Welcome to

Ready to learn: Supporting access to accommodations for students with intellectual disability in higher education

Please be respectful of your colleagues by silencing your phone. If you need to answer a call, please go to the hallway.

Presented by
• Cate Weir, Project Coordinator, Think College National Coordinating Center
• Clare Papay, Senior Research Associate, Think College National Coordinating Center
• Michelle Mitchell, Professor, Disability Learning Specialist, Lehigh-Carbon Community College

Conference Inclusion Statement
Access and Inclusion and Civility and Respect...this week and in all aspects of our organization.
Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to explain the legislative foundations that led to the growth of college opportunities for students with intellectual disability (ID).
- Participants will be able to state that students with intellectual disability enrolled in college courses are eligible for accommodations as students with disabilities.
- Participants will be able to explain which academic accommodations are most likely to be effective for students with ID.

Current Landscape of Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disability

Cate Weir, M.Ed.
Clare Papay, Ph.D.

Access to higher education for students with intellectual disability (ID)

- Open admissions
  - Access supports available to all students with disabilities

- Specialized programs
  - Access supports available to all students with disabilities AND additional specialized support
  - Some may be Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTP) currently 128
  - Some may be federally funded Transition Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TIPS) currently 19 grantees operating 35+ programs
  - Some are neither of these
College programs for students with ID

- Alternate admission process to a certificate program
- Are admitted to the college as students, and as such are eligible for ADA/504 accommodations
- Students take college courses, for credit or audit
- If auditing, modifications may be provided
- Program staff provides additional support

Students with ID in degree programs

- Students with ID may be enrolled at your college as typically matriculating students.
- These students are eligible for all supports and services under 504/ADA as any other student with a disability.

Discussion

- What is the prevalence of students with ID on your campus?
- Are students attending through a certificate program designed for students with ID?
- What experiences/issues/collaborations have you had?
Importance of Program Accreditation

- **Benchmarks** useful for quality assurance & improvement
- **Added value** for institutions of higher education, college programs, students with ID & their parents
- Implementation will **validate & strengthen programs**
- **Accountability** for college program practices

Program Accreditation Standard Areas

- Mission
- Student Achievement
- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Facility, Equipment & Supply
- Administrative & Fiscal Capacity
- Student Services
- Length & Structure of Program of Study
- Student Complaints
- Program Development, Planning, & Review
National estimate of students with ID
As of August 2021, 5,754 students with ID were reported to be enrolled in college programs
*n = 251 programs, data were missing for 59 programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-year college or university</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year community college or junior college</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical or vocational/trade school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of courses taken by students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Course</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit only</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit or audit</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit only</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education + credit or audit</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education only</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students do not take college classes</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to Disability Services access at TPSID programs

In 2020-2021, 67% of students attending TPSID programs received support or accommodations from Disability Services office on their campus.

13 students were reported to have been denied services from the DSO on their campus.

Survey of Disability Services Offices

- This spring, AHEAD and Think College National Coordinating Center partnered to develop and deploy a SURVEY to gather information.
- This survey seeks to learn more about the prevalence of students with intellectual disability (ID) participating in standard college classes and the nature of disability services office and campus-wide services and supports for students with ID both attending specialized programs and not.
Improves Learning: Faculty said that students with ID often bring up "really thoughtful questions" that typical students "just wouldn’t think to ask," whereas many typical students are "reluctant to ask questions" even if they don’t understand. This benefited the learning experiences of all students.

Improves Teaching: Faculty said that having students with ID in their classes challenges them to get better at breaking down concepts to make the material more universally accessible. One faculty participant said that this made them a "better teacher."

Improves Class Environment: Faculty participants said students with ID often bring a greater level of "enthusiasm" and a "positive attitude" into the classroom that can be "contagious" and improves the environment for everyone.
Accommodations for students with intellectual disability
Michelle Mitchell, Lehigh Carbon Community College

Q: Are students with ID eligible to receive accommodations or access?
A: If a student with an intellectual disability is admitted for enrollment or is involved in a college program, course, or event on campus, the answer is yes. Since accommodations are not given to ensure success but are for access, students with ID once admitted or participating on campus should be able to request and receive accommodations that address their known strengths and weaknesses.

From the AHEAD White Paper (Thompson, Weir, & Ashmore, 2011)

Q: Do students with ID need to provide documentation to the Disability Services office and go through an interactive process, i.e. interview, to obtain accommodations?
A: Yes, documentation should address the strengths and weaknesses of their cognitive and adaptive skills. A student with ID is defined as a person with “significant limitations in cognitive/intellectual functioning and adaptive skills.” Decisions should be made on a person by person basis.

From the AHEAD White Paper
Q: What are appropriate accommodations for a student with ID?

A: The process for determining accommodations for a student with ID is the same as for other students with disabilities. It should involve a careful consideration of information provided through documentation and personal contact. Disability Services staff should consider and discuss the functional impact of a student’s disability in relation to the courses being considered and the types of tasks required in the course. Answering what types of access and/or accommodations will facilitate this student’s involvement and learning is important. Some students with intellectual disabilities may have other disabilities which also need to be considered when planning accommodations.

Accommodations to consider

• Opportunities to practice new skills and concepts before assessment
• Opportunities to discuss outlines and drafts of assignments before submitting

Accommodations to consider

• Provision of reading lists before the start of a course
• Provision of simplified, step-by-step instructions for practical tasks, with verbal and written instructions and diagrams as appropriate or the ability to sit down with the professor to discuss expectations
Accommodations to consider

- Provision of assistive technology as appropriate
- Information provided in multiple formats
- Alternative exam venue that is private and free of distractions

Accommodations to consider

- Provision of a glossary of technical and professional jargon
- Recordings of lectures
- Oral feedback on assignments in addition to written feedback.
- Individual orientation to laboratories, workshops, studios, etc.
- Extensions to assignment deadlines

Accommodations to consider

- Alternative assessment methods
- Additional time to complete exams
- Support in exams such as reading questions and scribing answers
Q: Should Disability Services professionals advocate for curricular modifications for students with ID taking courses for credit?

A: No, curricular modifications or changes to standards are not allowed or expected for students taking courses for credit. If students with ID audit college courses then an individual agreement with an instructor may be established to allow for course modifications.

From the AHEAD White Paper

Earning College Credit

- Accommodations may be provided to ensure equal access
- No modifications are made to content or assessment

Auditing a college course

- Accommodations may be provided to ensure equal access
- Modifications can be made to content and assignments/tests
  - Reduced reading load
  - Alternate assignments or test formats
  - Reduced requirements for assignments

Credit example: Child Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course requirement</th>
<th>Accommodations</th>
<th>Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings for each class</td>
<td>Book on tape, provision of reading list before the start of class</td>
<td>Course expectations, assignments and due dates were not modified, as the student was earning college credit for the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations with small children to identify developmental stages</td>
<td>Information provided in multiple formats, e.g., charts providing concrete examples of developmental levels, in addition to text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>Extra time, open book, staff read questions and scribed answers</td>
<td>Final grade: C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grade awarded (A-F): Final grade: C
Audit example: First Year Seminar

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course requirement</th>
<th>Accommodations</th>
<th>Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings for each class</td>
<td>Watch summary videos on YouTube</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group presentation, Brain research in the media</td>
<td>Oral feedback on the assignment as written</td>
<td>No modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a research study</td>
<td>Glossary of technical terms</td>
<td>Write 1 paragraph for each section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and tests</td>
<td>Additional time for tests, quiet room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final grades awarded (A-F)</td>
<td>Pass/Fail grade awarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Supporting students with ID (no program)

- Utilize the suggested accommodations list to determine effective accommodations just as you would any other student with a disability
- Offer individualized academic counseling through your office, if you can, to assist the student in choosing the best classes
- Can you offer opportunity to audit rather than take for credit to allow for flexibility in assignments, etc. but still learn as much as possible in the class?
- Often it is placement tests and developmental courses that provide the biggest barrier to continued learning – can those be waived for students who want to participate in a college class for audit?

Partnering with a program for students with ID

- Meet with students to determine appropriate accommodations just as for any other student with a disability
- Coordinate with the program staff on the delivery of additional supports that are above and beyond reasonable accommodations.
- Keep communication channels open
- Participate in the program’s advisory committee, if they have one
- Offer your expertise on the best ways to assure equal access and support to students in the program.
Session Evaluation

Please point your phone at this QR code, or go to:
tinyurl.com/AHEADeval

Your feedback helps shape future programming.
Thank you for attending!