

Disability Services and Campus Supports for College Students with Intellectual Disability

Meg Grigal¹
Clare Papay¹
L. Danielle Roberts-Dahm¹
Sally Scott²
Cate Weir¹

Abstract

Opportunities for students with intellectual disability to access higher education in the United States are now more widely available than ever before. Some institutions have developed dedicated programs that support students with intellectual disability to access courses, prepare for employment, and pursue credentials, and many institutions enroll students with intellectual disability even without a dedicated program. Disability resource offices (DROs) are responsible for ensuring students with disabilities, including those with intellectual disability, have equal access to higher education through necessary accommodations and supports. Yet little is known about how DRO professionals support students with intellectual disability and how support differs between institutions with or without a dedicated program. This study sought to address this knowledge gap through a survey of DRO professionals associated with the Association on Higher Education and Disability, the leading organization for professionals engaged in disability services in higher education. Findings of the survey offer implications for supporting students with intellectual disability in higher education settings.

Keywords: disability services, intellectual disability, postsecondary education

Postsecondary education options for students with intellectual disability in the United States have increased in the past 15 years due to federal legislation, funding, and advocacy (Grigal et al., 2021). A national directory of existing postsecondary options lists 359 colleges and universities enrolling students with intellectual disability in the U.S. as of December 2025 (Think College, 2025). About three-quarters of these programs enroll only adult college students; 14% enroll only high school students receiving college-based transition services, and the remainder enroll both types of students. The majority of these college programs are hosted at public colleges and universities ($n = 298$), and almost half of these programs can offer eligible students with intellectual disability access to financial aid via their status as approved comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) programs.

A CTP program is a degree, certificate, or nondegree program to support students with intellectual dis-

ability to continue academic, career, and independent living instruction offered by an institution of higher education (IHE). CTP programs approved by Federal Student Aid in the U.S. Department of Education can offer eligible students access to Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, and federal work study funds (Federal Student Aid, n.d.; Grigal et al., 2012; Madaus et al., 2012). These postsecondary education programs focus on academics, campus living, and employment preparation, as well as supporting students to engage in campus clubs, organizations, events, and activities. In most cases, students' courses of study result in the attainment of one or more credentials and ultimately prepare them for employment.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; Public Law 110–315) passed by the U. S. Congress in 2008 had a significant impact on postsecondary education access for students with intellectual disability (Madaus et al., 2012). It authorized federal funding for a new type of model demonstration project, called

¹ Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston; ² Association on Higher Education and Disability

the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) program. TPSID grants were awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, and grantees were charged with setting up or expanding model postsecondary programs focused on academic enrichment, socialization, independent living skills, and integrated work experiences leading to employment. Between 2010 and 2025, across three 5-year funding cycles, 126 institutions of higher education in 34 states have engaged in TPSID grant activities, enrolling almost 5,000 students with intellectual disability who have taken nearly 60,000 college courses (Grigal et al., 2025).

Enrolled students access college courses for audit and credit; engage in career development and paid employment; and access campus organizations, events, and, when available, campus housing. As part of required evaluation activities, the TPSIDs grantees reported whether students accessed Disability Resource Office (DRO) and the services they received from this office. Findings suggest students are requesting services from DRO, with higher rates of DRO engagement in programs implemented in 2-year institutions of higher education (Papay et al., 2017).

The programs funded through the TPSID initiative represent approximately one-third of the postsecondary education programs nationwide enrolling transition-age youth and/or adult college students with intellectual disability (Think College, 2025). Whether through federal grant funding, state funding, or other means of support, these postsecondary programs are developed by college and university faculty and staff, often in collaboration with leadership from local school systems, community agencies, and, in some cases, families of students with intellectual disability. The development of a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability requires substantial planning and collaboration with the university or college, involving leadership and representation from multiple departments (Baker et al., 2018; May, 2023). Dedicated programs for students with intellectual disability often include an alternative application and admissions process, program of study, program goals, student supports, and articulated outcomes (Plotner & Marshall, 2014). Most dedicated programs result in a credential or certificate awarded to enrolled students with intellectual disability who complete their program of study, but not necessarily a degree (Weir, 2024).

Course Access and Enrollment Options

The best source for information about course access and enrollment options for students with in-

tellectual disability attending a dedicated program comes from data collected from programs funded by the TPSID model demonstration program. In this dataset, course enrollments fall into two categories: academically inclusive and specialized (Grigal et al., 2025). Academically inclusive courses are defined as typical college courses attended by students with intellectual disability alongside other college students without intellectual disability. Specialized courses are courses designed for and offered only to students with intellectual disability, often focusing on topics such as life skills, social skills, or career development. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 551 college students with intellectual disability enrolled in 4,583 college or university courses (both inclusive and specialized) in the 40 TPSID programs. Sixty-three percent of these enrollments were in academically inclusive courses. Forty-five percent of course enrollments were in courses offering credits that could only be used toward a TPSID credential, 32% were for standard college/university credit, 21% were audited courses, and 1% were in not-for-credit or non-credit courses (Grigal et al., 2025).

However, not all students with intellectual disability attending college take part in a dedicated program. Colleges and universities without a dedicated program may also enroll students with intellectual disability, often through open admissions or enrollment policies. In these instances, students with intellectual disability enroll using a typical admission process, have access to the courses allowed by their student status, and are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations and supports from university offices such as the DRO, student tutoring or writing center, or other university departments. There are no current public data available documenting which colleges and universities without a dedicated program have enrolled students with intellectual disability.

Current Knowledge of DROs' Engagement with IPSE

Although the increase in dedicated postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability has presumably led to increased interactions between these programs and DROs, little is known about this collaboration and the resulting supports received by students, especially beyond what is known about campuses with a TPSID program (Papay et al., 2017). Guidance on dedicated program development and implementation emphasizes the need for collaboration with other offices on campuses (Baker et al., 2018; May, 2023; Plotner & Marshall, 2014), including the DRO, but it is not clear the extent to which this is occurring. Further, it is not clear who (dedi-

cated program staff or DRO staff) is providing needed support to students. Additionally, research has not addressed how the presence of a dedicated program impacts the provision of services and supports for students with intellectual disability, and how DROs support students with intellectual disability.

In 2010, just as funding for model demonstration programs became available, leading to an increasing number of students with intellectual disability attending college, the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) published a white paper offering the following guidance to its membership: “Once accepted into a college program (including ones designed for students with intellectual disabilities) or enrolled in a course, students with disabilities have a right to access services” (Thompson et al., 2011). This guidance further suggested DRO professionals needed to define their relationship with existing or developing dedicated postsecondary education programs serving students with intellectual disability, focusing on articulating points of collaboration for the delivery of accommodations, campus access, and technology usage. This white paper attempted to clarify the rights and responsibilities of college students with intellectual disability, whether they were enrolled through a dedicated program or not.

Few studies have examined the engagement of college students with intellectual disability with DROs. One early study conducted by Kardos (2011) established a baseline regarding the prevalence and types of supports and services offered by the DROs through a survey of AHEAD members in leadership roles. Kardos (2011) examined practices supporting adults with intellectual disability to participate in regular college classes at two and four-year colleges and universities. She found that adult students with intellectual disability took college classes for credit and used the same supports available to any students with a disability, offered at no cost by DROs. These students also followed the same procedures as any other student with a disability. The most common supports provided by these offices to adults with intellectual disability were tutoring and counseling. This study was conducted prior to the broad implementation of the TPSID program and other emerging dedicated postsecondary education programs, and there was no mention of a dedicated postsecondary program as part of this analysis.

Olson (2021) surveyed students with intellectual disability enrolled in TPSID programs related to the most chosen and helpful accommodations, assistive technologies, and supports while in college. Through an electronic survey, students identified the accommodations they have utilized, whether they were

helpful, and provided open-ended comments on why the accommodation was helpful. Students with intellectual disability reported the following accommodations as most used and helpful: use of a computer on tests, extended time for assignments and tests, a quiet area for testing, tests read aloud, and an alternate format for materials. Most of the accommodations reported as helpful were associated with testing. Notes and outlines from the instructor were also identified as commonly used accommodations reported, though these were not top-ranked as helpful. The findings from this study related to commonly used and helpful accommodations reinforce findings from previous studies on accommodations for students with disabilities (Kurth & Mellard, 2006; Newman & Madaus, 2015; Zafft, 2006; Zafft et al., 2004). Olsen’s (2021) study did not indicate how students were supported to receive the accommodations, nor the collaboration between the TPSID program staff and the DRO related to the provision of accommodations.

With the continued development of dedicated postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability, the relationship with DROs continues to expand and evolve. A survey of faculty from five universities about the factors they believe were most important to the success of students with intellectual disability in their classes indicated that support from the office of disability services was the most important factor (Graves et al., 2020). Recent studies have examined different stakeholder groups, including faculty, dedicated program staff, and students with intellectual disability (Brewer & Movahedazarhouli, 2021), and reviewed the literature related to benefits and barriers of postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability (Lee & Taylor, 2022). However, little attention has been given to a critical aspect of students’ integration on campus—the interaction and collaboration between DROs and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability to support this student population.

In the spring of 2025, colleges and universities responded to a voluntary survey about programs for students with intellectual disability conducted annually to update a public directory of dedicated programs overseen by Think College at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Findings indicated students enrolled in these programs had access to disability/accessibility services at 264 of 356 programs (74%) (Think College, 2025). However, it is unclear the extent to which the DROs have knowledge about or collaborated with dedicated program staff, or the services utilized by college students with intellectual disability in these programs, since respondents to

this survey are typically dedicated program staff, not DRO professionals.

The TPSID data offer the most recent and specific information about the engagement of dedicated postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability and DRO offices. However, these programs do not represent the full spectrum of postsecondary programs as they are receiving federal funds to implement these programs and are obligated to align their practices with funding requirements, which emphasize inclusive course access. In the 2023-2024 academic year (the most recent data available), there were 22 TPSID grantees implementing 40 programs at 39 college and university campuses in 16 states, enrolling 557 students (Grigal et al., 2025). Ninety percent of these programs reported that students with intellectual disability accessed the DRO.

Seventy-nine percent of students attending TPSID programs in 2023-2024 received support or accommodations from the DRO on their campus (Grigal et al., 2025). Therefore, approximately 20% of the enrolled students with intellectual disability did not receive support from the DRO. Among the students who received support or accommodations from the DRO, only 6% received all of their support from this office. The remaining 94% also received support or accommodations from TPSID staff, faculty, peer mentors, and others.

The growth of dedicated postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability in the US has led to increased interactions between these programs and DROs on college and university campuses. What is not yet evident in the literature is what supports students with intellectual disability are receiving while on campus, and from whom—whether DRO, a dedicated program, or both. Further, it is not yet evident if or how the presence of a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability changes the provision of services from the DRO or the level of collaboration between DROs and dedicated programs. The present study seeks to address this gap in our knowledge base by answering the following research questions of DRO professionals who report that students with intellectual disability have enrolled and participated in credit or non-credit college classes at their institution:

1. To what extent do DRO professionals report that their institution has a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability?
2. To what extent do DRO professionals report that their office has the same documentation requirements for students with intellectual disability as for any students registering with

their office, and does this percentage differ based on whether there is a dedicated program or not?

3. To what extent do DRO professionals report that the DRO office is providing the primary support for students with intellectual disability in standard college classes when there is a dedicated program compared to when there is no dedicated program?
4. To what extent do DRO professionals report that additional supports are provided to students with intellectual disability to access DRO processes and services by the DRO or the dedicated postsecondary education program?
5. To what extent do DRO professionals report that campus-wide support services are available to students with intellectual disability enrolled in college classes, and does availability differ when there is a dedicated program or not?

Methods

An electronic survey was developed and administered to disability resource professionals across the country. The participants, survey instrument, and procedures are described below.

Participants

Participants in the survey were the directors or lead administrators of campus-based disability resource offices. The membership roster of AHEAD was utilized for a convenience sampling of this population. AHEAD is a professional organization of postsecondary disability resource and affiliated professionals with over 4,100 members at the time of survey administration (J. Johnson, personal communication, March 9, 2022). The AHEAD roster was reviewed to identify a single point of contact for each institution of higher education represented within the membership. The lead administrator of the disability resource office, typically identified with the professional title of director or coordinator, was invited to participate in the survey ($N = 1,118$). Although we attempted to contact one representative per institution, there may have been more than one response per institution due to forwarding or sharing of the survey invitation.

Of the 1,118 disability resource professionals invited to participate in the study, 299 responded to the survey, reflecting a 27% response rate. An initial screening question on the survey asked respondents: “To your knowledge, have students with intellectual disability ever enrolled and participated in credit or non-credit college classes at your institution?” Re-

sponses progressed to the data cleaning stage if the answer to this screening question was “Yes.”

Survey Development

An electronic survey (*Disability Resource Offices and Campus Supports for College Students with Intellectual Disability*) was developed by our research team reflecting expertise in postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability, as well as disability resource office services and programs. The team began instrument development by reviewing the 44-item survey instrument used by Kardo (2012), identifying questions aligned with our research questions that could be retained and updating language to reflect current practices and terminology. The draft instrument was developed, including a purpose statement, definitions of intellectual disability, standard college classes, and a screening question to ensure respondents came from institutions of higher education enrolling students with intellectual disability. The instrument consisted of 22 items, including a demographics section, 18 multiple-choice questions, two multiple-choice grids, and one numerical entry. Five multiple-choice items offered open-ended text fields for respondents to offer additional explanatory information. Four questions sought text responses. The array of question types allowed respondents to choose options that accurately characterized their supports and services. The text box responses provided respondents an opportunity to offer additional insight or clarification.

The draft instrument was piloted with five DRO directors with expertise in both DRO administration and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability as well as by staff from the Think College National Coordinating Center. Pilot participants from two- and four-year colleges representing campuses with and without a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability were emailed the survey and a form seeking feedback on the survey navigation and directions, clarity of wording, and asking for suggestions for improvement. Based on pilot feedback, one question was added and additional response options were created for another question.

The final survey instrument comprised 23 questions using a combination of multiple-choice single-answer, multiple-choice with select all that apply options, multiple-choice grids, and open-ended question formats. Institutional demographics questions included name, type of institution (2yr/4yr/Public/Private), approximate student enrollment, application process (open or competitive), and minority-serving institution (MSI) status. The present study provides the results of the following aspects: presence of a

dedicated program for students with intellectual disability, documentation requirements for students with intellectual disability, provision of support for students with intellectual disability in standard college classes, supports provided to students with intellectual disability to access DRO processes and services, and availability of campus-wide support services to students with intellectual disability. The survey was deployed in Alchemer, an online survey platform that had previously been vetted by AHEAD for accessibility and compatibility for use with a variety of assistive technologies. The survey was designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete. Institutional Research Board (IRB) exempt status was granted at the institution for members of the research team.

Data Collection

An e-mail invitation with a description of the study and a link to the survey was sent to professionals identified from the AHEAD roster. Respondents were given the option of entering a lottery to win one of three \$100 gift cards upon completion of the survey. Two follow-up e-mail prompts were sent after the initial invitation to encourage survey completion. Data collection commenced at the end of May and concluded in mid-June 2022. Informed consent was given by respondents on the first page of the online survey.

Data Cleaning and Analysis

A screening question asked whether students with intellectual disability had ever enrolled in credit or non-credit classes at the institution; 200 responded yes and continued with the survey. These responses were cleaned to check for consistency with the screening question and reviewed to look for blank or duplicate responses. Responses were removed if they were entirely blank ($n = 24$) or if they answered fewer than 50% of the questions included in the analysis ($n = 14$). One response was removed due to a response to an open-ended question (“We do not have students with intellectual disabilities”) that was inconsistent with the initial screening question. After data cleaning, 161 responses were included in the final analysis. Data were analyzed using the Alchemer online platform and Microsoft Excel. Given the exploratory nature of the study, descriptive statistics were reported for each of the survey items. Open-ended comments were organized and summarized by survey question and are highlighted in the discussion section.

Results

Respondents were asked to provide basic characteristics of their institution of higher education. More than two-thirds (68.3%) of respondents were from public institutions of higher education, reflecting nearly equal numbers of two-year ($n = 56$) and four-year ($n = 54$) institutions. One quarter (24.8%) of respondents reported working at a four-year private institution. More than half of respondents reported their institution had a total enrollment of between 1,000 and 10,000 students. An open-enrollment admissions process for students was reported by 62.1% of respondents ($n = 100$). Over one quarter of respondents ($n = 47$, 29.2%) reported working at an MSI, with over half of respondents at MSIs describing their campus as a Hispanic Serving Institution ($n = 27$, 57.4% of respondents at MSIs). The results are presented in the section that follows aligned to each of the five research questions: (1) presence of a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability, (2) documentation requirements for students with intellectual disability, (3) provision of support for students with intellectual disability in standard college classes, (4) supports provided to students with intellectual disability to access DRO processes and services, and (5) availability of campus-wide support services to students with intellectual disability.

RQ1 Presence of a Dedicated Program for Students with Intellectual Disability

When asked about the presence of a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability, more than one-third of respondents (38.5%; $n = 62$) indicated their campus had such a program. Slightly less than two-thirds (59.6%; $n = 96$) reported there was not a dedicated program, and the remaining 1.9% ($n = 3$) did not know if there was a dedicated program at their institution. Note that the three respondents who did not know if there was a dedicated program were excluded from comparisons between respondents with a dedicated program and those without, but were retained in analyses of the full sample.

RQ2 Documentation Requirements for Students with Intellectual Disability

Almost three-quarters of respondents ($n = 118$, 73.2%) reported that documentation requirements for students with intellectual disability who sought to register with the DRO were the same as they are for any other student with a disability; however, a substantial percentage (22.4%; $n = 36$) did not respond to this question. A small percentage (4.3%; $n = 7$) of respondents indicated “other” forms of documentation are used for students with intellectual disability.

More than half of respondents at institutions with a dedicated program ($n = 35$, 56.5%) indicated the same documentation requirements were in place for students with intellectual disability, with six respondents (9.7%) providing a response of “Other” and 21 respondents (33.9%) skipping this question. For “Other” responses, several respondents noted the DRO accepts whatever documentation is provided for admission to the dedicated program. Other participants noted more flexibility related to the recency of documentation required. Almost all respondents at institutions without a dedicated program ($n = 82$, 85.4%) indicated the same documentation requirements are in place for students with intellectual disability, with one respondent (1.0%) providing a response of “Other” and 13 respondents (13.5%) skipping this question. The “Other” response provided stated that self-report is the primary form of documentation used.

RQ3 Provision of Support for Students with Intellectual Disability in College Classes

Of respondents who indicated there was a dedicated program, 58.0% ($n = 36$) reported that support for students with intellectual disability in standard college classes was provided by both the dedicated program and the DRO, and 25.8% of respondents ($n = 16$) reported that support for college classes was provided only by the dedicated program. A further 12.9% of respondents ($n = 8$) indicated the DRO was the only office providing support in college classes and two respondents reported that another entity provided support. When there was no dedicated program, 90.6% of respondents ($n = 87$) noted only the DRO provided support in standard college classes, 7.3% ($n = 7$) indicated another entity provided support, and 2.1% ($n = 2$) did not answer the question. In both cases, the other entities reported to be providing academic support included TRIO programs (federally funded initiatives designed to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of higher education) and student support services such as writing, tutoring, and mentoring programs in conjunction with the DRO.

RQ4 Support to Access DRO Processes and Services

The survey explored whether additional support was provided to students with intellectual disability for them to access DRO processes and services. Questions asked whether DROs or dedicated programs provide additional support beyond what is available to all students registered with the DRO for processes (e.g., processes for documentation, self-disclosure, participation in the interactive process, communication with faculty, and attending appointments with

DRO staff) or supports for services (e.g., support for scheduling tests, receiving alternate format materials and receiving class notes).

Support for Accessing DRO Processes

The survey asked about the availability of additional supports for students with intellectual disability from a list of four typical DRO processes with the following response options: “Yes, additional support is provided by DRO staff,” “No additional support is provided,” and then for respondents at institutions with a dedicated program, “Yes, additional support is provided by staff of the dedicated college program for students with intellectual disability” and “Yes, additional support is provided by both the DRO staff and the dedicated program staff.” Results from respondents at institutions with a dedicated program compared to respondents at institutions with no program are displayed in Table 1.

At institutions with a dedicated program, respondents reported approximately equal availability of additional supports either from the DRO staff or both the DRO staff and the dedicated program for self-disclosing to the DRO, requesting accommodations from faculty, and making and attending appointments with DRO staff (between 22 and 29% of respondents reporting availability of each type of support). A slightly higher percentage of respondents noted additional support was provided by both DRO staff and the dedicated program (27.4%) than only the program for students to participate in the interactive DRO process (17.7%). Across the four listed processes, only 8.1—11.3% of respondents indicated that no additional support was provided.

At institutions with no dedicated program, between 38.5 and 51.0% of respondents reported that no additional support was available to students with intellectual disability for participating in DRO processes. Respondents most frequently indicated that additional supports were available from DRO staff for students with intellectual disability to participate in the interactive DRO process (44.8%), make and attend appointments with DRO staff (40.6%), and request accommodations from faculty (40.0%).

Support for Accessing DRO Services

The survey asked about the availability of additional support for students with intellectual disability for a list of three typical DRO services (scheduling and managing testing accommodations, requesting and receiving alternate format materials, and receiving class notes) with the same response options as above. Results are displayed in Table 2. At institutions with a dedicated program, similar percentages

of respondents reported availability of additional supports either from the DRO staff or both the DRO staff and the program for all three of the listed services (between 11 and 29% of respondents reporting availability of each type of support). No additional support was reported to be provided by 9.7% of respondents for both scheduling and managing testing accommodations and requesting and receiving alternate format materials. A slightly higher percentage of respondents (17.7%) reported that no additional support was provided to students with intellectual disability for receiving class notes.

At institutions with no dedicated program, 40.0—41.7% of respondents reported that additional support was provided to students with intellectual disability for the three DRO services. Similarly, 40.6—41.7% of respondents reported that no additional support was provided to students with intellectual disability for each of the three services.

RQ5 Availability of Campus Services for Students with Intellectual Disability

Respondents were asked about the availability of services across campus for students with intellectual disability. These services include academic coaching, career services, counseling, faculty mentoring, peer mentoring, tutoring, and the writing center. Across all respondents, counseling (87.0%, $n = 140$), tutoring (86.3%; $n = 139$), career services (84.5%; $n = 136$), writing center (79.5%; $n = 128$) and academic coaching (64.6%; $n = 104$) were reported to be widely available. Peer mentoring (41.6%; $n = 67$) and faculty mentoring (28.6%; $n = 46$) were less frequently reported to be available, and one respondent indicated none of the listed services were available (see Table 3). Twenty-five respondents listed other available supports, including a range of academic and non-academic programming such as TRIO support services, math center, library, health and wellness services, computer lab tutors, student life, and residential programming.

Discussion

Increased development of dedicated programs for and enrollment of students with intellectual disability in postsecondary education has led to greater interactions of these students with DROs in colleges and universities in the U.S. (Papay et al., 2017). There is a documented need for DRO involvement with dedicated postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability (May, 2023; Plotner & Marshall, 2014). Data from federally funded TPSID programs indicate most students have access to DROs, with varying degrees of shared responsibility.

Table 1*Supports Provided to Students with Intellectual Disability for DRO Processes*

Survey item	ID Program ^a (n = 62)		No program ^b (n = 96)	
	#	%	#	%
Students self-disclose to the DRO				
No additional support	5	8.1	49	51.0
Additional support provided by DRO staff	2	3.2	31	32.2
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	18	29.0	-	-
Additional support provided by both	16	25.8	-	-
Students participate in the interactive process with DRO staff				
No additional support	7	11.3	37	38.5
Additional support provided by DRO staff	6	9.7	43	44.8
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	11	17.7	-	-
Additional support provided by both	17	27.4	-	-
Students request accommodations from faculty				
No additional support	6	9.7	42	43.8
Additional support provided by DRO staff	5	8.1	38	40.0
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	15	24.2	-	-
Additional support provided by both	15	24.2	-	-
Students make and attend appointments with DRO staff				
No additional support	6	9.7	40	41.7
Additional support provided by DRO staff	6	9.7	39	40.6
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	15	24.2	-	-
Additional support provided by both	14	22.6	-	-

Note. ^aRespondents at a campus with a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability.

^bRespondents at a campus with no dedicated program.

Table 2*Supports Provided to Students with Intellectual Disability for DRO Services*

Survey item	ID Program ^a (n = 62)		No program ^b (n = 96)	
	#	%	#	%
Students schedule and manage testing accommodations				
No additional support	6	9.7	40	41.7
Additional support provided by DRO staff	6	9.7	38	40.0
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	12	19.4	-	-
Additional support provided by both	16	25.8	-	-
Students request and receive alternate format materials				
No additional support	6	9.7	39	40.6
Additional support provided by DRO staff	8	12.9	40	41.7
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	9	14.5	-	-
Additional support provided by both	18	29.0	-	-
Students receive class notes				
No additional support	11	17.7	40	41.7
Additional support provided by DRO staff	7	11.3	38	40.0
Additional support provided by staff of dedicated program	10	16.1	-	-
Additional support provided by both	13	21.0	-	-

Note. ^aRespondents at a campus with a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability.

^bRespondents at a campus with no dedicated program.

Table 3*Availability of Campus Supports for Students with Intellectual Disability*

Available Support Service	All responses (n = 161)		ID Program (n = 62)		No program (n = 96)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Academic coaching	104	64.6	43	69.4	59	61.5
Career services	136	84.5	52	83.4	82	85.4
Counseling	140	87.0	53	85.5	86	89.6
Faculty mentoring	46	28.6	19	30.6	27	28.1
Peer mentoring	67	41.6	35	56.5	32	33.3
Tutoring	139	86.3	49	79.0	88	91.7
Writing center	128	79.5	46	74.2	81	84.4
None of the above	1	<1.0	0	0	1	1.0
Other	25	15.5	11	17.7	14	14.6

ity between programs and DROs (Grigal et al., 2025). However, a comprehensive study identifying the provision of supports and supports provided to students with intellectual disability on campuses or the shared support between DROs and dedicated programs, beyond federally funded programs, was lacking. The present study also sought to discern if the use of DRO processes and services and campus-wide support accessed by college students with intellectual disability differed on campuses with and without a dedicated program for these students.

Awareness of the Presence of Dedicated Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

Nearly three-fifths of respondents reported not having a dedicated program for these students on their campus, while two-fifths confirmed the existence of such a program. A very small percentage of respondents indicated they did not know whether students with intellectual disability enrolled at their institution. This finding is encouraging as it suggests at least a general awareness among DRO staff respondents regarding the presence of dedicated programs serving students with intellectual disability, which has not always been the case (Graves et al., 2020). It is also notable as this is the first time DRO professionals have been asked to report their awareness of a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability on their campus. Previous estimates were drawn from a public directory reflecting responses reported by dedicated program staff, not DRO professionals. DROs should be connected to dedicated programs for students with intellectual disability, both when developing and on an ongoing basis to ensure coordination of supports for students with intellectual disability (May, 2023; Plotner & Marshall, 2014).

Issues with Identifying Student Enrollment

One issue identified from our findings was the difficulty some DRO staff faced when trying to confirm whether students with intellectual disability are enrolled on their campus. For example, one response comment indicated, “The DRC [DRO] does not have intellectual disability as an option on our intake [form],” but when considering the students supported through the DRO, this same respondent indicated that there was a high likelihood that “some of these would be categorized as having an intellectual disability.” Other comments echoed this issue: “We just created a new category this term to track ID [intellectual disability]” and “Lack of an electronic case management system to better track, update, and report specific disabilities is problematic.”

These responses suggest that not all IHEs have a reliable method to determine the enrollment of students with intellectual disability through the DRO due to limitations in the systems used to categorize students, which is consistent with earlier findings related to categorization (Harrison & Holmes, 2014; Leake, 2015). The need for this baseline enrollment data by disability category is critical for moving into deeper examination of the collaboration and provision of support for students with intellectual disability in higher education.

Eligibility Documentation Requirements

Documentation requirements to determine eligibility for disability services are largely consistent for students with intellectual disability compared to other students with disabilities, as reported by almost all (85%) respondents from colleges/universities without a dedicated program and more than half (56.4%) of institutions with a dedicated program (a percentage that is much higher when missing responses are removed from the denominator). It can be reasonably concluded that the documentation needed for students with intellectual disability does not significantly differ from that required for any other disability when seeking reasonable accommodations through the DRO, consistent with Kardos’ (2011) earlier findings. It is encouraging that the documentation needed for students with intellectual disability does not differ from that required of any student with a disability.

There did, however, seem to be greater flexibility in documentation requirements when there was a dedicated program, as some respondents reported they deferred to the documentation provided to the program and did not require additional documentation from students. The comments provided by respondents indicated the ways in which the requirements might be different if there were a dedicated program at their college or university. One DRO respondent explained, “Admission into the program for students with intellectual disabilities is sufficient for many accommodations.” Another comment provided a similar reflection: “Either documentation that meets our DRO requirements or, if they are enrolling in the specific program for students with ID, we just need confirmation of their participation.” And finally, “We typically accept whatever is provided to the dedicated program for students with IDD.” These sentiments align with recent guidance from AHEAD that states if a student with intellectual disability has been admitted to a program, they have met the legal standard for participation, and are thus eligible for reasonable accommodations (Levins et al., 2026).

Support Provision Related to Coursework

Our findings are consistent with earlier studies revealing that accommodations provided to students with intellectual disability were not substantially different than those provided to students with disabilities in general (Harrison & Holmes, 2014; Kardos, 2011). The majority of DRO professionals at IHEs with a dedicated program for students with intellectual disability on their campus indicated shared responsibility for supporting students with intellectual disability in standard college classes. About a quarter of respondents indicated that dedicated program staff provided the sole source of support, and a smaller percentage indicated only the DRO provided support in standard college classes. One respondent characterized the division of labor as such: “DRO establishes academic accommodations for their college classes and provides supplementary support. [The] program provides primary support.” Another commented, “The Disability Supports office is available if/when questions are asked about how to implement certain accommodations—but most of it is completely a different program that handles [it] all.” In addition, respondents without a dedicated program indicated in some cases, students also received support from TRIO programs.

Service Provision Clarity and Collaboration

There is a need for clarity and balance in the provision of services from a dedicated program and the DRO. For example, one respondent noted, “We have only had two [students with intellectual disability] apply for services with SAS [DRO office] but did not use it as the program provided the needed accommodations.” Caution should be used when program staff duplicate DRO services instead of supporting students to seek these from a DRO. Program staff may possess unique expertise and deep understanding of the needs of students with intellectual disability, but directly offering services typically provided through DRO may hinder student access to available campus resources. This arrangement may also prevent DRO staff from learning how to more effectively serve students with intellectual disability. The AHEAD Program Domains (2021) suggest that DRO professionals should advise and educate the campus community about disability and inclusive practices and provide services, strategies, and accommodations to mitigate the barriers faced by students with disabilities. Greater exposure to and experience with college students with intellectual disability enhances DRO professionals’ capacity to achieve both of these goals.

Additionally, a lack of engagement with DROs may eliminate students’ opportunities for self-advoca-

cy. DROs offer students with disabilities the opportunity to advocate for needed accommodations through the self-knowledge and self-identification process (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Bruce & Aylward, 2021; Yeager et al., 2022). While in college, these skills have applications within the academic environment, but these skills are also critical for accessing needed accommodations in future workplaces. Regardless of whether they are enrolled in a dedicated program or not, interactions with the DRO offer students with intellectual disability the opportunity to articulate their specific needs and advocate for their rights under Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Olson, 2021).

Conversely, when dedicated programs are present, DRO staff may also defer to program staff, allowing program staff to provide accommodations or serve in capacities typically within the DRO purview. This deferment can create confusion regarding roles and responsibilities. Baker et al. (2018) suggest, “partnering with this group [i.e., DRO] will allow you to ensure that ODS [DRO] provides the same accommodations to PSE program students as they do for typically enrolled students with a disability” (p. 24), which is an important goal for dedicated programs. Often, the provision of accommodations is necessary but not sufficient to meet the academic support needs of students with intellectual disability (Grigal et al., 2014). Respectful conversations about what can and should be provided by the DRO and what is better addressed by dedicated program staff, as well as shared responsibilities, can ensure appropriate accommodations will be paired with needed individualized supports.

Clearing Up Confusion About Accommodations Eligibility

In some instances, students not possessing a standard high school diploma may have led to concerns about whether they were “otherwise qualified” for college courses and resulted in confusion as to the appropriate accommodations or eligibility for academic accommodations in college-level courses (Sassu, 2018). In addition, many students with intellectual disability may have enrollment variations, such as not matriculating toward a standard degree but instead seeking their credentials from the dedicated program as a non-degree-seeking student. Such variations can affect how DROs perceive students’ needs and access to accommodations. For example, a respondent in the present study stated, “All students are enrolled in a specialized learning certificate program, outside of the DS office [DRO], and are not traditionally admitted.”

The higher likelihood of students with intellectual disability auditing courses, rather than taking

courses for credit, can further complicate the DRO's role in determining and arranging academic accommodations. This complication is highlighted by one respondent's comment: "Our college has a program specifically developed for students with intellectual disability. The only time they register with the Disability Office is if they are taking the course as a matriculated student." While this explanation may be an accurate description of the practices employed at that institution, it does not mean students with intellectual disability have to be enrolled for credit to seek DRO services. Students with intellectual disability enrolled as auditing students are eligible for DRO services (AHEAD, 2012).

Supports to Access DRO Processes and Services

DRO professionals were asked about the availability of additional support for students with intellectual disability from a list of four typical DRO processes and three typical DRO services. Responses were broken down by those with a dedicated program and those without. About a quarter of respondents from IHEs with a dedicated program indicated that additional support for students with intellectual disability was provided by both DRO staff and dedicated program staff for both processes and services. This evidence of collaboration between the dedicated programs and DRO staff is encouraging, as DRO personnel typically have support networks in place on campuses that can be an asset to dedicated programs, especially during program development (May, 2023; Plotner & Marshall, 2014). This collaboration was also evident in some respondents' comments, such as "DRO and program staff collaborate to offer orientations and supports for other on-campus events for students with IDD" and, "The Director of the DRO office also oversees the coordinator of the dedicated program, so the DRO office and dedicated program are very connected."

More respondents at IHEs with a dedicated program than respondents at IHEs with no dedicated program indicated additional supports were available, from either the DRO staff or both the DRO staff and program staff, to assist students with intellectual disability to engage in DRO processes. This finding suggests that the presence of a dedicated program on a campus leads to more support available for students with intellectual disability, including more support from the DRO. At IHEs without a dedicated program, respondents frequently reported that no additional support was provided in the areas of DRO processes. However, it was encouraging that more than two-fifths of respondents indicated DRO staff provided additional support for students with intellectual dis-

ability related to the DRO interactive processes, even when there was no dedicated program.

Respondents at IHEs without a dedicated program indicated a range of services were provided to students with intellectual disability, with several mentioning weekly check-ins and others outlining support to develop self-advocacy skills and case management support as well. This suggests DROs are increasingly serving students with intellectual disability in some capacity, providing all typical services as appropriate. There was also an indication that additional services may be offered by some DROs. For example, several respondents indicated they had weekly meetings/check-ins with students, with respondent comments providing more detail: "We intentionally create weekly meetings. Even though this is beyond our scope, we do everything we can to ensure safety and engagement."

Campus-Wide Support Availability

Campus-wide supports were those offered by entities outside of the DRO or a dedicated program and included academic coaching, career services, counseling, faculty mentoring, peer mentoring, tutoring, and use of the writing center. Availability of these supports was reported by a majority of respondents regardless of the presence of a dedicated program, except for faculty and peer mentoring. When differentiating between those with and without a program, reports of availability remained similar (with less than a 5-percentage point difference) with two specific exceptions: peer mentoring availability and access to the writing center or tutoring. For those with a dedicated program, peer mentoring had greater availability as a campus support. This is likely due to the prevalence of peer mentors being used as a support in dedicated programs. Peer mentors are typically college or university students who foster inclusion through peer-to-peer engagement in a variety of campus contexts. They may offer academic, social, or independent living support to help students with intellectual disability succeed in postsecondary education.

Data from the TPSID programs reflects significant use of peer mentors, with programs having up to 150 mentors on a campus, and these students offering an average of 230 hours of support annually for each student with an intellectual disability enrolled in the TPSID programs (Grigal et al., 2025). However, a third of respondents with no dedicated program also reported that peer mentors were available, indicating this type of support may be emerging outside of a dedicated program.

The second difference in campus support availability noted between programs with and without a

dedicated program was access to the writing center and tutoring. DRO respondents without dedicated programs indicated greater access to these types of supports, though the difference was only about 10 percentage points higher than those with a dedicated program. These supports are available to all students, with or without disability, and the use of these types of campus supports fosters greater knowledge of the presence of students with intellectual disability on campus and creates opportunities for the staff and students working in these offices to understand the needs of college students with intellectual disability. Use of these offices on campuses with dedicated programs was somewhat lower but still substantial. This finding aligns with those from the TPSID model demonstration programs; 85% of those dedicated programs offered enrolled students with intellectual disability access to tutoring services, indicating the use of this campus support was prevalent. What was not clear from our findings was whether access to these campus supports was facilitated by the DRO on campuses with dedicated programs or if program staff directed students to these support systems without interacting with the DRO.

Implications for Practitioners

With the growth of dedicated postsecondary education programs for people with intellectual disability throughout the country, there is a corresponding need for DRO professionals to understand their role both with the dedicated program staff and with the individual students with intellectual disability. DRO professionals can expand their awareness of serving students with intellectual disability by engaging with dedicated postsecondary programs directly to learn more about the supports in place and areas for collaboration, and through professional development opportunities available through organizations such as AHEAD or the Postsecondary Disability Training Institute. AHEAD's updated white paper concurs, suggesting disability resource professionals learn more about inclusive postsecondary education and build relationships with others interested in these practices (Levins et al., 2025). Similarly, dedicated program staff must also continue to advance their knowledge and understanding of the supports and services offered by DRO, as well as what is available campus-wide from other offices, to best support students with intellectual disability to utilize these services more readily.

Our findings reflect that at colleges and universities without a dedicated program, students with intellectual disability were more likely to receive support from the DRO and other campus offices, such as the writing center, tutoring center, or from TRIO services. Colleges and universities with dedicated pro-

grams should review their existing use of the DRO and other campus services, and whenever possible, expand student use of established supports. This ensures dedicated program staff are not supplanting existing services on campus. Collaborating with these other support structures also provides the opportunity for staff in these offices to learn more about the goals of the dedicated programs and effective support for enrolled college students with intellectual disability. Additionally, dedicated program professionals can capitalize on the DRO staff's expertise in accommodations, strategies for self-disclosure, and knowledge of campus resources. Further, dedicated program staff can share their expertise in serving students with intellectual disability with other campus departments to build capacity for meeting these students' needs.

Implications for Research

There is considerable room for additional research exploring the role and relationship between dedicated programs for students with intellectual disability and DROs. It can be very difficult to assess the extent to which students with intellectual disability are enrolled on college campuses and receiving services from the DRO. There is no current federal data source reflecting the level of enrollment of college students with intellectual disability. The DRO staff can only know about college students who have sought accommodations from their office. Therefore, additional research with colleges and universities outside of the DRO purview could potentially solicit additional information about the level of enrollment of people with intellectual disability in colleges and universities without dedicated programs.

Part of the challenge with this issue is that students are not required to self-identify either as having a disability when applying to college or at the disability resource office. Ensuring student privacy regarding their personal disability information is critical. However, without any data on the enrollment of individuals with intellectual disability, it becomes difficult for the Department of Education or other potential funders of research to understand the level of need for additional services, supports, and research on college students with intellectual disability. Smaller samples for future research on engagement with DROs could focus on approved comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) programs approved by Federal Student Aid, as these programs are specifically designed to enroll students with intellectual disability. Students' perspectives are an additional line of needed research. Qualitative research studies, as well as participatory action research, could help shed light on students' lived experiences, the issues that matter to

them, and discern how DRO and other campus supports are sufficient or effective in helping them learn.

Limitations

This study had several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the study relied on self-reported data and therefore may not be fully reflective of how students with intellectual disability are supported to access higher education at respondents' institutions and the presence of a dedicated program. Additionally, there are many more potential respondents from institutions with dedicated programs for students with intellectual disability than those included in the sample (and potentially more respondents from institutions without a dedicated program), suggesting these responses may not be representative of the full array of program offerings at institutions across the nation. Third, it is possible some respondents may not have understood the terms used in the survey. For example, although we made every effort to provide definitions, there may have been a misunderstanding about the definition of intellectual disability and what constituted a dedicated program, and therefore, some questions may have been answered incorrectly. Fourth, the analysis of data was complicated somewhat by high numbers of "don't know" or skipped responses. Almost a quarter of respondents indicated that they did not know about documentation requirements for students with intellectual disability, and three respondents did not know if there was a dedicated program on their campus. This finding suggests that some DRO professionals may not know about processes in place for supporting students with intellectual disability. Thus, there is the potential for some survey responses to reflect inaccuracy. Finally, we did not collect demographic information regarding the years of experience the responding DRO professionals had in their positions, so we are unable to discern if this information may have impacted results.

Conclusion

Continued expansion of dedicated postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disability through federal and state investments requires colleges and universities to continue to explore, differentiate, and clarify how these dedicated programs and DROs need to work together. Our findings demonstrate that the presence of a dedicated program provides college students with intellectual disability with amplified support both from the dedicated program staff and from the DRO office. However, our findings also demonstrate that there is greater capacity for support outside of the DRO that some dedicated

programs may not be utilizing to their full extent. It is evident that DRO professionals working in colleges and universities without a dedicated program seek to meet the needs of students with intellectual disability. Without the structured supports and services offered by the dedicated program staff, though, some supports are limited. Continued collaboration, communication, and reflection about the practices that best serve college students with intellectual disability are necessary.

References

- AHEAD. (2012, October). Supporting accommodation requests: Guidance on documentation practices. Association on Higher Education and Disability. <https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/accommodations/documentation>
- AHEAD (2021). The AHEAD program domains, standards, and performance indicators. <https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/information-services-portal/data-collection-and-management/performance-indicators>
- Baker, J. N., Lowrey, K. A., & Wennerlind, K. R. (2018). Building an inclusive post-secondary education program for young adults with intellectual developmental disability. *Research, Advocacy, and Practice for Complex and Chronic Conditions*, 37(2), 13–33.
- Barnard-Brak, L., Sulak, T., Tate, A., & Lechtenberger, D. (2010). Measuring college students' attitudes toward requesting accommodations: A national multi-institutional study. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 35(3), 141–14.
- Brewer, R., & Movahedazarhouli, S. (2021). Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in inclusive higher education: Perceptions of stakeholders in a first-year experience. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(9), 993–1009.
- Bruce, C., & Aylward, M. L. (2021). Disability and self-advocacy experiences in university learning contexts. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 23(1), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.741>
- Federal Student Aid. (n.d.). *What is a CTP program?* <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities#ctp-programs>
- Graves, J. A., Mackay, M. M., & Hunter, W. C. (2020). Factors predicting the successful placement of inclusive post-secondary education students in college courses. *Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) Online*, 7(1), 31–43. https://exceptionalchildren.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/doj_7_2020.pdf#page=31

- Grigal, M., Dukes, L. L., & Walker, Z. (2021). Advancing access to higher education for students with intellectual disability in the United States. *Disabilities*, 1(4), 438–449.
- Grigal, M., Hart, D., & Weir, C. (2014). Postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. In M. Agran, F. Brown, C. Hughes, C. Quirk & D. Ryndak (Eds.), *Equity and full participation for individuals with severe disabilities* (pp. 275–298). Brookes Publishing.
- Grigal, M., Hart, D., & Weir, C. (2012). A survey of postsecondary education programs for students with Intellectual Disabilities in the United States. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 9(4), 223–233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12012>
- Grigal, M., Papay, C., Bukaty, C., Choiseul-Praslin, B., Weir, C., & Lazo, R. (2025). *Annual report of the Cohort 3 TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (Year 4, 2023–2024)*. University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.
- Harrison, A. G., & Holmes, A. (2014). Mild intellectual disability at the postsecondary level: Results of a survey of disability service offices. *Exceptionality Education International*, 23(1), 22–39.
- Kardos, M. R. (2011). *Postsecondary education options for individuals with intellectual disability* (3485240). [Doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/postsecondary-education-options-individuals-with/docview/906486719/se-2>
- Kurth, N., & Mellard, D. (2006). Student perceptions of the accommodation process in postsecondary education. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 19(1), 71–84.
- Leake, D. (2015). Problematic data on how many students in postsecondary education have a disability. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 28(1), 73–87.
- Lee, C. E., & Taylor, J. L. (2022). A review of the benefits and barriers to postsecondary education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education*, 55(4), 234–245.
- Levins, C., Mitchell, M. Nolting, P., Stubbs, A., Weir, C., & Berberi, T. (2026). Advancing inclusive postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 39(1), 9–17.
- Madaus, J. W., Kowitt, J. S., & Lalor, A. R. (2012). The higher education opportunity act: Impact on students with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*, 26(1), 33.
- May, C. (2023). A planning guide for new inclusive programs and initiatives serving college students with intellectual disability. *Think College*. University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. <https://thinkcollege.net/resource/program-development/a-planning-guide-for-new-inclusive-programs-and-initiatives-serving>
- Newman, L., & Madaus, J. (2015). Reported accommodations and supports provided to secondary and postsecondary students with disabilities: National perspective. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38(3), 173–181. doi:10.1177/2165143413518235.
- Olson, L. (2021). *A descriptive study of the accommodations, assistive technologies, and supports chosen by students with an intellectual disability attending a post-secondary institution* [Doctoral dissertation, Bethel University]. Spark Repository. <https://spark.bethel.edu/etd/753>
- Papay, C., Smith, F. A., & Grigal, M. (2017). Access to the disability supports office by students with intellectual disability in TPSID programs. *Think College Fast Facts*, 13. University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. <https://thinkcollege.net/resource/disability-services/access-to-the-disability-supports-office-by-students-with-intellectual>
- Plotner, A. J., & Marshall, K. J. (2014). Navigating university policies to support postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 25(1), 48–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207313514609>
- Sassu, K. (2018). Access versus success: Services for students with disabilities in postsecondary education. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*, 19–24.
- Thompson, T., Weir, C., & Ashmore, J. (2011, July). *Students with intellectual disability and campus disability service*. Association on Higher Education and Disability. <https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/white-papers-guiding-documents/intellectual-disabilities-white-paper>
- Think College. (2025). *College search*. <https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>
- Weir, C. (2024). Articulating the value of a credential from a postsecondary education program for students with Intellectual Disability. *Think College Insight Brief*, 61. University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. <https://thinkcollege.net/resource/employment-supports-student-credentials/articulating-the-value-of-a-credential-from-a>

- Yeager, K. H., Gandara, G. A., & Martinez, C. (2022). "It's Bigger than Me:" Influence of social support on the development of self-advocacy for college students with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 35(2), 145–159.
- Zafft, C. (2006). A case study of accommodations for transition age students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 18(2), 167–180.
- Zafft, C., Hart, D., & Zimbrich, K. (2004). College career connection: A study of youth with intellectual disabilities and the impact of postsecondary education. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 39(1), 45–53.

About the Authors

Meg Grigal received her B.A. in psychology from Rutgers University, her M.Ed. in transition and supported employment from UNC Charlotte, and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. Her experience includes working as a special education teacher, and as a researcher, evaluator, and technical assistance leader in inclusive higher education. She is currently the director of Think College, the principal investigator of the Think College National Coordinating Center and the Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network, a senior research fellow, and the Inclusive Postsecondary Education Team Lead at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests include transition to college, inclusive higher education and employment for people with intellectual disability. She can be reached by email at: meg.grigal@umb.edu.

Clare Papay received her M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees in special education from Lehigh University. She is currently Senior Associate for Inclusive Postsecondary Education at Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston, where she conducts research and provides technical assistance on higher education for students with intellectual disability. Clare is the co-Principal Investigator for the National Coordinating Center for the TPSID model demonstration program and for the Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network: A Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center, both funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. She is also co-Principal Investigator for the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) funded project "From College to Career (FCTC): Strengthening Employment Outcomes after Postsecondary Education for People with Intellectual and Developmental

Disabilities (IDD)." She serves as co-editor for the Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (JIPE) and as a special advisor to the board of the Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Association. Clare can be reached at clare.papay@umb.edu.

L. Danielle Roberts-Dahm received her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with a focus on special education from the University of South Florida. Her experience includes serving in a range of roles from direct support to program development and leadership within postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disability. She is currently a Program Director at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston. Danie serves as the Project Coordinator of the Think College National Coordinating Center for the TPSID model demonstration program and the Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network: A Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center, both funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. Her research interests include various aspects of postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability. She can be reached by email at: danielle.dahm@umb.edu.

Sally Scott, Ph.D., holds a doctorate from the University of Virginia. With over 30 years' experience as faculty member and director of disability resource offices, she served as AHEAD's Director of Research, 2014-2024, and received the Association's inaugural Distinguished Career Contributions to Postsecondary Disability Research Award in 2024. She can be reached at drsallyscott@gmail.com.

Cate Weir, M.Ed., Program Director, Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston (retired) worked for more than 25 years in postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability and coordinated the Think College National Coordinating Center. Her expertise in inclusive postsecondary education includes program standards, accreditation, person-centered planning, and developing statewide initiatives. She can be reached by email at: Cathryn.weir@umb.edu.

Acknowledgement

Funds for this project were provided in part by a grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, Award Number P407B200001.