

# A Conversation about Employment Preparation for College Students with Disabilities

***Panelists:*** David Beach (University of Kentucky)

Kristie Orr (Texas A&M University)

Jen Montag (NCCSD, ICI)

Carlos Taylor (Gregory S. Fehribach Center)

***Moderator:*** David R. Parker (Gregory S. Fehribach Center)

We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

**Access and Inclusion**

and

**Civility and Respect**

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

# Panel Discussion Outline

- A New Focus on Career Preparation in Higher Education
- Gaps in Campus Career Planning for Students with Disabilities
- What Role Can DR Providers Play Moving Forward?
- Best Practices for Closing Existing Gaps
- Questions and Discussion

# Introductions

- Panelists will introduce themselves
- Who's in our audience?

# A New Focus on Career Preparation

Undergraduates with disabilities utilize career services less often and graduate with less work experience than non-disabled peers (Parker & Markle, 2020).

Knowledge about requesting academic accommodations does not translate to requesting workplace accommodations and fears about disclosing when applying for jobs remain high (Kutscher et al., 2025).

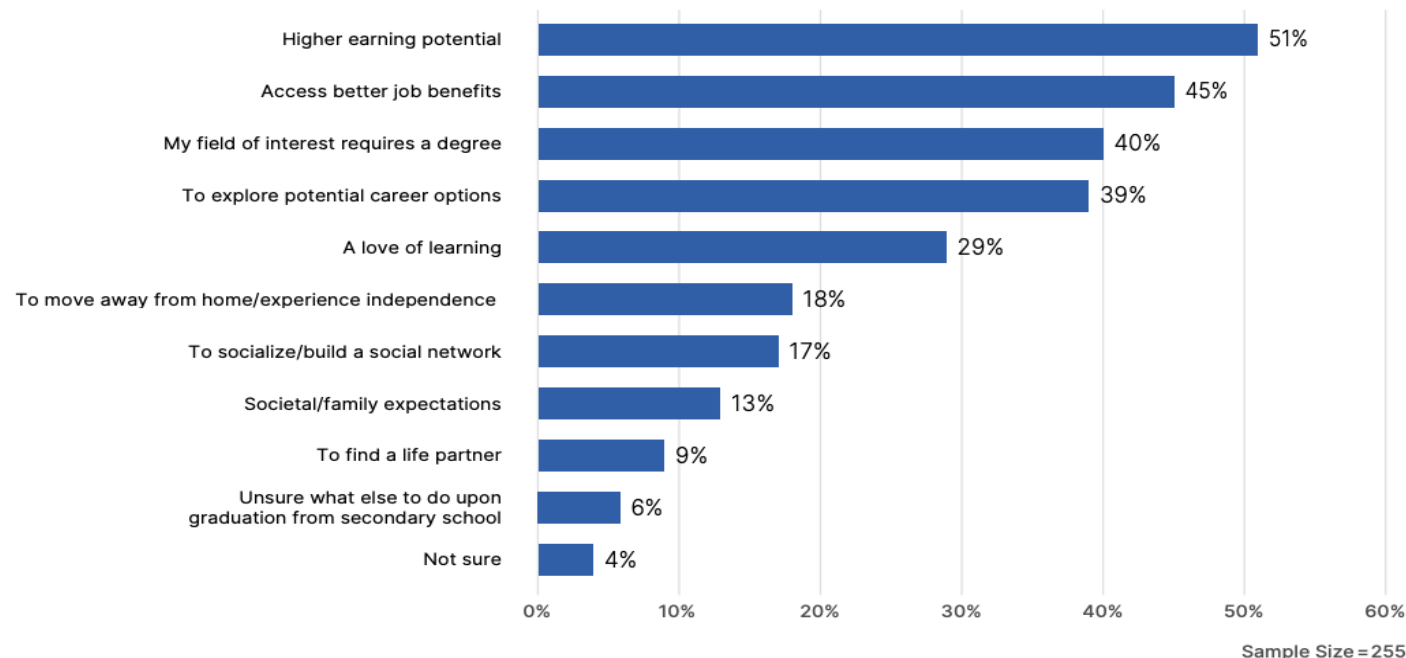
Only 21.6% of adults ages 25-34 with disabilities have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 42% of adults without disabilities (NiDILRR 2024).

College graduates with disabilities face significant employment disparities. They experience lower overall employment rates, less job-degree relevance, and more frequently work part-time (without benefits) than their non-disabled peers. Systemic barriers include employer bias, lack of accommodations, and salary caps if receiving SSI/Medicaid benefits (Phillips et al., 2022).

# Why Are Students in College?

## Motivations for Enrolling

What were your primary motivations for enrolling at your current university?



In 2025, the employment-population ratio (the percentage of adults 18 to 65 employed full time) was **38.9%** among those with disabilities and **74.9%** among those without disabilities.

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

The Students' Perspective: Valuable Insights for University Leaders (2025)

# A New Model for Career Planning

“Intervention from faculty and staff – incorporating career readiness into all levels of the college experience – is key to the success of those efforts, higher education administrators, consultants, and researchers said. And connecting students to employers through internships, project-based learning, and networking should happen consistently throughout the college years. The model can no longer be ‘We have a career center. Come see us.’”

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) (2022)

# Prompt 1

What are some implications of the data presented thus far?

# Prompt 2

What can make it challenging for Career Services to address the needs of students with disabilities?

# Prompt 3

How can Disability Resource professionals help shape inclusive, disability-informed career preparation efforts?

# Prompt 4

Tell us more about your own practices to promote effective career development for college students with disabilities.

# Questions and Discussion

We'd love to hear from you!

# Session Evaluation

[tiny.cc/8zu1101](https://tiny.cc/8zu1101)

Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape future programming.

