

New Directions in Faculty Development

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This special issue of the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* presents information on faculty development regarding students with disabilities in postsecondary settings. Each of the articles relates to the work emanating from the Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education (CFDA No. 84.333) funded by Title VII, Part D, of the Higher Education Amendments of 1988. The purpose of these

projects was to develop and implement professional development and technical assistance activities designed to provide faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education the skills and supports needed to help students with disabilities to succeed. See Table 1 for a list of the 21 sites funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), in 1999.

Table 1

Institutions of Higher Education Funded Under the 1999 Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education

University of Arkansas at Little Rock: <http://www.ualr.edu/~pace>
California State University at Northridge: <http://p3.csun.edu/>
University of Connecticut: <http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu>
University of Kansas: <http://www.ku-crl.org>
Buffalo State College: <http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/disabilityservices/fac-workshops.htm>
University of Minnesota: <http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/ctad/default.htm>
University of New Hampshire: <http://iod.unh.edu/EE/>
Oregon Health Sciences University: <http://www.healthsciencefaculty.org>
Utah State University: <http://asd.usu.edu>
Landmark College: <http://www.landmark.edu/support/index.html>
University of Washington: <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Faculty>
University of Arizona: http://www.utc.arizona.edu/utc_peel_main.htm
San Diego State University: http://www.interwork.sdsu.edu/web_programs/higher_ed.html
Northern Illinois University: <http://factraining.hhsweb.com/>
University of Kentucky: http://www.uky.edu/TLC/grants/uk_ed/
Columbia University: Information Not Available At This Time
University of Southern Mississippi: <http://www.ids.usm.edu/ODA/PTTAPProject.htm>
Ohio State University: <http://telr.osu.edu/dpg/>
University of Rhode Island: <http://www.uri.edu/ctc>
Virginia Commonwealth University: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/pda>
University of Wisconsin – Stout: <http://www.askvrd.org/askable>

The purpose of this special issue is to promote awareness of the projects and help postsecondary personnel get an in-depth understanding of the training programs and products developed and available at several exemplary sites. In order to appreciate the significance of these projects, it is important to examine the context for this timely federal initiative supporting college students with disabilities.

Students with Disabilities

The information age is making postsecondary education a personal and national necessity. For example, in 1999 students who graduated from college earned, on average, between 58-92% more than those just graduating from high school. More than 15 million students enrolled in postsecondary education during 2000—about two of every three high school graduates (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The percentage of full-time college freshmen with disabilities increased from 2.3% in 1978 to 9.8% in 1998 (Henderson, 1999). Between 1988 and 2000, “learning disability” was the fastest growing category of reported disabilities among students (Henderson, 2001). By 2000, two in five freshmen with disabilities (40%) cited a learning disability (LD) compared to 16% in 1988. In the last few years, however, students with ADHD and psychiatric disabilities are reported to be increasing at an even faster rate than students with LD (Brinckerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002; Steinberg, 1998; Wolf, 2001).

Clearly, the doors to higher education have opened for these students. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (1999) indicate that students with disabilities who manage to graduate from college exhibit similar labor market outcomes as their counterparts without disabilities (i.e., the employment rates and annual salaries of the two groups do not significantly differ). However, the Report of the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) states that “students with disabilities who elect to continue their education at the post-secondary level face significant barriers to achieving their goals” (p. 48). Thus, college participation and, more important, graduation, does not approach that for students without disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education

(November, 2000) reports that students with disabilities “who enroll in a two-year program with the intention of transferring to a four-year school do not, and students with disabilities are less likely to persist in earning a postsecondary degree or credential than peers without disabilities” (p. 16).

Since a college education has become a minimum requirement to successfully compete in the global marketplace, improved access to postsecondary education and strategies to enhance graduation rates from postsecondary education for students with disabilities must become a priority (Dukes & Shaw, 2003). The challenge for both postsecondary students with disabilities and institutions of higher education is to ensure that access really becomes opportunity.

Postsecondary Disability Services

The changing nature of postsecondary disability services has created a new and challenging environment for service providers. Within the past 10 years trends show that there are a greater number of students to serve, most with disabilities that are not readily apparent to the faculty or administration. In addition, there are often fewer resources, more complex accommodation needs, and a greater potential for conflict and litigation (Heyward, 1998). Providing services to students with disabilities at the postsecondary level has evolved from being straightforward and student-oriented with minimal programmatic influence to being more complex and having substantial impact on faculty instruction and institutional policy (Heyward, 1998). The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) is faced with providing quality service that is appropriate for the individual student and cost effective, as well as adhering to legal mandates.

To help its members deal with these growing challenges, the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD), the organization for postsecondary disability professionals, has recently adopted and promoted several professional guidelines in support of quality program development and enhancement for postsecondary students with disabilities including Professional Standards (Shaw, McGuire, & Madaus, 1997), a Code of Ethics (Price, 1997), and Program Standards (Shaw & Dukes, 2001).

In the arena of faculty development, postsecondary disability professionals have typically focused outreach activities and training materials on legal mandates, including compliance requirements, accommodations, and office procedures (Scott & Gregg, 2000). The relationship between faculty and postsecondary disability professionals has at times been described as adversarial as disability professionals have sought accommodations for students with disabilities (Faculty members, 1995). In recent years, however, there has been increasing acknowledgement of the need to work more collaboratively with college faculty. A major role for postsecondary disability professionals is now seen as collaboration with faculty and other postsecondary personnel to help students become self determined, independent learners (Shaw et al., 1997).

AHEAD's Program Standards for postsecondary disability services reinforce this collaborative role (Shaw & Dukes, 2001). Determined through a rigorous empirical process, these standards reflect overwhelming consensus among postsecondary disability service providers on essential programmatic components (Dukes, 2001). For example, standards in the category of faculty/staff awareness encourage consultation with faculty and support for instructional interventions. As postsecondary disability professional roles continue to evolve, perceptions must move to the next level, beyond mere collaboration with faculty around issues of legal compliance. A focus on a broader interpretation of faculty collaboration and support offers a potentially more powerful and proactive venue for providing equal educational access (Scott & Gregg, 2000).

Faculty

Faculty play a pivotal role in ensuring equal educational access for students with disabilities. Similar to the trends observed with students with disabilities and postsecondary disability services, the expectations of and demands on faculty and their involvement with college access issues have evolved over time. While expectations of faculty were once to merely acknowledge that accommodations must be permitted for students with disabilities (Jastram, 1979; Stewart, 1989), typical activities and expectations now

reflect a much broader ownership of disability issues on campus (see Table 2 for an overview of evolving faculty roles and responsibilities).

Growing participation in ensuring equal educational access for students with disabilities at institutional and individual levels has direct implications for faculty development and training activities. The ultimate example of this expansion of faculty involvement in providing educational access is the emergence of Universal Design (UD) in higher education. Under a UD paradigm accessible features are built into the classroom proactively rather than being retrofitted as an after-the-fact request for accommodation (Scott, Loewen, Funckes, & Kroeger, 2003). As this new paradigm emerges, faculty will take on increasing leadership roles as the key designers of accessible learning environments in the classroom.

Given the changing dynamics of students with disabilities, the emerging pressures and constraints on postsecondary disability services, and the evolving responsibilities of faculty to be increasingly involved in ensuring accessible college environments, the topic of faculty development is receiving increased focus.

Faculty Development

Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, Scott and Gregg (2000) synthesized current practices in faculty development and noted general practices for educating and supporting faculty in working with college students with disabilities. The descriptions in the literature were remarkably consistent, recommending approaches to faculty development such as: (a) the large group faculty inservice as an efficient educational tool for general awareness, (b) the small-group workshop allowing for more in-depth follow-up with faculty including individual departments, and (c) the individual follow-up session designed to assist faculty in responding to individual students. With only slight variation, descriptions of faculty development programming noted that it was important to view faculty education as a developmental process over time, requiring multiple and varied forms of outreach. Training was described as typically focused on increasing knowledge about disabilities, familiarity with nondiscrimination law, and awareness of campus services.

Table 2

Evolving Faculty Roles and Responsibilities in Assuring Equal Educational Access for College Students with Disabilities

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- I. Serve as an institutional representative and assist in fulfilling the legal mandate for campus accessibility.
 - A. Follow policies and procedures of the institution pertaining to disability access
 - B. Be an informed participant in institutional structures that consider disability issues such as disability advisory boards, academic standards committees, and policy development structures.
 - C. Maintain academic standards for program and course requirements
 - D. Participate in institutional requirements for notification of nondiscrimination
 - E. Refer students for services in appropriate support offices
 - II. Participate in the design of inclusive classrooms and decision making about individual student accommodation requests.
 - A. Maintain academic standards of content and pedagogical practice in the classroom
 - B. Make academic adjustments, including modifying instruction that consider student learning and access needs
 - C. Participate in discussion of appropriate accommodations that allow students equal educational access
 - D. Permit reasonable accommodation allowing for student experimentation

Adapted from "Meeting the evolving education needs of faculty in providing access for college students with LD," by S. Scott & N. Gregg, 2000, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 33(2), 158-167.

Although existing faculty development initiatives have served a valuable role, faculty support and training must keep pace with the dynamic and evolving context of higher education. While faculty continue to need information pertaining to disabilities, support services, and the law (Hill, 1996; Leyser, Vogel, Wyland, & Brulle, 1998), there is a critical need for data-based approaches and innovation in faculty development initiatives to keep pace with the ever-changing landscape in higher education. Scott and Gregg (2000) provided a wake-up call, noting that "if we do not re-examine our assumptions and broaden our questions pertaining to faculty development, we have the potential to endlessly recreate the wheel in faculty education approaches" (p. 165).

Salzberg et al. (2002) conducted a survey of disability services professionals to tap their perspectives on changing needs and future directions in faculty development. They identified the need for varied formats in training delivery ranging from traditional in-

person sessions to varied electronic media such as web-based information and CD-ROMs. Leyser et al. (1998) found that few faculty were interested in participating in training workshops, but preferred to receive information through self-paced print materials.

In terms of contents Salzberg et al. (2002) noted that disability services professionals continue to see the importance of providing faculty training in the areas of campus services, legal foundations, and characteristics of disabilities, but in keeping with evolving faculty roles, they recommended expanding the list of desired topics to include ethical issues and designing accommodations. Hot topics identified by disability services professionals as emerging on the horizon of faculty training needs include distance education and Universal Design.

In considering the implications of the varied responses of disability services professionals on future directions in faculty development, Salzberg et al.

(2002) noted that "the design of a faculty training program needs to be tailored to the individual needs, preferences, and available resources of each institution and these vary widely" (p.112). In addition to institutional variation, it has been recommended that faculty development initiatives would benefit from addressing the varying needs of faculty during different career stages (Gillespie, 2002; Scott & Gregg, 2000; Seldin, 1995; Walker & Symmons, 1997) as well as supporting initiatives that are unique to specific academic disciplines (Gillespie, 2002; Huber & Morreale, 2002; Leyser et al., 1998; Scott & Gregg, 2000).

Given this backdrop of a dynamic and changing environment in higher education, the stage is set for examining the innovative demonstration projects that are featured in this special issue.

Demonstration Projects

The Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education were created by Congress "to support model demonstration projects to provide technical assistance or professional development for faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education in order to provide students with disabilities a quality postsecondary education" (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p. 10). They were required to conduct, at least, one of the following activities:

TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES. The development of innovative, effective and efficient teaching methods and strategies to provide faculty and administrators with the skills and supports necessary to teach students with disabilities. Such methods and strategies may include in-service training, professional development, customized and general technical assistance, workshops, summer institutes, distance learning, and training in the use of assistive and educational technology.

SYNTHESIZING RESEARCH AND INFORMATION. Synthesizing research and other information related to the provision of postsecondary educational services to students with disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING SESSIONS. Conducting professional development and training sessions for faculty and administrators from other institutions of higher education to enable the faculty and administrators to meet. (U.S. Department of Education, May 5, 1999, pp. 10-11)

The individual projects highlighted in this issue describe initiatives that have incorporated rigorous data-based procedures for developing and evaluating faculty development approaches and products. They reflect a number of the innovative faculty development topics called for in the literature and, as data-based practices, offer a solid foundation for moving the faculty development knowledge base forward in keeping with the dynamic environment of higher education. Featured projects and their areas of focus include: the University of Connecticut (Universal Design for Instruction), the University of Kentucky (web-based support system), the University of Oregon (staff development for health sciences faculty), and the University of Rhode Island (systems change). We end this special issue of the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* with a synthesis of the Demonstration Projects funded in 1999. Getzel, Briel and McManus gathered data from the 1999 funded projects to provide an overview and general information on the faculty development strategies. Information about the range of projects that have developed unique and effective staff development strategies will permit follow-up in areas of interest. In addition, 27 projects, some continuations and many new ones, began their three year funding in 2002 under the second round of OPE Demonstration Projects. We look forward to continued innovation, expanded resources, and reports of their work when it is completed.

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