

THE LANDSCAPE OF SUPPORT

Students with Disabilities in Community Colleges

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Prepared by Education Northwest



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Project Overview

The experience of students with learning disabilities who attend community colleges is a key area for future research and advocacy, as identified by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD). For this report, we engaged in four investigative activities to inform NCLD's work in this area:

1. Scan of existing community college reform efforts to impact experiences of students with disabilities.
2. Identification of applicable community college data systems that could inform improvement initiatives for students with disabilities.
3. Review of published and gray literature to identify:
 - a. Variables and existing reform initiatives that positively impact the community college completion rates of students with disabilities.
 - b. Academic and nonacademic supports, with demonstrated effectiveness, for students with disabilities within the community college environment.
 - c. Variables that may influence students with disabilities to attend community colleges at higher rates than four-year institutions.
 - d. Outcomes for students with disabilities who enroll in community college but do not complete a degree or credential.
4. Identification of key players within the U.S. community college system who could impact policies and practice related to students with disabilities.

DATA COLLECTION

- Informal investigation of reform efforts and applicable databases with 11 leading policy and research groups focused on community colleges:
 - Follow-up phone interviews with six of the identified researchers.
- Interviews with community college disability services coordinators from across the United States.
- Comprehensive literature search.
- Review of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) databases to identify relevant and available data.

Community College Efforts to Impact Experiences for Students with Disabilities

In our contacts with numerous stakeholders associated with community colleges and students with disabilities, we identified no explicit or current research and reform efforts focused on students with disabilities in community colleges. Associates at the National Center for College Students with Disabilities stated that, although they do conduct research that includes samples containing community college students, they have not disaggregated this population. The American Association of Community Colleges reported most of the work done by colleges *focuses on the legal aspects associated with services for students with disabilities and not the effectiveness of these services*. Achieving the Dream staff expressed their organization’s goal of supporting students with disabilities as part of their holistic student support efforts, but these efforts did not currently target this population specifically. Additionally, representatives from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, the Community College Research Initiatives (CCRI) at the University of Washington, and the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, each reported that they were not engaged in research involving students with disabilities.

Legality versus efficacy

Contact with disability services coordinators from community colleges across the United States again failed to identify any specific reform efforts. An Oregon disability services coordinator explained that the state chapter of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) regularly engaged in collaborations around supports and easing of eligibility requirements for students, but it was not a fully organized reform effort. A disability services coordinator from an east coast community college discussed “entitlement versus eligibility” (see box) when explaining the dif-

ENTITLEMENT	ELIGIBILITY
IDEA entitles students with disabilities access to an equitable education in any public institution.	ADA and Section 504 provide the opportunity for equal access to education. Specific eligibility requirements for supports that facilitate equal access can be determined by each individual education entity.

ference between the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), which governs educational services in the K-12 realm, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which ensure access to educational opportunities in postsecondary settings. The coordinator felt many students enter postsecondary education assuming they are entitled to supports because they have received these supports in their K-12 setting. She described particular difficulty for students identified as having a disability through Response to Intervention (RTI). Her finding was that

these particular students typically lacked the necessary documentation her institution required to justify accommodations. This finding is in line with recent commentary from the National Joint Council of Learning Disabilities expressing concerns about the use of RTI as the sole method in K-12 settings for identifying a specific learning disability (Gartland & Strosnider, 2020).

In these conversations with disability services coordinators, we identified two clear camps of eligibility requirements among institutions: those that require complete neuropsychological or psychoeducational reports—complete with included standard scores—and those that do not. Multiple interviewed coordinators, supported by multiple community college disability support service manuals, identified a persistent reliance on students to provide a recent (e.g., within the most recent five years) neuropsychological or psychoeducational report for them to receive accommodations. However, multiple other coordinators indicated their institutions required only a documented history of support for a disability and a clear statement describing the impact the disability has on the student. This reasoning was based upon the revised 2010 ADA regulations clarifying that eligibility through ADA can be based upon “a record of impairment” and that, for a person to meet the definition of a disability under ADA, extensive analysis should not be required (ADA.gov, 2012). These coordinators stated they readily accept K-12 Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) as this documentation, but they frequently find IEPs do not include a statement of impact or a clear connection between a student’s disability and previously provided accommodations. This interpretation of ADA would appear to address the concerns of Gartland and Stronsnider (2020) related to RTI, so long as appropriate impact statements are included in the IEP’s Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance.

Community College Data Systems that Could Inform Improvement Initiatives for Students with Disabilities¹

NATIONAL INSTITUTION-LEVEL DATA

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) provides annual data on the share of undergraduate students formally registered as having a disability. These data have been publicly available for all U.S. colleges and universities since fall 2008 and allow researchers to examine changes in the share of students who have a disability over time and across different institutional types. Researchers could also examine how these population shares relate to other institutional characteristics available in IPEDS (e.g., tuition and fees, student enrollment, student-to-teacher ratios, student and academic affairs staffing, and completion outcomes) as well as local, state, and national policy changes. Additionally, IPEDS data could be merged with College Scorecard data to study relationships between the share of students who have a registered disability and student outcomes such as earnings and debt repayment.

From 2008-09 to 2015-16, the share of institutions that reported at least 3% of students were registered for disability services increased from 14.7% to 17.6%. The increase was largest at private non-profit institutions (26.7% to 38%) and public four-year institutions (23.3% to 35.3%).

NATIONAL STUDENT-LEVEL DATA

Nationally representative, student-level data sets provide more detailed information on student disability type (e.g., vision impairment, hearing impairment or deafness, speech disability, orthopedic limitation, learning disability, or other health impairment) and can be used to study relationships between disability status and transitions from high school to adult life (National Longitudinal Transition Study-2), how students pay for postsecondary education (National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey), and postsecondary student persistence and completion (Beginning Postsecondary Students). Restricted-use files provide disaggregated student-level data and allow for robust analysis, whereas public-use aggregated data are also available.

Between the entering cohorts of 2003-04 and 2011-12, the share of students with any disability who were also veterans increased from 2.8% to 4.8%, while veteran enrollment among students without a disability decreased slightly from 1.7% to 1.5%.

¹ All analyzed data retrieved from Hinz, Arbeit, and Bentz (2017).

Both National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS) data are not collected annually, so analysis of these data require comparisons across collections. For example, researchers interested in changes in how students with disabilities pay for college could draw from individual NPSAS surveys collected every three to four years since 1987. Changes in college persistence and completion rates for students with disabilities could be studied using BPS data from the four complete collections: BPS: 90-94, BPS: 96-2001, BPS: 04-09, and BPS: 12-17. Researchers wishing to augment student-level analysis with institution-level data could merge IPEDS and College Scorecard with BPS and NPSAS data collections.

One-year persistence rates for all students decreased from 74.6% (2003-04) to 71.3% (2011-12), but the decrease was much larger for students with any disability: 68.9% to 61.1%.

STATEWIDE DATA

In some instances, statewide longitudinal data systems might also be leveraged to explore relationships among student disability status, college enrollment and completion, and workforce participation. Access to these data would be state specific.

Two-year completion rates for students with a disability decreased from 10.6% (2003-04) to 7.1% (2011-12) but increased slightly from 8.1% to 9.4% for students without a disability.

See Appendix A for a complete list and description of applicable national and state databases.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

IPEDS and College Scorecard data are limited in that neither provides data disaggregated by student disability status. Furthermore, IPEDS staffing and finance surveys lack information specific to the staff who work in disability services offices. The following table describes potential research questions resulting from new data elements in IPEDS and College Scorecard.

New Data Elements	Dataset	Potential Research Questions
The share of students who contact disability services offices but are not eligible to receive services	IPEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the share of students requesting access to disability services compare to the share of students eligible to receive disability services? • To what extent does the gap between students requesting disability services and students receiving disability services vary with college-level characteristics? What college-level characteristics are associated with the largest gaps?

New Data Elements	Dataset	Potential Research Questions
Completion outcomes and graduation rates disaggregated by student disability status ²	IPEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do student completion outcomes and graduation rates vary with student disability status? • What college-level characteristics are related to completion outcomes and graduation rates? How do these relationships vary with student disability status? • What is the impact of a given policy change on completion outcomes and graduation rates? How do these impacts vary with student disability status?
Earnings and loan repayment data disaggregated by student disability status ³	College Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do post-college enrollment earnings and loan repayment outcomes vary with student disability status? • What college-level characteristics are related to post-college enrollment earnings and loan repayment outcomes? How do these relationships vary with student disability status? • What is the impact of a given policy change on post-college enrollment earnings and loan repayment outcomes? How do these impacts vary with student disability status?
Staffing and finance data specific to disability services providers ⁴	IPEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do changes in the share of students with a registered disability relate to changes in staffing of disability services providers? • What is the impact of a given policy change on changes in staffing for disability services providers?

² In recent years, IPEDS updated its outcome measures (OM) and graduation rates (GR) surveys to include data disaggregated by Pell Grant and Stafford Loan recipient status. Beginning with the 2017 collections, OM data were disaggregated by Pell Grant recipient status and GR data were disaggregated by Pell Grant and Stafford Loan recipient status.

³ See the College Scorecard data dictionary for a complete list of earnings and repayment variables that are currently provided: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/data/documentation/>. Current earnings data are disaggregated by dependency status, gender, and employment status at six through 10 years following initial postsecondary enrollment.

⁴ Currently, the IPEDS human resources survey uses the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system to classify employees (<http://www.bls.gov/soc/>). The IPEDS finance survey provides salary and wage expenditure data for employees in “student services.”

Literature Review

METHODS

A detailed search strategy of the following electronic databases: Education Research Complete, ERIC, PsycInfo, and Academic Search Premier. We searched for material published from 2010 to 2020 using English-only text from peer-reviewed journals and gray literature, excluding dissertations. We used the following terms in searching abstracts, descriptors, and subject headings to locate articles specific to this review: community colleges, junior colleges, two-year colleges, post-secondary, higher education, disabilities, special education, and special needs. Variations of these terms and combinations of terms were used to ensure exhaustive search results.

The Education Northwest research librarian also reviewed relevant publications from the National Center for College Students with Disabilities Clearinghouse and Google Scholar for gray literature, including dissertations. The search identified 1,515 items, which we entered into a Zotero database for initial review, resulting in 173 unique items identified. Two Education Northwest researchers reviewed abstracts from the 173 identified pieces of literature, and items were excluded that did not reference the inclusion of students with disabilities or those enrolled in community colleges. This secondary review resulted in 104 items identified for full-text review. The same two researchers reviewed the full text of each of the 104 articles, excluding articles that (a) did not address one of the research questions of focus or (b) did not disaggregate data for subjects enrolled in two-year institutions. Forty-two items were identified for inclusion in the results presented below.

RESULTS

Research Questions

- a. What are variables and existing reform initiatives that positively impact the community college completion rates of students with disabilities?
 - b. What academic and nonacademic supports demonstrate effectiveness for students with disabilities within the community college environment?
 - c. What are variables that may influence students with disabilities to attend community colleges at higher rates than four-year institutions?
 - d. What are the outcomes for students with disabilities who enroll in community college but do not complete a degree or credential.?
-

Across each of the four questions, a set of general themes emerged that supported the success of students with disabilities in community colleges. These included (a) transition support from K-12 to the postsecondary setting, (b) a student's sense of belonging on the community college campus, (c) the utilization and quality of disability supports on the community college campus, and (d) the student's perception of the quality of the academic and environmental aspects of the community college as a whole. Most prominent within the literature were investigations of variables supporting student success once on the community college campus—33 of the 42 reviewed items addressed this question in some way. . Nine articles addressed impacts on student's with disability completion rates, but only two referenced influences for two over four-year schools and three addressed outcomes for students who are non-completers of community college programs. A summary of our findings is shown in Table 1.

"In the discussion about relationships with high school teachers versus with college faculty Caroline expressed disappointment, saying, —'I've always had such a great relationship with my teachers [in high school] but like here you don't get that like to like really chit chat with your teachers and become close, and they don't really like acknowledge that you're here" (Corcoran, 2010, p. 69).

"Working with Disability Services for sure was the best. You have that support, and I know if I called her [coordinator] and was like I'm having trouble in this she would be right there" (Corcoran, 2010, p. 83).

"I think sometimes students with disabilities might have been over accommodated K through 12 and they still expect the faculty to take away one wrong answer or adapt the curriculum or modify the curriculum, and that's not going to happen.

"The faculty know how to teach the content of their subject, but they typically struggle with the question of how much attention to give students with disabilities. . . . They really don't understand what their role is as a faculty member once students are approved accommodation" (Duggan, 2010, pp. 71, 73).

"If B. [disability coordinator] hadn't come to my rescue, I probably would have left school. I was so close to leaving and walking out" (Garrison-Wade, 2012, p. 9).

Table 1: Summary of Findings from the Literature Review

Impacts on completion rates	Academic and nonacademic supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy, personal motivation, and having friends on campus correlated with improved student persistence. • Positive attitudes of professors support students. • Student utilization of community college disability services (Corcoran, 2010; Fichten et al., 2012; Fichten et al., 2014; Gregg et al., 2016; Lawler et al., 2018). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough and coordinated transition plans correlated with more successful student outcomes (Ankeny & Lehmann, 2011; Folk et al., 2012; Oertle & Bragg, 2014). • Students are more likely to receive community college disability supports when their transition plans specify these postsecondary supports (Newman et al., 2016). • Students who access supports, even supports available to the full student body, demonstrate improved outcomes (Mamiseihvili & Koch, 2012; Milsom & Sackett, 2018; Newman et al., 2019; Oertle & Bragg, 2014). • Students with disabilities have improved student outcomes when staff on community college campuses are willing and able to support them (Brown & Coomes, 2016; Gregg et al., 2016; Highlen, 2017; Oertle & Bragg, 2014; Qian, Clary, et al., 2018).
Influences on students’ decisions to attend two-year rather than four-year institutions	Outcomes for students with disabilities who enroll but do not complete community college
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year institutions may not require standardized test results for admittance (Milsom & Sackett, 2018). • Students with autism chose community college because of close geographic proximity and the ability to continue living at home (McBride, 2017). • Transition programs were coordinated between high school and the local community college (Folk et al., 2012). <p>Note: Multiple articles cited affordability, open-door admissions, geographic accessibility, an emphasis on teaching, and smaller class sizes as variables influencing students’ attendance at two-year institutions. However, upon investigation of cited source material, these variables could not be verified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premature leavers are less likely to be employed. • Employed premature leavers are more likely to be employed in an area outside of their previous program of study (Jorgensen et al., 2015).

Key Players of Policy Influence for Community Colleges and Students with Disabilities

Research Organizations	Organization Description	Key Contact
<p>Center for Community College Student Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin</p> <p>3316 Grandview Street Austin, TX 78705 Ph: 512.471.6807 https://cccse.org/</p>	<p>The University of Texas' College of Education established the Center for Community College Student Engagement as the umbrella organization for survey research, focus group work, and related services for community and technical colleges interested in improving educational quality through strengthened student engagement and student success. Member colleges represent an overwhelming majority of all accredited, public, associate degree-granting two-year institutions in the United States.</p>	<p>Linda García <i>Executive Director</i> Ph: 512.232.8428 linda.garcia@cccse.org</p> <p>Mike Bohlig <i>Assistant Director of Research</i> Ph: 512.232.6456 bohlig@cccse.org</p>
<p>Center for the Study of Community Colleges</p> <p>9544 Cresta Drive Los Angeles, CA 90035 Ph: 310.951.3565 http://centerforcommunitycolleges.org/</p>	<p>The Center for the Study of Community Colleges is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and policy center based in Los Angeles, California.</p> <p>The Center's mission is to improve community college effectiveness and student success by engaging in and supporting research related to community college practice and policy.</p>	<p>Carrie Kisker <i>Member of the Board of Directors</i> carrie@kiskeredconsulting.com</p>
<p>Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University (CCRC)</p> <p>Box 174 525 West 120th Street New York, NY 10027 Ph: 212.678.3091 https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/</p>	<p>CCRC's mission is to conduct research that helps community colleges strengthen opportunities and improve outcomes for their students, particularly those from underserved populations.</p>	<p>Thomas Brock <i>Director and Research Professor</i> Ph: 212.678.3091 brock@tc.edu</p>

Research Organizations	Organization Description	Key Contact
<p>Community College Research Initiatives at the University of Washington (CCRI)</p> <p>UW Tower 4333 Brooklyn Ave NE, 12th Floor Seattle, WA 98105 Ph: 206.616.0722 https://www.washington.edu/ccri/</p>	<p>CCRI conducts research on equitable college access, progression and transfer, degree completion, and employment in living-wage careers for underserved students and diverse learner populations throughout the United States.</p>	<p>Debra Brag <i>Founding Director</i> dbragg@uw.edu</p>
<p>Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL)</p> <p>51 Gerty Drive, 129 CRC MC-672 Champaign, IL 61820 Ph: 217.244.9390 https://occrll.illinois.edu/</p>	<p>OCCRL's mission is to use research and evaluation methods to improve policies, programs, and practices that enhance community college education and transition to college for diverse learners at the state, national, and international levels.</p>	<p>Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher <i>Director</i> Ph: 217.300.0897 ezamanig@illinois.edu</p>

Professional Organizations	Organization Description	Key Contact
<p>Achieving the Dream (ATD) 8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500 Silver Spring, MD 20910 Ph: 240.450.0075</p> <p>529 SE Grand Avenue, Suite 300 Portland, OR 97214-2232 Ph: 971.634.1212 https://www.achievingthedream.org</p>	<p>ATD leads America’s largest network of community colleges working to become strong engines of student and community growth. ATD’s proven model helps colleges identify emerging needs and ways to improve practices across the full spectrum of capacities required for whole-college reform.</p>	<p>Julia Lawton <i>Director of Holistic Student Supports</i> Office: 240.450.3836 Cell: 443.844.9634 jlawton@achievingthedream.org</p>
<p>American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20036 Ph: 202.728.0200 https://www.aacc.nche.edu/</p>	<p>AACC is the primary advocacy organization for the nation’s community colleges. The association represents nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 12 million students.</p>	<p>Dr. Walter G. Bumphus <i>President and CEO</i> Ph: 202.728.0200 x235 wbumphus@aacc.nche.edu</p> <p>Kent Phillippe <i>Associate Vice President, Research and Student Success</i> Ph: 202.728.0200 x222 kphillippe@aacc.nche.edu</p> <p>Kevin Christian <i>Director, Diversity, Inclusion & Equity</i> kchristian@aacc.nche.edu</p>

Professional Organizations	Organization Description	Key Contact
<p>Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)/National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD)</p> <p>8015 West Kenton Circle, Suite 230 Huntersville, NC 28078 Ph: 704.947.7779 https://www.ahead.org/ http://www.nccsdonline.org/</p>	<p>AHEAD is the leading professional membership association for individuals committed to equity for persons with disabilities in higher education.</p> <p>The NCCSD has three purposes:</p> <p>(1) Provide technical assistance and information to anyone needing information about disability and higher education.</p> <p>(2) Collect information and do research about disability services at campuses in the United States.</p> <p>(3) Report to the U.S. Department of Education about the current status of college students with disabilities in the U.S.</p>	<p>Richard Allegra <i>Associate Director of Education and Outreach, AHEAD</i> richard@ahead.org</p> <p>Wendy S. Harbour <i>Director, NCCSD</i> Ph: 704.707.5886 wendy@ahead.org</p>
<p>League for Innovation in the Community College</p> <p>2040 South Alma School Road Suite 1-500 Chandler, AZ 85286 Ph: 480.705.8200 https://www.league.org/</p>	<p>The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate innovation in the community college environment. The League serves as a catalyst for introducing and sustaining deep, transformational innovation within and across colleges and international borders to increase student success and institutional excellence.</p>	<p>Rufus Glasper <i>President/CEO</i> glasper@league.org</p> <p>Cynthia Wilson <i>Vice President, Learning and Chief Impact Officer</i> wilson@league.org</p>

Professional Organizations	Organization Description	Key Contact
<p>Opportunity America 737 8th Street, SE, Suite 201 Washington, DC 20003 Ph: 202.506.4541 https://opportunityamericaonline.org/</p>	<p>Opportunity America is a Washington think tank and policy shop promoting economic mobility—work, skills, careers, ownership, and entrepreneurship for poor and working Americans. Among the top issues on its agenda: working-class decline, career education, community college reform, career-focused charter schools, and immigrant entrepreneurship. Opportunity America recently released a research paper titled <i>The Indispensable Institution: Reimagining Community College</i>.</p>	<p>Tamar Jacoby President & CEO info@opportunityamericaonline.org</p>

Areas for Future Focus

As a result of our investigation, we concluded that a national focus on support for students with disabilities appears to be lacking in efforts both to improve the system of support and to investigate effective practices or programs. Hence, the investigative team presents the following areas for future focus as those we feel will make the greatest immediate impact.

POLICY

NCLD should continue pursuing the passage of the Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act. A student's IEP provides a record of impairment that is sufficient to meet the requirements for identification under ADA. Institutions that ask for additional documentation to determine eligibility are engaging in extensive analysis that is not necessary and is placing an undue psychological and potential financial burden on the person with the disability.

REGULATORY

- Under the RISE Act, an IEP can facilitate eligibility for accommodations for a student in a post-secondary institution. However, given the current framing of entitlement versus eligibility, eligibility alone does not require the postsecondary institution to provide accommodations. An IEP that fails to demonstrate a clear link between the impact of a student's disability on the student and the corresponding accommodations is an identified variable for possible denial of accommodations. To remedy this barrier, NCLD should advocate for regulations within IDEA that outline metrics of success more clearly for Indicator 13, transition planning. Specifically, these regulations should ensure that all high school students with disabilities who spend 80% or more of their time in a regular classroom are provided with a transition plan that includes (1) a direct contact with a postsecondary institution's disability services office and (2) a review of the student's IEP by the office to determine if it contains the information necessary to facilitate accommodations.
- At the state level, NCLD should investigate the possibility for two regulations that will better facilitate the provision of effective accommodations to students with disabilities:
 - To better ensure that community college disability services coordinators can expand their roles past strictly making eligibility decisions into working to ensure proper support that facilitates student success, NCLD should advocate for regulations requiring a minimum number of continuing education credits related to disability identification and accommodations for public community college disability services coordinators.

- NCLD should pursue regulatory guidance stipulating that all learning outcomes for community college courses are clearly stated on course syllabi. Such a regulation would enable students with disabilities to better allocate their efforts on specific learning goals and would better facilitate learning and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities by ensuring any request for accommodation does not modify learning expectations (e.g., a request to reduce the number of test items could be framed as a request to remove any items not directly related to a published learning outcome; or requests for an alternative test format could be justified so long as the format is linked to the learning outcomes).

ADVOCACY

NCLD is uniquely positioned to advocate for changes in common practice in collaboration with national assistance and professional organizations that support community colleges. Specific recommended areas for NCLD advocacy include:

- Collaborate with the National Technical Assistance Center for Transition (NTACT), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and AHEAD to provide increased support for high school special education teachers to better understand postsecondary eligibility requirements, with the goal of improving transition for high school students and the development of IEPs that provide information necessary to facilitate eligibility at institutions.
- Collaborate with AHEAD to provide professional development to disability services coordinators that ensure they can better facilitate seamless transitions and more effective accommodations for students with disabilities.
- Advocate for increased professional development for community college faculty related to equitable and effective accommodation practices for their instruction and assessment. Concurrently ensure faculty operationally understand “accommodations” as a device, practice, intervention, or procedure provided to a student with a disability that affords equal access to instruction or assessment and “modifications” as changes to the content being taught or a reduction in achievement expectations.

AREAS FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATION

- In the absence of expeditious passage of the RISE Act, the landscape of eligibility requirements for students to receive accommodations in community colleges requires investigation. Eligibility requirements are currently determined by the institution, which results in inconsistency in practice that impacts the ability to develop a transition plan for a student who is unsure what institution to attend. Conducting a thorough investigation of eligibility requirements would provide a clearer understanding of the suspected variability in requirements. This information could not only strengthen the need for passage of the RISE Act itself but also provide foundational information for any additional efforts to standardize practiced eligibility requirements.

Appendix A. National and State Databases and Applicable Questions

Database	Description	Key inclusions	Access to data
<p>Public-Use Data Files and Documentation (PEQIS 17): Students with Disabilities at Postsecondary Institutions, 2008-09 (NCES 2011-119)</p>	<p>Public-Use Data Files and Documentation (PEQIS 17): Students with Disabilities at Postsecondary Institutions, 2008-09 (NCES 2011-119) This file contains 2008-09 data from a quick-response survey titled “Students with Disabilities at Postsecondary Education Institutions.” The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education requested that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, conduct the survey using the Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS). The survey was designed to provide national data collected from degree-granting postsecondary institutions about students with disabilities, the services and accommodations provided to these students, and various aspects of institutional accessibility. A disability was defined as a physical or mental condition that causes functional limitations that substantially limit one or more major life activities, including mobility, communication (seeing, hearing, speaking), and learning. NCES released the results of the survey in the publication, “Students with Disabilities at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions” (NCES 2011–018).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment of students with disabilities, services and accommodations provided. • Documentation accepted as verification of a disability. • Educational and accessibility materials and activities provided, and Universal Design. • Information about students with disabilities represents only those students who had identified themselves in some way to the institution as having a disability, because these are the only students about whom the institutions could report. • The survey also included questions about institutional practices and accessibility that were completed by all institutions regardless of whether they enrolled any students with disabilities. 	<p>Aggregated, institution-level data are publicly available at: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/peqis/downloads.asp#p7. Records cannot be merged with IPEDS data.</p>

Database	Description	Key inclusions	Access to data
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System	<p>IPEDS is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. It is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid. These data are made available to students and parents through the College Navigator college search website and to researchers and others through the IPEDS Data Center. To learn more about IPEDS survey components, visit https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components.</p>	<p>Percentage of undergraduate students formally registered as students with disabilities. A value is observable for institutions when more than 3% of students are registered as having a disability. In the most recent data (2019-20), 24% of all institutions in the IPEDS universe had a value for this variable. This variable has been collected since 2008-09.</p>	<p>Aggregated, institution-level data are publicly available at http://nces.ed.gov/IPEDS.</p>
College Scorecard	<p>College Scorecard provides data at the institution level and by field of study within institutions. In addition to several IPEDS variables, the College Scorecard also includes earnings and loan repayment data for former students.</p>	<p>College Scorecard does not specifically track students with disabilities but could be merged with IPEDS to examine relationships between the share of students with a disability and earnings and loan repayment outcomes.</p>	<p>Aggregated, institution-level data are publicly available at https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/data/.</p>

Database	Description	Key inclusions	Access to data
Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study	<p>The Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS) collects data on student persistence in, and completion of, postsecondary education programs, their transition to employment, demographic characteristics, and changes over time in their goals, marital status, income, and debt, among other indicators. BPS tracks students' paths through postsecondary education and helps answer questions of policy interest, such as why students leave college, how financial aid influences persistence and completion, and what percentages of students complete various degree programs.</p>	<p>Disability type (i.e., vision impairment, hearing impairment or deafness, speech disability, orthopedic limitation, learning disability, or other health impairment).</p> <p>Community College Outcomes: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012253.pdf</p>	<p>Aggregated, public-use files are available at: https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/index.aspx. Student-level, restricted-use data are also available for restricted-use license holders.</p>
National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey	<p>The National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) is a study of financial aid that NCEC has conducted since 1987. The study collects comprehensive data about how students and their families pay for postsecondary education and also serves as the foundation and base year cohort for the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS) and Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B).</p>	<p>Disability type (i.e., vision impairment, hearing impairment or deafness, speech disability, orthopedic limitation, learning disability, or other health impairment).</p>	<p>Aggregated, public-use files are available at: https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/index.aspx. Student-level, restricted-use data are also available for restricted-use license holders.</p>

Database	Description	Key inclusions	Access to data
National Longitudinal Transition Study-2	<p>The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) is intended to provide a national picture of the experiences and achievements of students in special education during high school and as they transition from high school to adult life. NLTS2 involves a nationally representative sample of students who were 13 to 16 years old and receiving special education services in December 2000 when the study began. These students were followed until 2010 in an effort to understand their educational, vocational, social, and personal experiences as they transitioned from adolescence to early adulthood. Findings from NLTS2 generalize to special education students nationally as a group, to each of the 12 disability categories in use for students in the NLTS2 age range and to each single-year age group.</p>	<p>Disability type (including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Special Education disability categories), transition supports, and postsecondary outcomes. It does not include students with disabilities who have 504 plans.</p>	<p>Some aggregated, public-use files are available at: https://nlts2.sri.com/data_tables/index.html. Student-level, restricted-use data are also available for restricted-use license holders.</p>
Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems	<p>Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) link students as they move between K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce. These data systems vary state-to-state but could be leveraged to examine relationships between student disability status, college enrollment and completion, and workforce participation.</p>		<p>Access to SLDS data are state specific. Education Commission of the States provides an overview of these data systems: https://www.ecs.org/state-longitudinal-data-systems/.</p>

Applicable Questions that Available Data Could Address

Question	Data source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the share of colleges and universities with at least 3% of students reporting a disability changed over time? How do these changes vary with institutional characteristics? • How has the average share of students with a disability enrolled at a college or university changed over time? • How does a college or university's share of students with a disability relate to other institutional characteristics (e.g., tuition and fees, student enrollment, student-to-teacher ratios, student and academic affairs staffing, and completion outcomes)? • What was the effect of a college or university's policy change or initiative on its share of enrolled students with a disability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPEDS: 2008-09 to 2019-20 <p>Select IPEDS variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DISAB: Percent indicator of undergraduates formally registered as students with disabilities • DISABPCT: Percent of undergraduates, who are formally registered as students with disabilities, when percentage is more than 3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do students with a disability enroll in college? • How do enrollment choices vary with disability type? • How have these enrollment choices changed over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning Postsecondary Students: BPS: 90/94, BPS: 96/2001, BPS: 04/09, BPS: 12/17, BPS: 20/22 • PEDS: 1989-90 to 2019-20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do college persistence and completion rates vary by student disability status? • How do these rates vary by college characteristics? How have these rates changed over time? 	<p>Select BPS variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DISABLE: Indicates student has a long-lasting condition such as a hearing impairment (DIS16A = 1), blindness, deafness, or a severe vision impairment (DIS16B = 1); or difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions (DIS17A = 1); or a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying (DIS17B = 1) • IPEDS: 1989-90 to 2019-20

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