Bridging the Employability Gap: A Partnership of Four Postsecondary Institutions in Canada

AHEAD 2019
READ Initiative

To highlight, celebrate, and cultivate Carleton University’s expertise, leadership and collaboration with the community to create greater accessibility and a more inclusive world.
Employment Gap

• Persons with disabilities are underrepresented in the labour force.

• 59% of persons with disabilities aged 25 to 64 were employed compared to 80% of the general population.

• 2 in 5 or 645,000 Canadians with disabilities have potential to work.

• 50% of persons with disabilities have a post-secondary education.
Environmental Scan

Preparing for Employment - Trends and Best Practices:

An environmental scan of programs and collaboration between Disability Service Offices (DSO’s) and Career Service Offices (CSO’s) at Colleges and Universities across Canada

Dale Stevenson & Dean Mellway

August 2016
The Big Picture

Demonstration project for a partnership model of best practices to promote the employment of postsecondary students with disabilities through applied research and development, transferable across Ontario.
5 Major Objectives

1. Applied Research and Development
2. Employment and Enterprise Outreach
3. Public Awareness Campaign
4. Knowledge Repository and Transfer
5. Sustainability
Advancing employment outcomes for SWDs

- R&D Officers placed in the Career and Disability Office on each campus
- Identifying best practices for communication, engagement with students
Exploring the Gap between completion of PSE and finding meaningful career-related work

- Develop strategic partnerships with employers, agencies, PSEs
- Identify best practices for attracting, recruiting, sustaining
- Partnering with community stakeholders (i.e. EARN, LEPC, etc.)
Pathways to Employment

- For STUDENTS and EMPLOYERS from 1st to final year
  - Volunteer
  - Part-time
  - Summer
  - Coop
  - Internship/Apprenticeship
  - Full-time New Grad
  - Entrepreneurship
#AbleTo Pledge
Emerging Trends To Date
Emerging Themes from R&D

- General knowledge/capacity building needs
- Disclosure
- UDL & Alternative HR practices business case
- Supporting employers
Emerging Themes from Employer Conversations

- Openness to re-thinking recruitment practices – more inclusive job descriptions, recruitment events in different formats
- Looking for training on how to create and support inclusive and accessible workplaces
- Requesting opportunities to really engage with SWDs to better understand how to support them and to share employer needs/expectations in the workplace
- Desire simplified access to campus career offices and access to students, employment pathways – shared portal
Discussion
What do you see as the top 3 issues of importance related to students with disabilities and employment?
Do you have experience supporting employability of students or persons with disabilities?
In what ways could we promote career development of students with disabilities on campuses?
How can we support employers in hiring students with disabilities?
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