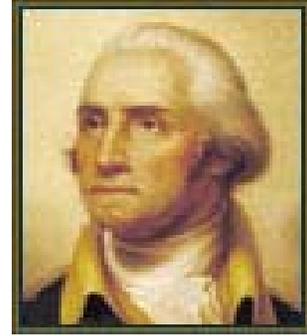


# The George Washington University HEATH Resource Center



## Postsecondary Options for Students with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities By: Donna C. Martinez

The GW HEATH Resource Center has received with increased frequency questions about postsecondary options available for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities:

1. Where are the colleges or universities that accept and support students with autism/Asperger's and/or intellectual disabilities; and
2. Do those colleges and universities have any specific "program" designed just for students with developmental or intellectual disabilities, or are they enrolled, attending classes as nondisabled students do with support through the disability supports services office?

To better answer these questions and learn more about what is occurring across the nation participants of an online community of practice of college and university Disability Supports Services (DSS) staff and others interested in postsecondary education for students with disabilities were asked if they have students with autism spectrum disabilities (ASD), or other developmental disabilities, and/or intellectual disabilities (students who medically would be classified as mentally retarded, not including traumatic brain injury); and how they provide services, supports, and accommodations to attend school at their college. The responses gathered here is a small sampling of universities and colleges that provide support and accommodation for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Following their responses are other resources gathered in HEATH's LINKS pages for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, their families, high school staff, and college staff for planning, developing and providing supports for college.

### **Colleges and Universities Responses to HEATH's Questions:**

#### **Western State College of Colorado <http://www.western.edu/>**

DSS personnel have developed and provides for a mentoring program that works with an older student, preferably in a for-credit situation. While the student has specific requirements for participation the mentoring project is not an academic program or track. The goal is to help new students with autism/Asperger's transition to college life. The student is introduced to new social situations such as eating at the dining hall. The DSS staff person supervises the mentor.

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### **California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) <http://sdr.csumb.edu/>**

DSS staff has observed an increase in enrollment of students with ASD. College Living Experience (CLE) (<http://www.esa-education.com/schools/college-living-experience>) has recently opened a program in the college town. CLE is providing a layer of support that many of these students did not previously have. When students or families ask about specific programs that CSUMB offers specific programs for students with autism spectrum disabilities or any other pervasive developmental disability, DSS staff responds with information regarding supports and accommodations they offer and those they do not. In this way families are able to make an informed decision about their student and his/her needs and if CSUMB is a good fit for them.

### **The University of Findlay <https://www.findlay.edu/default.htm>**

While they do not have a "special program" at The University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio, they have been successful with students on the autism spectrum. Findlay is a small campus that provides good support for students that have been on the high functioning level. One suggestion for families to consider is to seek "personal care attendant" support for their students.

### **Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute (CCTI) <http://www.cccti.edu/>**

At CCTI student(s) with Asperger's are enrolled in regular programs. They must meet the same criteria as all other students, in their academics and in their behavior to the standards of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Northern Illinois University DeKalb, IL (<http://www.niu.edu/index.shtml>)**

NIU has enrolled students on the autism spectrum (especially with Asperger's) for many years. These students may or may not have chosen to receive support through NIU's DSS office. DSS staff are always discussing if there are other things NUI can reasonably do to support students with ASD or intellectual disabilities. A number of the students have successfully graduated from NIU; however, many have not been successful. There is no "program" per se for students with Aspergers. DSS staff at NIU adds they embrace not only the letter of the law, but also its spirit by trying to do more than the minimally mandated requirements. They note financial, personnel, and time resources are challenges to establishing specific program of supports needed for students.

NUI DSS collaborate with other offices on their campus to provide support to the students who need and will use services such as Counseling Center, Speech and Hearing Clinic. Staff and students from the Rehabilitation Counseling degree program also provide supports. DSS staff work intensively with housing staff, police and judicial for situations that may arise. In situations that involve inappropriate behavior natural consequences are used as teaching moments.

Success rates for student increase when they use supports services and meet regularly with coordinators in the DSS office. Student interest and readiness to independently live and learn on a college campus are important attributes for success. However DSS staff caution if students do not follow through with the recommendations, supports and services, they may face difficulties and fail.

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### **University of Kansas (KU)** <http://www.ku.edu>

Students with ASD or intellectual disabilities enroll at the University of Kansas enroll in the same classes as other students. Students use a variety of accommodations and supports from KU.

### **University of Denver (DU)** <http://www.du.edu>

DU has had students with Aspergers enrolled at the University. While DU does not have a program especially designed for students with ASD, their Disability Services Program helps with accommodations. They do not have students with intellectual disabilities.

### **Ohio State University (OSU)** <http://www.osu.edu/>

As a two-year feeder college for OSU-Columbus, there is great mobility within the student population. Student support varies individual to individual. While one person may need significant supports and intervention, another person with good academic and social skill development learned during K-12 may need less. During the 2006-2007 school year OSU presented a “brown bag” lecture presented by parents of children with autism of families of children on the autism spectrum. While many families contact the DSS office seeking information there have been no specific requests for supports in a “special program.” DSS staff currently serves two people with ASD, and one person with an intellectual disability. At this writing OSU has 1500 full time students. An example of a DSS staff person’s case load in one quarter is 35, though it varies quarter to quarter. Students enrolled in the Office for Disability Services at Mansfield typically represent about 2-3% of their total student population.

### **Next Steps for Students with ASD or Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families**

Students, families, high school and DSS staff are encouraged to visit The GW HEATH Resource Center ([www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)) to learn more about transition to postsecondary education for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Using the key words transition, autism, intellectual disability, developmental disability in our search bar will help you find news items, resource papers and fact sheets listed on our site on the topic.

To find other web-resources visit our Links pages (<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/links>). Students with intellectual or developmental disabilities ready to explore the possibility of college may find the resources included in the topic *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* helpful. Included in our resources are two data bases that provide information about colleges and universities supporting students with intellectual or developmental disabilities at a college setting:

- Thinkcollege.net’s *Database of Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* (see: <http://www.thinkcollege.net/programs/index.php>) that assists anyone interested in locating a postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities.

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- The Transition Coalition: 18-21 Programs Search (<http://tinyurl.com/3yuq95>), a database of community-based special education programs for students ages 18-21.

For high school transition specialists, high school administrators, and/or university staff planning for the arrival of students with intellectual or developmental disabilities at their local college or university, the following sites may be helpful for developing and planning for needed supports, accommodations for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities:

- *Individual Supports to Increase Access to an Inclusive Experience for Students with Intellectual Disabilities*: <http://tinyurl.com/2qfamv>. On-Campus Outreach Training Modules provide guidance on developing an Individual Support Model (ISM) to increase access to inclusive college experiences and to improve chances for the success of students with intellectual disabilities.
- *The Postsecondary Education Research Center (PERC)* project, coordinated by TransCen, Inc. website provides information and resources on college options for students with intellectual disabilities. The site provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to developing or expanding services for students with intellectual disabilities in college settings. It also provides access to a free online evaluation tool, the PERC Self-Assessment Tool that allows users to evaluate aspects of programs or services for students with intellectual disabilities on college campuses. <http://www.transitiontocollege.net/>

### **The Future Outlook for College Students with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities**

Colleges and universities are becoming aware that more and more students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are interested and eager to make postsecondary education their post school outcome goal. U. S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings recognized this fact when she stated October 3, 2007, “Now that we're making strong progress in K-12 schools, the next frontier is college. Especially now that higher education is becoming more and more essential for everyone in our global knowledge economy. That's why I'm pleased to announce that my department will provide 1.5 million dollars to create a Technical Assistance Center to help colleges and universities develop and expand programs for students with intellectual disabilities. By collecting and sharing information about effective coursework, supports and services, and community outreach strategies, the center will help more students enjoy a meaningful and rewarding college education” [see HEATH News Links: <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/node/411>]. The future looks promising for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities wishing continued learning and postsecondary education. HEATH will continue follow the development of college/university options and keep you informed.

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