Including Students with Intellectual Disability in the First Year Experience

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

**Open admissions**
- Access supports available to all students with disabilities
- No dedicated pathway or oversight of the student’s course of study beyond what is provided to all students

**Dedicated programs**
- Access supports available to all students with disabilities AND additional targeted support
- Some may be Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Programs
- Some may be TPSIDs
College Programs for Students with ID

- Have alternative admissions process & requirements
- Accept students who are non-degree seeking
- Vary in length – most are 2-year, some 4-year
- Vary in levels of academic inclusion
- Established course of study that leads to certificate
- May offer federal student aid (not loans)

Student Experience

- Enrolling in college courses for credit or audit
- Internships/work study
- Paid jobs (on/off campus)
- Campus life/organizations
- Learning to live independently
The TPSID National Coordinating Center at Think College is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. The Center is funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education Grant #P407B100062.

Think College National Coordinating Center

Federally funded since 2010 to provide coordination, training & technical assistance to any college or university who wants to establish or improve postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disability on their campus

www.thinkcollege.net
Transition Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID)

Goal: to create, expand, or enhance high-quality, inclusive higher education experiences to support positive outcomes for individuals with ID.
TPSID Programs 2015-2020

Since 2010, the TPSID initiative has supported the creation or expansion of...

103 Programs
100 colleges and universities
serving almost 4,000 students with I/DD
31 STATES

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Courses taken by students at

Introduction to Human Services
Introduction to Computer Office Applications
Basic Journalism
The Event Industry
A/C Refrigeration Theory
Customer Service Operations
Introduction to Guest Services Management
Principles of Marketing
Principles of Food Systems Management
Introduction to Front-End Web Development
Introduction to Marketing
Introduction to Food Systems Management
Introduction to Principles of Network Security (DCB)
Introduction to Print, Web, and Social Media Graphics

Foundations and Careers in Recreation, Parks, & Tourism
Introduction to Sports Events Management
Marketing and Branch Sales in Music Industries
Principles of Network Security (DCB)
Print, Web, and Social Media Graphics

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Who are first-year students with intellectual disability?

- Average age = 20 (range = 17-43).
  - 95% of students age 25 or younger
- 61% male
- Prior educational setting:
  - Spent all or majority of their time in inclusive setting = 44%
  - Spent all of majority of their time in special education setting = 40%
  - Other/don’t know = 16%
- 29% had a paid job prior to entry

(Of 482 first-year students in 2018-19)
Orientation activities

At 71% of TPSID programs students attended the regular orientation for new students at the IHE

At 47% of TPSID programs family members of students attended the regular parent orientation

Of all course enrollments in 2018-19, 8% were identifiable as “first year” courses

- University 101 - Freshman Experience
- Orientation to Adult Learning
- First Year Experience
- Freshman Seminar
- First Yr: What/Who are Computer Science/Scientists?
- First Yr.: Peace Justice & Sustainability
- FY103 The Body Adorned
- FY103 Up Your Game
- FYS101 A New York State of Mind: What Makes a City Great

Of 1931 course enrollments by first year students, 157 included the word “first year,” “orientation”, “college student,” “university student,” or “freshman” in the course name or FY or UNIV in the course code.
Key takeaways

- Growing group of incoming students
- Increased interest in program development
- Critical to align with college systems and practices
- Need for outreach to and connection with FYE

“To achieve the desired impact, a high-quality FYE includes assessment, focuses on learning and development, and responds to differences in backgrounds, abilities, and goals of a wide array of student groups (Barefoot et al., 2005; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).”

Young & Chung (2019)
Career & Life Studies Certificate (CLSC)

Center for Disabilities Studies

Professional & Continuing Studies
Career & Life Studies Certificate

- 2-year certificate program
  - Created in Office of Continuing Education
- Students attend full-time
- 15-20 students total each year
- Mix of in-state and out-of-state students
- Started in 2011 in an off-campus building with many separate classes

Accessing services and supports

- Paying the fee (student services)
- LONG discussions of policies, etc. (residence life)
- Turned away because of lack of resources (orientation)
- Worries about lack of training (counseling center)
- “No” due to flow of funding in the university (career services)

NOTE: We now largely have access to everything on campus 😊
CLSC Components

ACADEMICS

- Goal Setting
- Problem Solving
- Self-Advocacy
- Communication
- Natural Supports
- Networking
- Decision Making
- Independent Living
- Social Connections

CAREER

LIFE

STRATEGIES

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Undergraduate Coursework

Criminal Justice  Fashion Business
Sports Management  Percussion
Voice and Speech  Ensemble
American History  Studies in Diversity
Physics  Black American Studies
Math  Early Childhood Development
Drawing  Exercise Science
Internships

- US Senator’s office
- UD Office of Admissions
- Home Depot
- Newark Public Works
- Lums Pond State Park
- YMCA
- UD Athletics

Campus & Community Participation

- Student clubs
- Student centers and resources
- Campus activities
- UD Alternative Spring Break
Point Coaching

- Point Coach and Student work 3-5 hours per week on academic, career, and life strategies.
- Meeting agenda is set by the student
  - Goals are also guided by a plan developed by the student, university staff and family
- Set goals and outline next steps: social connecting, independent living, leadership
- Support with undergraduate classes: study skills, notetaking, time management
- Developing skills/strategies for greater independence

Residence Life

- Spread across multiple dorms
- CLSC students mostly living with other CLSC students
- No additional supports in the dorm
  - Taking advantage of natural supports built into the residential system
- Grown over time:
  - 3 students in 2016 to 11 in 2020
  - Initially only allowed to live in upper class dorms
First Year Experience at UD

- 1743 Welcome Days
- Common Reader
- New Student Orientation
- First Year Seminar

1743 Welcome Days

- Engagement activities prior to Fall and Spring semesters
- Opportunity for students to connect with clubs of interest
- Coaching staff is available as needed during some events
Common Reader

- Program purchases for CLSC students
- Given to them during CLSC orientation so they have more time to read
- First time for students to utilize accommodations or other technology to support academics
- Often discussed in First Year Seminar

New Student Orientation

- 2011-2016 – Separate orientation
- 2014-2016 - Told by NSO that CLSC students can’t attend; “don’t have the resources”
- 2017 – Agreed to have CLSC students attend. CLSC staff attended with students and families
- 2018-Present – CLSC students and families attend without staff. During visits with academic dept., CLSC students meet with CLSC staff.
First Year Seminar

- < 2017 – CLSC students took their own similar, separate course
- Spring 2016 – requested to join FYS
- Considerations for:
  - How to identify instructors/sections
  - Whether to have all CLSC students in same section
- Advocated for having CLSC students spread across different sections (2 in each section)
- Instructors were selected, met with students and staff prior to semester

First Year Seminar: Instructor Reflections

“I was actually really surprised by how the class turned out. Classmates love talking to students with ID and it is very easy for students with ID to form group discussions with other students. Some of them became close friends at the end of the class.”

“I realized I need to be clearer when explaining how to submit assignments via Canvas and that this is a good idea for ALL first year students.”

Quotes collected by Wes Garton, UD staff
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