master's level and doctoral research. Additional information can be found at the Mason LIFE Web site: <http://masonlife.gmu.edu>.

Jeff Ross, M.A.

**Director of Student Support Services
Taft College, California**

Taft College established a transition to living center on August 1, 1995 for California students with developmental disabilities to learn independent living and vocational skills while living in college dormitories the first year and off-campus housing the second year. The program is funded by state regional centers of the California Department of Developmental Services and provides \$30,000 in funding per student each year. They were recently given \$9.5 million by a state bond issue to build a facility with 32 individual living classrooms to house this program for their 48 students.

The Taft College mission is to provide enriching collegiate experiences; to have interactive and inclusive environments; and to learn opportunities transferable to lifelong independent living skills, work ethics necessary for gainful employment, and self-respect and knowledge of individual strengths. An important part of the program is the social experiences that these students share with other students on campus. The program also stresses the importance of decision making, safe living practices, and responsible choices. A certificate is awarded when the required coursework is successfully completed. As part of the program, students are also required to work eight hours a week either on or off campus.

When the Higher Education Bill was rolled out, the Model Demonstration Projects required that students with ID spend 50% of their time with students without disabilities. At Taft, students have gone through college placement tests to determine where they would fit. The average scores for writing, reading, and math show that students with ID start out at a sub-remedial level and for them to reach a level to matriculate would take 2-3 years. In California the state does not allow students to audit courses unless they are matriculating. Therefore the college developed a curriculum for this program with course

work that must be completed to receive a certificate. Students in the program then graduate with other students at Taft College. Since 1997, the College has tracked 182 graduates for a 10-year period. They have found that 95% of their graduates live independently and 89% are employed.

The Community College Consortium on Autism and Intellectual Disabilities was founded by college presidents to support its members in the development of programs to serve students with these types of disabilities. For more information, contact:

Co-founders of the Community College Consortium on Postsecondary Options for Individuals with Autism and Other Intellectual Disabilities:

William H. Duncan, IV, President
Taft Community College
661.763.7710, Email: wduncan@taft.org

David Miller, Board Member
Former Vice-Chair
Northern Virginia Community College District
703.371.7728m, Email: dmiller@skylink@usa.net

David Miller, J.D.

Co-founder/Board member NVCC

Co-chair, Community College Consortium on Autism and Intellectual Disabilities

Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) is the largest community college in the nation with 65,000 full-time students and 150,000 part-time students. David Miller has a real interest in this field given that he has two sons with autism. When giving a speech on the Combating Autism Bill, which is a great bill for research and diagnosis, Miller began to contemplate what is going to happen to his children and other kids with Autism.

While the LIFE program at Mason is an excellent program, the scale and numbers for Autism are challenging. In Fairfax County the incidence of Autism in the schools is 1 in 94 and in Fairfax City it is 1 in 91. He asked if programs such as the one at Taft College can be replicated around the country. Community colleges have open enrollment and must accept all students who apply. As a result, Miller indicated that there are 200-300 non-traditional students on NVCC campuses with no programs available for them, a common problem at all other community colleges. Most community colleges do not have the resources and capabilities of the programs participating in this meeting, but they do provide a living laboratory for trying to provide effective programs for students. Miller indicated that he welcomes the opportunity for partnerships with other colleges and universities throughout the country.

Working Group Session Results

Working Group 1 Report

Research needs regarding students with ID in postsecondary education programs in relatively broad terms

Dr. Colleen Thoma

This group explored the individual issues and the research questions that impact students with intellectual disabilities who go on to postsecondary education. It was a difficult task to talk about what is important to students with ID without also looking at the system's issues, what is happening at the state level, and the funding considerations.

The first focus was related to the admissions process, and in particular, what academic preparation students with ID need in order to be admitted to a 4-year institution and be successful in the program. The second focus was on how to increase expectations so that most students with intellectual disabilities think about postsecondary education as a possible option. Additional questions focused on how people in the ID field get parents and school districts to think about that as well.

Next, the group members discussed retention and the factors and supports necessary to keep students in these postsecondary programs. It requires first identifying the supports that work and the best methods for providing these services to students. Who should provide them? Should it be the disability support center on campus or peers? Should it be academic coaches or mentors? What training and supports do those individuals need?

Last, the group discussed longitudinal research questions, first looking at a youth-driven component and asking what the issues are that youth with disabilities identify as being important to understand and important to their success. What are those common assessments and what are the common data that we need all of these programs to collect over time so that all programs are speaking a common language from which we can draw comparisons? What are the outcome data needed to determine that students have more employment options and are better capable of sustaining employment after postsecondary programs?

Working Group 2 Report

Research needs concerning post secondary education program characteristics and the broader context in which these programs exist and operate.

Stephanie Smith Lee

The discussion began with the determination to look at all perspectives—students, faculty, academic advisors, parents, and the funders—when determining the research questions. Next, the group decided to examine community colleges and 4-year colleges separately as well as look at vocational, technical, and trade schools. In addition, they considered individual students who may have found a way to participate in college activities or attend college classes without support from any type of formal structure or program.

The first step was to look at the taxonomy – what are the types of programs and services, and how are they funded? What role, if any, do other agencies, such as VR, independent living centers, DD agencies, and school districts play in funding and providing expertise and services?

It is necessary to examine how these postsecondary programs were started, the social and cultural milieu at the universities where these programs are located, and the successful strategies for starting them. Once these programs are established, what kind of access exists to disability services offices and other disability programs at the universities? What are the key elements of successful programs and the effective practices for the people who are providing support, whether coordinators of programs, educational coaches, or academic and peer mentors? More descriptive research is also needed to explain what it is like to successfully operate these programs. What are the day-to-day challenges? What are the challenges of residential life? How do we bridge the gap between K-12 and higher education?

The next major step was looking at potential outcomes. They discussed the four areas in the Higher Education Act—the academic, socialization, independent living, and integrated work and career leading to gainful employment—as areas to consider for collecting data. They also discussed the role of liberal arts education and the role of vocational programs.

There was further discussion about how the outcomes for students with ID who complete postsecondary education compare to outcomes for students with ID who do not participate in postsecondary education.

The third major category is economics:

- How much does it cost?
- Who is paying?
- What are the supports that the universities or colleges are providing?
- What is the return on investment when you look at the amount spent and what the outcomes are?

The fourth major area is the barriers and challenges to program implementation from the perspectives of faculty, students, academic advisors, parents, and the funders. The discussion included state laws, regulations, policy, and licensure issues and the barriers imposed by institutional policy. What are successful ways to overcome these barriers?

The fifth major area of discussion was the innovations that are occurring across programs and how they are being expanded. They want to go beyond studying just what has happened to consider new innovation and expansion.

The sixth area of discussion was marketing and outreach. Two other discussion points that were raised were the benefits to the institution, if any, in starting a postsecondary program for students with ID and finally a research focus on self-determination.

Working Group 3 Report

Explore in more detail ways in which individual student abilities and characteristics can be studied

Dr. Michael Weymeyer

This group focused on the individual students with ID and discussed in more depth the research that would help these students to be more successful in postsecondary education. The group determined that there are three different types of research that can be utilized. The first is survey research that would help to understand in more detail:

- The state of postsecondary education right now;
- What the services are;
- Where they are received;
- The process to enroll in these programs, including admission's requirements; and
- Why students with ID are making the decision to enter these programs.

The next type of research would be a systematic review of the extant literature. While there is a thorough review of the literature related to postsecondary education for students with ID, there are many other fields of research where an impact could be made. These include:

- Inclusion at the secondary education level that applies to the postsecondary level.
- How do we support students to get into college, stay in college and be successful, then graduate?
- Self-determination and person-centered planning – we have literature about the usefulness of teaching self-determination skills and promoting person-centered planning in other settings, but we have not really looked at it in the postsecondary education setting.
- Social skills – we know from the employment literature that students do better in employment if they have adequate social skills. If they are going to be fired from a job it is most likely because of a lack of social skills. The group wants to better understand this dynamic and how it applies to students with ID.
- Universal design and academic instruction – how do the research results at the secondary level apply to the postsecondary level?
- Self-determination and self-disclosure. Who should self-disclose? In what situation? What does it mean? Does it help? What can we learn from self-disclosure literature in other settings and for other populations of students?

The third type of research the group discussed is more participatory action research, but done in a very high quality way with lots of validation and interrelated reliability. This would include:

- As we look at modified curriculum in the context of alternate standards, how do we adapt this instruction and does it work?
- How do we look at that alternate assessment data, and how does it appear?
- What is the impact on cognition of being in postsecondary education settings, in reference to problems?

The group suggested examining these research questions from an intervention study perspective and through a series of intervention or action research studies.

Working Group 4 Report

Deepen the discussion of research needs and practices in the area of postsecondary education programs and their characteristics

Dr. Michael Behrmann

Many questions arose among group participants as to the structure, policies, goals, and outcomes of university programs for students with ID and how to best evaluate these programs. There was also much discussion about how to evaluate the performance of students while they are in the university setting and how to determine the outcomes of postsecondary education for students with ID in reference to employment opportunities, social skills, and peer interactions.

Program evaluation

This group began the discussion with issues about program evaluation. Given the range of people who work with students, from paid staff to volunteers, what are the expectations for these people and how does one elicit the best performance from these providers? They discussed the impact of the program on the providers, the students and on the volunteers from the perspectives of students, faculty, staff, and the community. The group suggested a potential longitudinal study on the impact of these programs on students without disabilities to determine if the familiarity with students with ID has long-term impact. In other words, would the students that are best buddies with the Mason LIFE students, and in the social clubs, sororities, and fraternities with them, also hire them ten years later? Does familiarity lead to better job outcomes?

Peer system

Next, they discussed issues related to the peer system. How does one select peers? Who is going to choose to befriend a Mason LIFE student? How do you measure the social environment and the self-selection process? Who are the friends in the residence halls? Are they the paid volunteers? Are they students that live next door? Is there a self selection process in choosing best buddies? What are the factors in the best buddy selection process? How are determinations made about life-long friendships? There is a need to gather information on long term social impacts and how students maintain their social networks.

Self-determination

The next area the group discussed was self-determination and the role of the students in determining what they want to do and who they want to associate with. Following this theme the group discussed jobs and why students with ID should have multiple job options to determine what they enjoy doing and what they do not like to do. In addition, they discussed whether these programs provide students with enough opportunities for job placement. They also wondered how to manage or balance the desires of the families for specific employment options for their children with what these young adults envision

themselves. The group also discussed how to provide and measure good training and supervision to peer mentors, volunteers, and paid employees.

Student integration

In reference to the integration of students with ID into the university culture with access to university services and programs, they discussed how to determine the kind of services received and how much integration exists. Is it based on matriculation status? Does enrollment status in the university have an impact on whether students receive disability support services or not, and on whether they receive assistive technology, counseling, and other services? How are the students classified? What are the barriers to accessing the programs? Do the university's policies enable students or act as barriers to integrating students into campus activities?

Employment

In reference to employment, the group discussed how to set up employment opportunities for students. What kind of continuum is available for the students? Is it structured with lots of support? What are the implications of those employment opportunities on the student's actual job performance or employment after leaving the program?

Admissions criteria

How are the admissions criteria designed and the admissions process of different programs set up? Is it based on who the faculty believes will be most successful? What are the demographics? Are there disproportionate issues among students enrolled in the program? Some programs have feeder schools. When this is not the case, how do programs assess where to draw their student population from? Is it according to their economic capability and whether they live nearby and have a support system?

Program goals and outcomes

The HEOA has four categories – employment, social, academic, and independent living goals. But there is no requirement that every program address all four of these categories. Therefore, what are the primary components of these programs? What do they emphasize? What are their expectations? When is it most appropriate to do program evaluations? Should programs be evaluated based on their own unique expectations and milieu rather than comparing one program to another? There are going to be different programs in 2-year and 4-year institutions, and these programs are going to have different capabilities. Therefore, should not the evaluation be based on program values and expectations rather than broad-based standards?

Independent living

Do students even want independent living opportunities? How do student expectations impact the program and its outcomes? Do programs have a continuum of services so that they allow students to make a gradual transition? For example, do they allow students to drop in and stay in the dorm for a few days or a week at a time? Or live in the dorms one semester out of the year? Live in an off-campus residence? Live in an apartment with different levels of support? How do different programs address the independent living

element? What are the curricula for that independent living activity, and how are they integrated into the program?

Academic evaluation

How do you assess academics skills in students? There has been a movement to have outcome evaluations for higher education in general. How effective is George Mason University versus George Washington University versus other kinds of institutions? There has been push back because program outcomes cannot necessarily be delineated in higher education. Therefore, it should not be any different for students in these programs. There are broad categories to evaluate effectiveness; should programs also be looking for explicit outcomes or individual student progress based on pre-tests and post-tests when they exit the program? Across the range of programs there is a wide range of student performance.

Program type and delivery

There was discussion about program type and delivery, inclusive programs versus separate programs, and the differentiation that could occur in hybrid models and other models. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the program? Is it based on the type of program delivery, the characteristics of the students, and/or the way that the program was set up in terms of benefits and impact?

When students require accommodations and supports, how are these supports (e.g., assistive technology and student services) determined and delivered? Will student performance be based solely on classes that the students choose? For instance, a student who is athletic may choose classes that are sports oriented. Therefore, the student's performance can only be evaluated based on the curriculum and program that they choose.

Working Group 5 Report

What are the broader social, political, and administrative environments affecting the development and growth of postsecondary education.

Dr. George Jesien

Dr. Jesien explained what occurred in Group 5 by first asking everyone to consider a bulls-eye with three concentric circles, and then a series of vectors. This represents micro and macro levels of influence, which the group tried to identify in terms of the major elements or components that could affect the movement of postsecondary education at local, state, and national levels.

Next, Jesien asked everyone to visualize a clock to symbolize elements of the group discussion. Starting at 12:00 are parents and their engagement in advocacy for postsecondary education. They are the principal stakeholders and leaders, pushing the field. What are the methods to further engage, help organize, and bring them on board to move this enterprise forward?

At 1:00 is knowledge. Knowledge is the main factor that drives all the other components. What are the expectations? What is the research evidence that we need to collect to make the case that postsecondary education for students with ID and other disabilities really is the way to move forward? And what are some of the internal practices that are necessary to push, disseminate, and encourage other institutions of higher learning? What are the methods for collecting, compiling and disseminating these findings for consumption?

At 2:00 is policy. What kinds of policies are either facilitative or can serve as obstacles to moving the field forward? What are the policies at local and county levels where community colleges have to respond often to county regulations? What are the state policies? Do state legislators make it easier or harder for postsecondary programs to exist for students with ID? And what are the national policies? The group spent a lot of time discussing the Higher Education Act and what it has done to serve as a base for national activities.

At 3:00 are values and attitudes. What is the process to formulate values and attitudes in this embryonic field where the practices are not generally accepted? Given that this is the leading edge of the field, what are the values and attitudes that are necessary to encourage and promote? The flip side is the discrimination and negative attitudes that must be overcome to move this field forward.

At 4:00 is leadership. What is the process to find new leadership to take up and be champions for this embryonic field? There have been real changes in Congress over the last few years. Ted Kennedy is gone. Senator Harkin is getting on in years. Where is the young leadership coming from? Is it from within the universities and the special education programs? Where are the young folks that can be promoted into positions of leadership?

At 5:00 is advocacy and the need to identify spokespeople at that local, state, and national levels that will help move the enterprise forward.

At 6:00 is general awareness. What are the best methods to create awareness of the generally accepted practice that youth with disabilities are expected to and should be afforded the opportunities to participate in postsecondary education experiences?

At 7:00 is capacity. If this field is to move forward and allow more students the opportunity for postsecondary education, what are the investigation and promotional needs to increase the capacity of organizations to meet the demand? While the population of students with ID is at 10% in comparison to all other disabilities, the percentage of students in postsecondary education is only at 0.6 or 0.7%.

Eight, 9:00 and 10:00 are about the economy, business, and schools. Postsecondary operations are basically businesses. Therefore, it is necessary to identify funding sources and partnerships to make this, if not a money maker, at least something that makes economic sense within a postsecondary environment.

At 11:00 is demand. There is a need to promote and create demand for postsecondary experiences and to provide enough diversity so that families and individuals have choices about the type of environment they wish to participate in. The normative operation of selecting a college is a process of looking at choices. This includes the size of institutions and campuses, and the types of programs and majors. These choices need to be made available for students with disabilities as well.

This group also spent time reflecting on the big picture issues, and why postsecondary education is a good idea for students with ID. One of the basic answers is to find the evidence that demonstrates the worth of these programs. At the end there was consensus about becoming a better community of knowledge gatherers and sharers. If knowledge is going to change the world of social, political, and administrative influence on the field, then it is necessary to develop an evidence base for the work being done. For this to occur, the educational community needs the partnerships of NIDRR and other federal agencies not only join in, but to compel the field to develop an evidence base for the programs that are being executed and the forces that comprise the hours around the clock. It is only through real evidence gathered through longitudinal studies and experimental trial research that employment outcomes can be shown for the people with ID who partake in postsecondary education, independent living, and developing better social skills.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Carlson closed the meeting by thanking everyone on behalf of NIDRR for a rewarding meeting and the wealth of information shared. He expressed a desire to continue this work at another time. He further indicated that the video recordings, transcripts, and the presentations from the meeting will be shared on the GMU Web site. Access to this information will be forthcoming. New Editions will produce a formal proceedings document for NIDRR that will be made available once it goes through the government clearance process. Carlson added that NIDRR wants to continue to support the ongoing academic and research efforts, and the knowledge shared at the conference.