# Similarities and Differences in Postsecondary Programs for Students with ID.

State of the Art Conference on PSE for students with ID

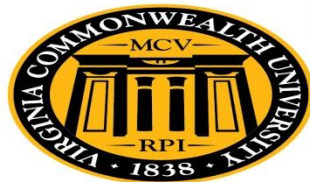George Mason University, 11/30/12

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# Background

- In this age of "evidence based practices" and fiscal constraints, there is a need for research on outcomes.

- Problems:

  - differences in programs based on review of literature

  - Differences in programs based on information shared in SOS/SOA conferences on PSE

# Types of Postsecondary Models

- Mixed/hybrid model (most common)
- Substantially separate model
- Inclusive individual support model
- Other considerations:
  - Dual enrollment
  - Supports within each model
  - Course development/enrollment options

# Led to research proposal

- Through Mary E. Switzer research fellowship
- Develop a framework that could:
  - Articulate distinctions and similarities between programs
  - Use the framework to help with conducting outcomes research
  - Help program staff make decisions about what will work for them

# Research design

- Participants
  - PSE programs for students with ID
  - Range of PSE models
  - Range of length of time for program existence
  - Range of locations

- Participants (actual)
  - 2 dual enrollment (one inclusive, one hybrid)
  - 2 substantially separate
  - 1 inclusive
  - 4 mixed/hybrid

# Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews: project staff, parents, others involved in establishment of program

- Observations: on-campus (for all but 2 programs)

- Document review: items that would provide information on program design, program implementation, and program evaluation

# Findings

- Dual Enrollment:
  - Students still receiving services from their schools
  - School staff provide services and/or teach courses
  - Enrolled in university

- Differences:
  - Not all considered fully enrolled in university
  - Vary in number of classes they attend with students w/o disabilities
  - Vary in employment experiences
  - One was more focused on community-access while other was more focused on the university experience.

# Substantially separate

- Students participate only in classes with other students with disabilities
- Participate in generic social activities, and may have employment options

- Differences:
  - Types of classes
  - Number of employment/internship options
  - Both had residential component; differences in location & supports
  - who teaches classes
  - Social activities
  - Movement toward hybrid model

# Mixed/hybrid

- Students participate in social activities and/or academic classes with students w/o disabilities
- Also participate in separate classes (life skills/transition)
- Typically provides employment options off campus

- Differences in:
  - Academic focus (liberal arts or specific focus)
  - Focus of separate classes (life skills to technology)
  - Employment options (Project SEARCH to range of internships to paid employment)
  - Interactions with peers
  - Financial aid

# Other differences

- Program inception: who started the ball rolling, who were the key players, state/local support
- Program enrollment: requirements for independence, transportation, **role of parents**, initial assessments
- Program implementation: degree of integration with typical university services, degree of connection with other students on campus, **key focus of program, role of students**.
- Program evaluation: frequency; evaluation process; **design own versus use existing options**

# Challenges

- Role of parents
  - Typical university perspective versus transition best practices
  - "*We need to work on your grades so we can get them to your parents….*"
  - "*We don't usually communicate directly with parents; it takes them a while to get used to the difference between high school and college.*"
  - "*We involve parents in person-centered planning activities each year; we know that parent involvement is important in transition planning, so it's important here.*"

# Challenges

- Evaluation
  - Time as well as relevance
  - *"We are struggling to find the right assessments; what are other programs using to measure growth in independence?"*
  - *"We are developing an assessment that focuses on the social interactions students have on campus. Would you consider interactions with a mentor as interaction with peers without disabilities?"*
  - *"We have lots of videotaped interviews with students but we struggle to find time to go back to really analyze them."*

# Challenges for research

- As many differences within models as between models

- Differences also exist in the approaches that programs take toward common features
  - Employment
  - Course enrollment
  - Supports in courses
  - Support for student self-determination/independence
  - Preparation for next transition

# Next steps

- Evaluate data using different frameworks
- Collect additional data from other programs related to these differences
  - Additional qualitative data collection
  - National survey data collection

# Taxonomy of Post-Secondary Education

- Four domains:
  - Academic
    - Courses with other students with disabilities
    - Courses with other typically-developing peers
    - College readiness coursework
  - Vocational
    - Coursework
    - Job shadowing
    - Internships
  - Independent Living
    - Life skills coursework
    - Dormitory
    - Other independent living
  - Social
    - Social skills coursework
    - Peer interactions
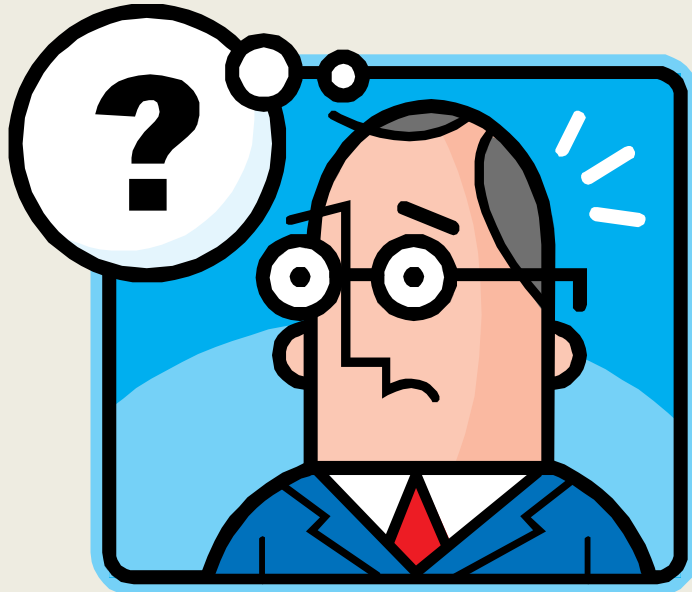    - Clubs and sports
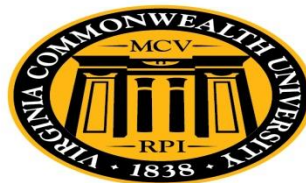
# Think College

8 Standards, quality indicators and benchmarks recommended for inclusive higher education

- Inclusive academic access
- Career development
- Campus Membership
- Self-Determination
- Alignment with College Systems and Practices
- Coordination and Collaboration
- Sustainability
- Ongoing Evaluations

# Questions?

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