Advancing the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities: AHEAD's Task Force on Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary Education

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Topics to be covered

- Role and work of the AHEAD Task Force
- Relationship between Think College and AHEAD
- Defining the Conversation about Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary
- Role and Concerns of Postsecondary DS professionals
- Survey Findings from Postsecondary Institutions
- Strategies for Stakeholders Collaboration
- Feedback and Input from Participants

AHEAD Task Force on students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary education

- Ten members representing many colleges and organizations; organized in Fall 2010
- Three work groups have addressed policy/philosophical issues, concerns of DS professionals and strategies for collaborating to develop/improve postsecondary opportunities
- Surveyed colleges:
  - Open enrollment institutions (DS staff work with students)
  - Colleges with programs for students (how did these programs start and how are they sustained)

AHEAD & Think College

- Disability Services a key partner in effective programs for students with intellectual disabilities

- Think College and AHEAD work closely together

- Proclamation and White Paper asserting role of disability services in programs for students with ID

AHEAD White Paper

* **We are in a unique position professionally to inform institutional decisions to design and implement programs that are welcoming and inclusive for students with intellectual disabilities.**

* Disability Service professionals can **work with the program staff to determine how students with intellectual disabilities can access accommodations and other resources of their offices.**

* AHEAD, in partnership with the Institute for Community Inclusion and ThinkCollege.net, will continue to provide its members with guidance on how to **support and facilitate the full participation of students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary educational settings.**

Defining the Conversation: White Paper

- Work Group One
  - Defining the population
    - Students with intellectual disabilities
      - AAIDD definition
      - AHEAD task force working definition
    - Other students – not learning disability or intellectual disability
  - HEOA of 2008
    - Students deserve opportunity to pursue postsecondary education
    - Students with intellectual disabilities exit with body of knowledge and competency to pursue next steps
    - Programs/support – student directed & individualized

Defining the Conversation: White Paper (2)

- Conversations to promote program development
  - K-12 and PSE educators
  - VR and Workforce Development staff
  - Parents
  - Employers
- Formats for such conversations
  - Formal settings, i.e. state-level initiatives
  - Informal settings
  - Naturally occurring forums or situations

DS Professionals in Postsecondary

- Role and Challenges on Campus
  - Typical office is small: one to two staff
  - Reasonable accommodations and access / other supports and modifications
    - DS providers do not advocate for essential course/program modifications
  - Goals: Credit courses and a credential / Experience and preparation for next step: employment or further postsecondary
    - Highly individualized guidance & support is not typical
  - Social and interpersonal involvement on campus

Surveys of open enrollment institutions

- Key findings include:
  - Almost all open enrollment institutions have been working with students for a long time. Numbers enrolled: 5 – 20
  - Many students struggle with developmental and college courses. Not many are successful: courses or credentials
  - States are pressuring community colleges for faster completion of developmental courses – adopting new models
  - Parent or advocate often takes primary role
  - Students tend not to be as involved as others on campus
  - Communicating with faculty is vital: expectations & accommodations
  - Experience with open enrollment students may lead to a program being created; campus/community advocates are key

Survey of college programs for students

- Students recruited from high schools (concurrent enrollment), currently enrolled, from community referrals

- Key faculty, other campus staff played lead roles in starting programs; campus buy-in is critical

- Barriers encountered include: funding (start-up and sustaining, transportation, "seeing benefit" for SWID

- Community partners include employers, banks, rehab agencies, high schools

- Increasing inclusion on campuses with programs

Strategies for Stakeholders to Promote Success and Manage Concerns (1)

- Understand role of DS professionals:
  - Providing accommodations – based historically on a model of closer review of documentation
  - Generally don't provide tutoring or any type of academic supports; may be part of a center that does provide these
- Inclusive education – articulate for the campus
  - Ideal models – what practices are proven to be successful
  - What are the benefits: to students, the campus
  - How a program can be financed and sustained

Strategies for Stakeholders to Promote Success and Manage Concerns (2)

- Campus champion – internal advocate who knows the campus system and decision makers
  - Faculty member, administrator, DS professional
  - Role of community advocates: parents, secondary educators
- Universal design – implementing these principles and practices
  - Helps create more inclusive teaching and environments for the full range of learners
  - Examples of practices: use of assistive technology, broad provision of notetaking and course review materials

Participant Discussion & Needs Assessment

- What more would you like to know about program development?

- What is happening on your campus, in your state?

- How can AHEAD's Task Force address your questions and interests this year: 2012 - 2013?

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