Recruitment and Admission of Students With Disabilities
Today’s Topics

• Background and Legislation
• Changing Demographics
• Recruitment & Attraction Process
• Admissions Process
• Questions/Discussion
Background and Legislation

What defines a student with a disability?

The following information presented denotes the use of the term *students with disabilities* to describe a group of students who have emerged as an underrepresented population on college campuses.
Background and Legislation

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Requires any public or private college or university that accepts federal funds for any activity to provide "program accessibility" to campus programs and services. *Program accessibility* is a concept that allows recipients of federal funds, in this case colleges and universities, to make their programs and activities available to individuals with disabilities without extensive retrofitting of their existing buildings and facilities by offering those programs through alternative methods.

Shortcoming of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Section 504 only applies to colleges and universities that accept federal financial assistance of some sort, and does not apply to those institutions that do not accept federal dollars. Moreover, section 504 was not adequately enforced and, therefore, did not increase the number of students with disabilities attending postsecondary education. A more comprehensive civil rights law was needed to implement access for people with disabilities in all facets of society, including higher education.
Background and Legislation

Public Law 94-142
In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), now codified as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Criticism of IDEA from Parents/Students
Some students do not obtain effective transition skills and are not made aware of opportunities at trade, two-year, and four-year schools since students must self-advocate when enrolled in postsecondary schools.
Background and Legislation

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the most comprehensive civil rights law protecting people with disabilities in history.

ADA Impact on Higher Education
Students with disabilities are increasingly accessing, persevering in, and benefiting from higher education experiences not solely due to government mandates but because of an increasing population of students with disabilities and college/university commitments to serving students. Furthermore, students with disabilities can no longer be “actively recruited” due to the confidentiality clause of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
Changing Demographics (Pre-Legislation)

• Universities in the late 1940s and 1950s began implementing rehabilitation and disability support services departments and colleges began recruiting students with disabilities to their school.

• Unfortunately, Glaser (2008) stated that one university was attempting to recruit students with disabilities to “enhance their public image” during the 1960s.

• In the early 1960s in an effort to attract underrepresented individuals the University of Illinois, their Director of Division of Rehabilitation Education Services was the name found at the bottom of acceptance letters therefore giving admittance responsibilities to their office which allowed them to control who was admitted and denied admission.
Changing Demographics

- According to the US Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics, between 1986 and 1994, the percentage of individuals with disabilities, age sixteen or older, who reported attending college or completing a degree rose from 29 to 45.

- A study in 1996 revealed that 6 percent of all undergraduates reported having a disability.

- In a 1998 study by Cathy Henderson, approximately 9 percent of all entering college freshmen reported having a disability, a substantial increase from 1978, when less than 3 percent reported a disability.
Changing Demographics

• A large percentage of institutions that enrolled students with disabilities during the 12-month 2008–09 academic year reported enrolling students with specific learning disabilities (86 percent), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (79 percent), mobility limitations or orthopedic impairments (76 percent), or mental illness/psychological or psychiatric conditions (76 percent)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional characteristic</th>
<th>Total number of institutions</th>
<th>Institutions enrolling students with disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All institutions</td>
<td>4,170</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 2-year</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit 2-year</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit 2-year</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-year</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit 4-year</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit 4-year</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of institution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3,000</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>2,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 to 9,999</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 or more</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Rounds to 100 percent.

NOTE: Information about students with disabilities represents only those students who identified themselves to their institution as having a disability, since these are the only students about whom the institutions could report. Data are for the 12-month 2008–09 academic year. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Recruitment & Attraction Process

• About three-quarters of institutions reported distributing materials designed to encourage students with disabilities to identify themselves to the institution. Most institutions provided one-on-one discussions when requested to assist faculty and staff in working with students with disabilities.

• Robert Young furthered Arthur Sandeen’s study in his Spring 1993 article in *New Directions for Student Services* and found eight critical values within student affairs.

• Of those eight, three are highlighted by Linda Hall and Holley Belch: *community, equality, and human dignity*.

• These three values are central because they are vitally important when working with students with a disability.
Why are these values important in the recruitment process?
Recruitment & Attraction Process

Community, equality, and human dignity are important because a commitment to these values allows those in student affairs to better assist underrepresented groups, including students with disabilities, and provides prospective students with a place that is comfortable and a place where they can belong.
Recruitment & Attraction Process

Barbara Palombi provides the following for four-year institutions to better attract students with disabilities:

- When visiting with students, make sure they know about visiting the campus and make certain their on campus visit focuses on services available to students with disabilities
- Target literature distribution to high school students with disabilities
- Ensure representatives (Admissions Counselors, Recruiters, etc) that visit high schools should be able to articulate the type and extent of special services that are available at their respective institutions
Recruitment & Attraction Process

EducationQuest Foundation, a nonprofit organization lists the following questions that students may ask of representatives:

- What documentation must I bring to identify myself as a student with a disability entitled to reasonable accommodation? How current must it be?
- How is confidential information handled?
- Who decides if I qualify for accommodations?
- Are the accommodations I need available?
- How much advance notice is needed to have textbooks recorded on tape?
- Is tutoring provided? What is the cost?
- Are basic skills or study skills courses offered? Are they available for credit? Can they be counted as hours toward full-time status? What is the cost?
- Is there a support group on campus for students with disabilities?
- Is there an adaptive technology lab on campus?
Recruitment & Attraction Process

The type and extensiveness of available support services are important to students with a disability in determining the selection of a college or university; however, the manner in which questions are addressed can aid in a student making a decision on which college(s) to pursue.
Admission Process

• Many students with disabilities move from an environment in which school personnel have identified their needs and provided appropriate services under IDEA to an environment in which students themselves are expected to provide documentation of their disability and request specific accommodations.

• Issues regarding confidentiality and disclosure of disability, the use of standardized test scores in making admission decisions, and requesting accommodations are significant to students with disabilities in the application and admission process.

• Disclosure of disability, or self-identification as disabled, is a significant issue in the admission process for the student.
Admission Process

• Some institutions have varying criteria for admission and use a sliding scale between a student’s grade point average and standardized test score.

• For applicants with disabilities, however, use of standardized test scores could have adverse effects on admission since some research conducted shows discrimination toward students with disabilities.

• Vogel and Adelman (1992) determined the two best predictors of success for students with learning disabilities have been identified as the number of regular high school English courses completed with a grade of C or better and overall grade point average (GPA).

• American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) recommended that institutions of higher education not rely solely on objective criteria (such as GPAs and standardized test scores) in admission decisions for students with disabilities.
Admission Process

The admissions process is already time consuming and busy...

A preadmission workshop offered by student affairs staff members might assist students with disabilities in gaining valuable information needed during the process of application.
Admission Process – Post Admission

• It is appropriate to encourage students who may need accommodations to declare those as soon as possible after notification of admission

• Service provider contact information should be provided in the application packet

• Admissions staff members need to establish strong relationships with staff who serve students with disabilities in order to obtain the necessary information and counsel from them regarding self-identification

• Roundtable advisement for students with disabilities, their academic advisor, members of the institution’s disability support services office, and any other participants in that student’s education
Questions/Discussion
References

College Students with Disabilities - ACCOMMODATING, SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS
http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1865/College-Students-with-Disabilities.html#ixzz0cQABtgSO


