Self-Determination and Career Skills as Components of the General Curricula
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell A1

Issue
It has been suggested that the poor post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities are due, in part, to their limited self-determination and career development skills. Students with disabilities may not learn these skills in secondary education because they have limited opportunities to explore careers and make self-directed decisions. Thus, many students lack the skills and experience they need to succeed when they enter postsecondary education and employment. Students should understand their own interests, abilities, limitations and related accommodations/supports prior to entering postsecondary and employment settings. Secondary special educators must re-think and expand their role to assure that students have opportunities to make decisions and to gain the self-determination and career development skills they need in order to navigate adult settings.

Findings
• The current IEP process does not allow for the development of self-determination skills. Only 22% of teachers report that all of their students have self-determination skills included in their IEP, and 31% of teachers report that no self-determination skills are included in their students’ IEP.
• Special educators need to expand their role by focusing on post-school preparation and promoting student self-determination through student-centered transition planning, career exploration, and paid work experiences.
• Career-oriented high schools have a positive impact on students’ self-determination and career planning, as evidenced by increased motivation, persistence, and decision-making among students enrolled in these high schools.

Implications
• Involve students in a coordinated assessment and planning process in secondary school.
• Facilitate student-centered IEPs and self-directed learning models in secondary school.
• Infuse self-determination and career development skills into the curricula.
• Develop and implement vocational and work-based learning programs for all students.
• Extend transition services beyond high school graduation to assure that students are linked to either postsecondary education and/or employment.
• Integrate training on self-determination and career development into teacher pre-service and in-service training.

Supporting Documentation: www_rrtc_hawaii Edu; Cultural Empowerment of Students in PSE; Essential Tools for College Students w/ Disabil; College Success for Students w/Disabil; Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub # 2)

Brief Author Margo Izzo
Role of Family in the Development of Self-Determination in High School and Beyond
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell A1

Issue
Changes in federal policy governing the transition from secondary school to adult life have direct implications for family involvement in the education of a student with a disability. Under IDEA, in secondary education, parents are the legal advocates for students with disabilities until graduation, the age of majority, or completion of IDEA eligibility. In postsecondary education, under the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, persons with disabilities are expected to understand their disability, identify needed accommodations, and negotiate with postsecondary faculty or employers to obtain accommodations. Youth generally learn self-determination skills in the context of relationships—families can be the most pivotal of these relationships.

Findings
- The launching period—the time youth complete formal education and adopt adult roles and responsibilities—is typically challenging for youth with disabilities and their family members.
- Typical parents advocate for their members, give choices, teach members to advocate for themselves, teach skills, and foster self-determination, leading to participation in adult roles.
- The legally mandated advocacy role of parents under IDEA should develop to a role of encourager and supporter of youth with disabilities in adult life.
- In secondary school, often the focus in planning is on the immediate educational environment, not on the needs in the post-school world.

Implications
- Build student/family-professional partnerships during the secondary school years.
- Provide adequate information for decision-making to both students and parents regarding postschool options.
- Promote student empowerment through active participation in IEP team meetings by students with disabilities.
- Seek mechanisms that support the provision of adult service prior to students exiting secondary education.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Role of Families of Students in Postsecondary Ed; Coordination & Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub #4)

Brief Author Teresa Whelley
Issue
As youth transition from secondary education to postsecondary education and then on to employment, the Federal policies that govern their access to support provision within these environments change. With this change come discrepancies in the level of self-determination and advocacy skills that youth with disabilities are expected to have in order to access education and employment opportunities. In secondary school, the IDEA mandates that school districts, along with a team made up of parents, teachers and administrators, are the responsible parties for initiating, articulating and implementing the services, supports and accommodations that a student with a disability needs in order to access a public education. In post-secondary environments, the IDEA no longer applies, and the ADA and Rehabilitation Act hold the individual with a disability responsible for initiating, articulating, and negotiating the provision of any necessary supports.

Findings
• Youth with disabilities do not receive opportunities within secondary school to learn and practice the self-advocacy and self-determination skills that they need in order to negotiate access to postsecondary education and subsequent employment.
• Youth with disabilities in postsecondary education are concerned that they do not have the self-advocacy and self-determination skills that they need in order to articulate/negotiate their access needs in postsecondary education and employment.

Implications
• Youth with disabilities in secondary school should be required to actively participate in the IEP planning process with a focus on articulating the nature of their disability, how their disability relates to their assistance needs, and learning and practicing skills needed in the post-school environment.
• During the transition process, youth with disabilities should be made aware about how their roles will change in terms of procuring assistance in post-school environments.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub # 2); Services, Supports and Accommodations for Individuals w/Dis (NCSET Pub # 1); Cultural Empowerment of Students in PSE; Coordination of Support Services; Faculty Awareness of Disability Rights; Essential Tools for College Students w/Disabil

Brief Author Megan A. Jones
Self-Determination for Youth with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell A1

Issue
The growing emphasis on self-determination for students with disabilities has been marked by an emerging core of empirical research that supports the positive link between self-determination skills and successful post-school outcomes. Quality of life outcomes include access to postsecondary education, higher rates of employment, and increased wages for students with disabilities. In addition, research has found that students who learn self-determination skills have higher levels of self-esteem, enhanced intrinsic motivation, and more effective communication skills. Despite the pervasive popularity and growing empirical validation of the need to teach self-determination skills, critical gaps exist in the instruction of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Education programs have long been criticized for being structured in ways that diminish the development of self-determination for youth with disabilities. Students do not use self-determination skills in the development of their IEP/ITP, since, typically, they are not active participants in the planning process.

Findings
• Students with significant cognitive disabilities are not typically taught self-determination skills or supported to practice such skills while they are in secondary school.
• Students with significant cognitive disabilities have indicated that they are not prepared for taking on the responsibility of advocating for themselves and for identifying needed accommodations and supports in postsecondary education and employment settings.

Implications
• The need to learn self-determination skills applies to all students, including students with significant disabilities.
• Students with significant cognitive disabilities should be taught self-determination skills across the secondary school curriculum and should be provided with ample opportunities to practice skills.
• There is a need for professional development for personnel on how to teach and practice self-determination and self-advocacy skills.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; PSE Practices for Indiv w/MR: Review of Lit; Serving Students w/ Disabil. Reflection of CC Teacher; Case Study of Student-Parent-Faculty –DSO in PSE; Creating Access to College for All Students; Coordination & Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub #4)

Brief Author: Debra Hart
Issue
There has been increasing concern over the need for youth with disabilities to develop the self-determination skills that they will need in order to advocate for themselves in postsecondary settings. The need to self-advocate arises on a daily basis for many individuals with disabilities, often in the form of having to describe their disability and related support needs to others. The call for increasing self-determination skills in youth with disabilities often assumes that when individuals with disabilities advocate for themselves, they are assured immediate and positive results. However, this is not always the case. Although self-determination and self-advocacy skills have been identified as necessary tools for success, the fact is that other people’s attitudes can still pose a significant barrier to individuals with disabilities. Even the most congenial and skilled advocate may be met with resistance from others, perhaps labeled a “trouble maker” or perceived as trying to take advantage of the system in order to get special treatment that is unwarranted.

Findings
• Students with disabilities in postsecondary education say that “other people’s attitudes” are one of the most significant barriers that they face.
• Although there have been attempts to develop curricula that enhance the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of youth and postsecondary students with disabilities, this curricula receives little attention or meaningful application by many educators.
• Many postsecondary institutions and employers focus on meeting the letter of the law rather than upon what the individual with a disability indicates are their accommodation wants and needs.

Implications
• Efforts to increase the self-determination skills of youth with disabilities must be coupled with educating others about valuing and respecting individuals with disabilities.
• The government must fund projects that examine the interplay of expressions of self-determination and societal attitudes about disability.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Wilson & Getzel, Creating a Supportive Campus; Focus Group, Transition to Employment; Topic Rev., Postsecondary Supports; Stodden, Stodden, Kim-Rupnow, Sam, Services for Minority People w/Dis; Essential Tools for College Students w/Disabil; College Success Class for Students w/Disabil; Services, Supports & Accommodations (NCSET Pub #1); Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub #2)

Brief Author Megan A. Jones
Self-Determination and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth with Disabilities
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell A1

Issue
Youth with disabilities, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, often lack the attitudes and skills needed for effective self-determination. Self-determination is generally understood as the personal capacity to choose one’s own goals and then purposefully undertake steps to achieve those goals. In recent years, strategies for boosting the self-determination attitudes and skills of youth with disabilities have been widely promoted because: (1) services are more likely to be successful when youth actively participate in planning them; (2) youth who have good self-determination attitudes and skills achieve better post-school outcomes; and (3) self-determination is considered important in order to participate as a contributing member of a democratic society. However, efforts to enhance the self-determination attitudes and skills of CLD youth with disabilities may lose effectiveness if cultural differences are not taken into account. For example, self-determination is often defined in terms of an individualistic ethic, which values individual achievement and independence from group influences. By contrast, the members of many CLD groups tend to place high value on group achievement and interdependence among group members.

Findings
• Self-determination tends to be understood and defined in the context of an individualistic ethic that may be at odds with values commonly held in various CLD groups.
• If programs and strategies to enhance self-determination attitudes and skills are rooted in an individualistic ethic, they may be relatively less effective with members of certain CLD groups.

Implications
• Efforts to enhance self-determination attitudes and skills of CLD youth with disabilities need to take account of, and build on, the decision-making and goal-setting practices of their families and communities.
• Secondary education and postsecondary education models that demonstrate CLD values should be supported and evaluated vigorously.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Bibliography: Nakanishi & Nishida, 1995; Park & Chi, 1999; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; Self-Det& Career Devel (NCSET Pub #2)

Brief Author David Leake
Issue
Although students with disabilities are entering postsecondary education in greater numbers, evidence suggests that they experience difficulty completing their programs. One major factor contributing to their limited success are the dramatic differences in the federal policies that govern their educational support in high school and college. In high school, under IDEA (1997), students with disabilities are entitled to individualized supports and services provided by an array of special education staff. Postsecondary settings are governed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA (1990), which only mandate access to higher education, not a range of services and support personnel. Furthermore, these laws hold students with disabilities responsible for requesting and securing any accommodations and supports. Consequently, self-determination and self-advocacy skills, or the ability to articulate one’s strengths, challenges, and necessary supports, are critical in postsecondary settings.

Findings
• A college course focusing on the development of self-determination and self-advocacy skills can increase understanding of these skills for students with disabilities.
• When given opportunities to practice self-advocacy with college faculty, students with disabilities increase their confidence and are more likely to talk with their own instructors.
• A college faculty workshop on disability issues developed and presented by students with disabilities is a valuable format for learning about disability topics.
• A panel discussion by veteran college students and faculty with disabilities presented to college freshmen with disabilities is a valuable tool for learning about the importance of self-determination and self-advocacy for college success.

Implications
• Postsecondary schools should offer supports in self-determination and self-advocacy (courses) for students with disabilities and encourage students to educate faculty.
• Recognition of the role of veteran college students and college faculty with disabilities in mentoring college students with disabilities should be demonstrated through model projects.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Cultural Empowerment of Students in PSE; Essential Tools for College Students w/ Disabil; College Success Class for Students w/ Disabil; Self-Det & Career Devel. (NCSET Pub #2)

Brief Author: Peg Lamb
Issue
Many students with disabilities entering postsecondary education are unaware of how their disability impacts their learning. These students are unable to articulate what changes are needed in their learning strategies or accommodations in order to meet the demands of higher level learning. As a result, students with disabilities often experience difficulties in articulating their accommodation needs with university faculty and staff.

Findings
- Students with disabilities will seek accommodations but are often reluctant to fully utilize them. Students expressed concerns about feeling singled out from the other students, concerns about faculty not believing students are qualified for college as a result of using accommodations, and concerns about being able to manage their educational needs.
- Peer mentors are a valuable and effective resource for students with disabilities in post secondary education from which to obtain ideas and strategies on how to discuss accommodations with faculty and staff.

Implications
- Students with disabilities need to enter post secondary education better prepared to meet the responsibilities of advocating for their educational services and supports.
- Further research is needed on the long-term impact of peer mentors in assisting students with disabilities to successfully adjust to post secondary education environments and remain in college.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Comp Career Plan: VCU; College Success Class for Students w/Disabil: Getzel, McManus, Briel, and Wehman, 2002; Supports & Accommod (NCSET Pub # 1); Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub # 2); [www.ncset.hawaii.edu](http://www.ncset.hawaii.edu); NCSET Pub # 11

Brief Author Liz Getzel
Youth with disabilities continue to lag far behind their non-disabled peers in terms of outcomes such as employment - only 29% of persons with disabilities between ages 18-64 are employed. Lack of skills by many youth with disabilities entering the workforce continues to be one of their primary obstacles to achieving positive post-school outcomes. Further, it has been shown that self-determination/self-advocacy skills are critical for students with disabilities in employment. It is crucial that we examine whether lack of self-determination/self-advocacy skills contributes to poor employment outcomes.

Findings
• Many persons with disabilities who were interviewed in one study were either “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” with their current accommodations and their ability to identify and advocate for their needs with their employer. However, many also indicated some level of dissatisfaction with their ability to discuss accommodation needs with their employer.
• Sixty-six percent of the participants in the study indicated that they made their own accommodations without support from professional support staff or their employer. Further, 52% reported making their own accommodations “Almost Always” or “Frequently.”

Implications
• Teach persons with disabilities self-advocacy skills as early as possible and provide training regarding their rights to accommodations and supports in the workplace.
• Analyze and synthesize research-proven practices and strategies that will increase self-advocacy skills for persons with disabilities in the workplace.
• Work with employers to increase and benefit from awareness of the accommodations and supports they can provide for their employees with disabilities.
Issue
Despite policy changes and an increased focus on supports, the rate of unemployment for individuals with disabilities has been exceptionally low for the past 12 years. Education is one way to empower persons with disabilities to achieve a higher quality of life. There are statistically significant relationships between disability, level of education, and employment outcomes. Success for people with disabilities is, however, part of a bigger picture that includes self-competence, self-determination, and self-awareness. These are some of the characteristics that persons with disabilities, who have successfully transitioned from postsecondary education to employment, possess and apply as they participate in the workforce.

Findings
- Persons with disabilities need natural supports, such as mentors and family supports, in order to succeed in postsecondary education and employment settings.
- Control and choice are as important if not more important for persons with disabilities than they are for persons without disabilities.
- Many persons with disabilities attribute their employment success to internal motivation, persistence, and their personal relationships.
- Because employers and employees are often still unaware and/or biased toward individuals with disabilities and their skills and needs, individuals with disabilities feel that they must work harder, and be more competitive to be successfully employed.
- People with disabilities' primary motivation for higher education are the pursuit of a ‘good job’ and the resulting financial independence that comes with professional level employment.

Implications
- Continue to work to decrease bias and increase awareness of employers regarding the skills and value of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
- Clarify factors in the current transition system that improve or impede the success of individuals with disabilities.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Transition 2 yr to 4yr for Students w/Disabil.; Quality of Life after PSE for Indiv w/Disabili.; Success for People w/Disabil After PSE; Self Det & Career Devel. (NCSET Pub #2)

Brief Author Joie Acosta, Jennifer Graf, Nghi Thai
Issue
Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that programs that teach career development and self-determination skills in the context of self-directed work-based learning experiences have improved employment outcomes. As measured one-to-two years following graduation from high school, common characteristics of these programs included: (1) coordinated assessment and planning process that involved the student, family, school and agency personnel, (2) school and work-based instruction that included many opportunities for students to choose jobs that match their interests and abilities, and (3) follow-up services, data collection and pooled resources/shared funds of multiple agencies such as schools, vocational rehabilitation and labor.

Findings
• Work-based learning can result in better school performance, increased motivation to learn, and the opportunity to develop and refine career interests and make job contacts.
• Students who receive extended transition services are significantly more likely to be employed or in a training program than those without extended transition supports.
• Equipping students with knowledge of their disability improves their ability to self-advocate.
• A credit bearing classes on self-determination can improve self-awareness and advocacy skills.
• School and agency personnel who pool funds and resources and deliver follow-up services gain improved employment outcomes.

Implications
• Focus graduation requirements on the acquisition of academic and transition skills that are relevant to the student’s self-determined future.
• Expand self-directed internships and work-based learning opportunities for youth.
• Develop collaborative relationships among school and agency personnel that use follow-up data from a coordinated management information system to improve services and outcomes.
• Extend transition services beyond high school that are coordinated with adult services and are jointly funded by school and rehabilitation and other adult service agencies.

Supporting Documentation: [http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Cultural Empowerment of Students in PSE; Essential Tools for College Students w/Disabil; College Success For Students w/Disabil; Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub# 2)

Brief Author Margo Izzo
Issue
In 1991, 8.8% of full-time college freshmen reported having some form of disability, compared with 2.6% in 1978. Of the types of disabilities reported, learning disabilities were the fastest growing group, increasing from 15% to 25% of all students with disabilities over the 13-year period. While these data indicate an increase in the number of people with learning disabilities attending college they do not indicate the number of students graduating. There is evidence that young adults with learning disabilities have low postsecondary graduation rates and tend to take longer to complete their program of study compared to their peers without disabilities. Estimates of the number of adults with learning disabilities who exhibit written language disorders range from 80% to 90%. For these individuals assistive technology in the form of voice recognition software may offer a new strategy to be utilized to increase access and success in postsecondary and subsequent employment settings.

Findings
• Qualitative findings indicate “timing” is a strong determinant of voice recognition software use by students with learning disabilities in postsecondary education. Students indicate that they do not have the time necessary to learn the new skills required to use the software while also fulfilling their academic requirements.
• In one study, voice recognition software was found to be effective for two participants (out of 11). One of these participants had severe dysgraphia and the other used the software to put her thoughts into writing. Three participants dropped out of college prior to using the software for completing assignments. Six other participants indicated they didn’t have enough time to learn the new skills required for using the software.

Implications
• Voice recognition software and training should be provided as an option for postsecondary students with learning disabilities.
• Issues of training, availability of software, and the availability of time on the part of students to learn the software are important issues to be researched.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Assistive Tech Supports; Trends of AT in PSE; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth W/ Disabilities for PSE (NCSET Pub #3)

Brief Author Kelly Roberts
**Issue**

It is widely recognized that effective teachers understand and respond to the individual strengths and needs of their students. This process is particularly critical in the field of special education, but tends to be more difficult when teachers and students come from substantially different backgrounds. Such differences are quite common, given that close to one-third of public school students are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) heritage, compared to only about one-seventh of teachers. The problem seems to be getting worse, with the proportion of CLD students projected to increase to about one-half by 2040. Two solutions have been widely promoted: One is to increase the proportion of CLD teachers, and the other is to enhance the cultural competence of teachers and of the educational system as a whole. “Cultural competence” refers to the capacity of individuals and agencies to work effectively in cross cultural situations. An important rationale for promoting cultural competence is that it enhances the effectiveness of educational and related services, producing better outcomes at a lower cost compared to services lacking cultural competence. In addition, cultural competence supports greater accuracy and validity in referring and evaluating students of CLD heritage for special education eligibility.

**Findings**

- Persons of CLD heritage are underrepresented among education personnel overall.
- There is often a lack of cultural competence in the determination of special education eligibility and the provision of special education and related services.

**Implications**

- Special efforts are needed to increase the proportion of persons of CLD heritage among teachers and school administrators.
- Cultural competence should be made a required component of all pre-service teacher training programs; models should be demonstrated regarding the use of cultural competence in teacher education.
- All teachers and school administrators serving CLD populations should be provided with in-service training and mentoring for cultural competence.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Bibliography. Berliner & Biddle, 1996; Gay, 2002; Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Warger & Burnette, 2000; Coordination & Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub #4); Services, Supports & Accommodations for Indiv w/Disabilities (NCSET Pub #1)

**Brief Author** David Leake
Issue
Today, technology plays a role in almost all educational, employment-related, and recreational activities. Computer access has the potential to help people with disabilities complete coursework independently, participate in class discussions, communicate with peers and mentors, access distance learning courses, participate in high tech careers, and lead self-determined lives. Although the benefits of technology may be even greater for people with disabilities than for those without disabilities, individuals with disabilities are less likely to own a computer or to use the Internet. The full potential of technology for individuals with disabilities will not be realized unless all individuals with disabilities have access to technology, learn to use technology, and experience a seamless transition of access to technology as they move through educational and career environments.

Findings
• There is a lack of funding to purchase assistive technology in educational settings.
• Many computing environments are inaccessible because of procurement and development of inaccessible electronic resources and the design of inaccessible facilities.
• There is a lack of knowledge by teachers and support staff about accessible electronic and information technology.
• Policy and funding discrepancies exist that impede a smooth transition of technology access between academic levels and career environments.

Implications
• Ensure that all students with disabilities and the professionals who support them have access to and learn to use technology, as a part of the educational experience.
• Ensure a seamless transition of availability of technology and support as people with disabilities move through secondary and postsecondary education and career environments.
• Design accessible labs and purchase assistive technology for all school computing environments.
• Include students with disabilities and their supporters at all stages of technology selection, support, and use.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth w/ Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub # 3); Burgstahler & Cronheim, 2001; Assistive Tech Supports; Trend of AT in PSE: www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET Pub F#10

Brief Author Sheryl Burgstahler
Issue
One of the hallmarks of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the “child find” requirements codified in Sections 1412 (a)(3) and 1412(a)(10). Essentially, this aspect of the federal legislation requires that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must implement a comprehensive system for identifying children and youth in need of special education and related services as a result of a suspected disability. As such, each LEA has an affirmative obligation to actively identify, locate, and evaluate all individuals 0-21 years of age to ensure that a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is available to those deemed eligible. While the implementation of the child find requirements of IDEA has resulted in the identification of many students with disabilities, it nevertheless remains unclear the extent to which some are “missed,” especially in those categories termed “hidden disabilities” (e.g., Specific Learning Disability, Attention Deficit Disorder, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder). The failure to identify these students at an early age when specialized instruction can be provided will have clear ramifications for later learning—particularly those who wish to pursue postsecondary education opportunities.

Findings
• In a recent study conducted by NCPES, 31% of the participants indicated that their disability was first identified at the postsecondary level.
• When declaring a primary disability, 44% of the participants with an Attention Deficit Disorder indicated that their disability was first identified at the postsecondary level. Similarly, 31% of the participants with Specific Learning Disability indicated that their disability was first identified at the postsecondary level.

Implications
• There is a need to enforce the “Child Find” component of the IDEA in order to identify students with disabilities before the postsecondary level, especially students with “hidden” disabilities.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Project Grad

Brief Author Michael Sharp
Issue
Discrepancies between secondary school and postsecondary school regarding the provision of supports, both in policy and in practice, present a significant barrier to postsecondary school success for youth with disabilities. Students with disabilities transition from procedural steps under the highly prescriptive Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (which provides the guidelines and financial support for schools to serve students with disabilities), to the Americans with Disabilities Act, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which are civil rights laws that provide only vague guidelines and no financial support for postsecondary institutions and employers to support persons with disabilities. After secondary school, students are required to self-identify and advocate for supports in a number of systems with limited resources, inconsistent terminology, and conflicting eligibility requirements. There is a need for secondary schools to better prepare students with disabilities for success within the different support systems found in postsecondary education and employment.

Findings
• Students, parents and professionals lack information about differences in the provision of supports after secondary school.
• Students with disabilities in secondary school are seldom active participants in decisions about their own learning.
• Students with disabilities lag behind their non-disabled counterparts in terms of academic preparation for the requirements of post-school settings.

Implications
• Utilize the IEP and ITP to prepare students academically and facilitate self-determination and self-advocacy skills, self-knowledge, and career development. Structure IEP planning around student’s long term post-school goals, rather than short-term educational goals.
• Increase participation of students with disabilities in opportunities that are more similar to all other students’ goal-setting processes.
• Improve collaboration and communication between support personnel, secondary and postsecondary institutions, agencies, and related service providers.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Services, Supports and Accommodations (NCSET Pub #1); Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub #2); Role of Tech in Prep of Youth W/ Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub #3); Coordination & Manage Of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub #4); Coordination Of Support Services; Secondary Influ & Outcomes; Secondary Curricula Issues: www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET Pub #5

Brief Author Kelly B.T. Chang
The Nature of Secondary and Postsecondary Instructional Accommodations
Strategic Plan of Research: Cells B1, B2

Issue
A prominent feature of federal requirements intended to address the needs of individuals with disabilities is that of providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Whether one refers to the mandates of the IDEA or Section 504, the requirements to provide students with accommodations is firmly embedded into these federal laws. While the stipulations and scope of the mandates differ, it is reasonable to assume that an effective accommodation should be “portable”—that is, an accommodation that “works” at the secondary level should have value at the postsecondary level as well. Thus, whether it involves some type of instructional strategy or the use of assistive technology, an accommodation that effectively facilitates student learning should be adaptable to any type of educational environment. In a recent study conducted by NCPES, data were analyzed to examine both the differences and similarities in the nature and range of instructional accommodations provided to students in the secondary and postsecondary settings.

Findings
• Accommodations reported by study participants were much more likely to be referred to in postsecondary settings, rather than the secondary school setting.
• Very few of the most frequently used accommodations involved the use of “high” or complex technologies.
• A marked discrepancy was noted between settings, with regard to the use of the accommodation “Communicating with the Instructor.” This accommodation, which involves the student’s ability to discuss accommodation needs with their instructor, was used at a rate of 47% at the postsecondary level in comparison with only 2% at the secondary level.

Implications
• Research-based strategies for secondary and postsecondary staff need to stress that the majority of accommodations can be implemented with relative ease and do not require complex technologies or labor intensive efforts.
• Educators at the secondary level need to provide students with self-advocacy skills that will allow them to understand and communicate their learning needs to instructors at the postsecondary school level and to employers in subsequent workplace settings.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Supports & Accommod (NCSET Pub #1); Project Grad; www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET Pub #11

Brief Author Michael Sharpe
Issue
The demands of the Twenty First Century workforce include advanced training, technical skills, high standards for productivity, problem solving, and teamwork. Students with disabilities are among those entering postsecondary education in greater numbers to meet these demands. However, students with disabilities often experience limited success and exit college without completing their program of studies. Policy makers, in the revision of IDEA 1997, addressed the need for strong transition programs involving collaboration between high school and rehabilitation agencies by defining transition services similar to the definition used in the Rehabilitation Act of 1992. The alignment of these laws clears the way for Rehabilitation Counselors to work jointly with special educators and students with disabilities to promote successful transition from secondary to postsecondary education and employment.

Findings
• School-To-Work Internships jointly developed and supported by special educators and rehabilitation counselors are critical for developing a career focus for youth with disabilities.
• Self-determination/self-advocacy skills evolve over time when strategically developed by both the special education teacher and the rehabilitation counselor.
• Encouragement and support from the rehabilitation counselor increases the frequency of interactions with youth with disabilities.
• Postsecondary educational supports (encouragement, purchase of technology, support for tuition, books) increase a student’s motivation to succeed and decreases the time and stress of completing a postsecondary educational program of study.

Implications
• Demonstration of effective, collaborative transition programs between special education and rehabilitation counselors during transition from secondary school to postsecondary school and employment.
• Development of incentives for businesses to continue School-To-Work Programs, and other program support for preparation activities.
• Integrated pre-service training programs for special education and rehabilitation trainees.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; PSE & Employment; Coordination of Support Services; Role of Rehab in Transition to PSE & Employ; Coordination & Management of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub #4)

Brief Author Peg Lamb
Issue
Postsecondary education students have a range of independent, dependent and interdependent relationships with their families. Some students live apart from their families, are financially independent and have their own social networks. Other students live at home, are financially dependent, and also depend on family members for instrumental support, e.g. transportation and assistance with daily living. Students with disabilities often take a longer time to establish adult relationships within their families. Faculty /student relationships can be very empowering in support of persons with disabilities during the postsecondary education years. Often faculty or peers can serve as role models and become mentors.

Findings
• Families give encouragement, provide guidance and instill a vision for the future for youth as they transition from secondary education to adult roles.
• Families continue to provide for the basic necessities for their children as they transition to postsecondary education.
• Mentoring by professional persons with disabilities who are successful in their field of study has a positive effect on the personal and career development of students with disabilities.
• Many successful professional persons with disabilities report that professional role models and mentors were important to their success.

Implications
• More information needs to be given to educators regarding the important role that families play in the career development process of students and adults with disabilities.
• Parents need to be honored and valued during the secondary school transition time and included in a supporting role with their young adult.
• The use of professional role models and mentors needs to be encouraged through research-based model demonstration initiatives.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Role of Families of Students in Postsecondary Ed; Oceans of Potentiality; Role Modeling and Mentoring; Role of Rehab in Transition to PSE; Services, Supports and Accommodations (NCSET Pub # 1); Faculty Mentors and Peer Role Models

Brief Author Teresa Whelley
Characteristics of Disability Support Personnel in Postsecondary Education
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell B2

Issue
Identifying the appropriate and reasonable educational supports and accommodations needed by students with disabilities to progress and succeed in postsecondary programs appears to be of critical importance. Disability support staff provide a wide array of support, accommodation, service acquisition and coordination functions. Disability Support Personnel in postsecondary education have been characterized by students with disabilities, through a series of focus groups, as committed, supportive and sometimes offering guidance beyond their job descriptions.

Findings
• Disability support personnel are performing their jobs with a diverse range of preparation and often appear to be learning on-the-job without benefit of a coherent program of study.
• Approximately half of disability support personnel surveyed have been in their positions less than five years, but about half have been in student support provision more than 10 years.
• 75% of disability support coordinators have a Masters Degree (in some field of study), reflecting a high level of education commensurate with the complexity of their positions.
• A Professional Standards and Code of Ethics has been approved by the Association for Higher Education and the Disabled (AHEAD) to guide the training and professional role of disability support personnel in postsecondary education.

Implications
• The Professional Standards and Code of Ethics need to be aligned with collegiate accreditation systems, thus finalizing the role across postsecondary education programs.
• There is a need for increased implementation of the Standards and Ethics, as a basis of credentialing new and existing disability support personnel in postsecondary education.
• There is a need to develop a system of awareness and accountability regarding educational support provision so that youth with disabilities and their parents can make informed decisions about choosing a postsecondary institution that offers the supports that youth need in order to succeed.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Coordination of Support Services; Transfer of Support to Employ; Coordination & Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub # 4)

Brief Author Teresa Whelley
Issue
Many postsecondary faculty members are not aware of the many services available to assist them in working with students with disabilities. As one faculty member reported in a focus group, “This topic of disability has never been discussed… I feel as faculty we are left in the dark.” Other faculty members report that they do not have an understanding of how students’ needs for accommodations should be disclosed and negotiated or the role they should play in providing accommodations, as evidenced by this statement: “I do not want to give accommodations without the proper identification because it is not fair to the other students. How do I get the information to make an informed decision?”

Findings
• Some faculty members are concerned that accommodations might compromise the academic integrity of their courses.
• Many faculty are unaware of their legal obligation to provide academic accommodations, strategies for communicating with and teaching students with disabilities, as well as the resources to help them provide accommodations for their students with disabilities.
• Often students are reluctant to approach faculty to discuss their accommodation needs.
• Students with hidden disabilities (e.g. ADHD, learning and/or psychiatric disabilities) report the greatest challenges in securing accommodations.

Implications
• Faculty members and teaching assistants should be provided with professional development on their rights and responsibilities when teaching students with disabilities, different types of disabilities and related accommodations; general teaching strategies for reaching all students; effective ways of communicating without violating confidentiality; and campus-wide resources.
• Professional development opportunities for faculty and teaching assistants to promote the principles of universal design to minimize the need for basic accommodations.
• Postsecondary faculty need to provide confidential ways for students to approach them about disability-related accommodations.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; National Survey; Promising Practices for Students w/disabil; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth w/ Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub #3); Professional Dev for Faculty; Transition from 2yr to 4yr School for Students w/ Disabil.

Brief Authors Sheryl Burgstahler, Margo Izzo, Liz Getzel
Effective Supports and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell B2

Issue
Questions still remain about which strategies and supports are effective for enabling students with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder to successfully complete their programs of study. Currently in the field of disability and higher education no body of knowledge exists regarding which specific accommodations are appropriate for these students, nor is there information regarding which educational outcomes were dependent upon the use of accommodations. Virginia Commonwealth University has documented the services and supports provided to a cohort of 17 students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders during the 2001-2002 academic year. Data was collected on types of supports provided, frequency and intensity of supports, academic outcomes, and satisfaction with services.

Findings
• Student use of educational accommodations increased when an individualized plan was developed which incorporated the accommodations with other specialized services and supports.
• Positive educational outcomes were linked to the intensity and frequency of services and supports used by students, their access to technology, and persistence. Outcomes were measured by course grades, retention, and progression in their program of study.
• Providing multiple strategies to learn and practice course material proved highly effective for students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders in both academic and medical settings.

Implications
• Individualized planning in postsecondary education settings can assist students to coordinate their accommodations and specialized supports to successfully meet their educational needs.
• Further study is required on the institutional structures that are needed in order to provide appropriate accommodations and supports to students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Pursuing PSE Opps for Indiv w/ Disab; Effect Instruct Strategies for LD; Getzel, McManus, Briel, & Wehman, 2002; Supports & Accommod (NCSET Pub #1): [www.ncset.hawaii.edu](http://www.ncset.hawaii.edu); NCSET Pub #5

Brief Author Liz Getzel
Issue
The positive impact of postsecondary education, as well as poor employment outcomes for people with disabilities, make increasing their success in college an important goal. In order for students with disabilities to successfully pursue postsecondary academic and career options, they must have access to the high tech tools available to their nondisabled peers. These include computers, Web sites, telecommunications products, instructional software, and scientific equipment.

Findings
• Postsecondary education institutions often purchase technology, develop Web pages and distance learning courses, as well as utilize other electronic resources that are inaccessible to individuals with disabilities.
• The need for developing accommodations for specific students can be minimized when Web pages and other electronic resources are designed to be universally accessible.
• Persons with disabilities identify the two biggest barriers for technology access to be lack of knowledge by support personnel regarding appropriate assistive technology and lack of funding to purchase assistive technology.

Implications
• Postsecondary education programs should consider universal accessibility in all technology procurement processes.
• There is a need to design computer labs, provide assistive technology and develop Web pages, distance learning courses and other electronic resources so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.
• Postsecondary education programs must train disability, library, computer and distance learning support staff to design accessible computing environments and select appropriate assistive technology for students with disabilities.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth w/Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub #3); Burgstahler, 2002, Educational Technology Review; Trend of AT in PSE; www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET Pub #10

Brief Author Sheryl Burgstahler
The Emergence of Psychiatric Disabilities in Postsecondary Settings
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell B2

Issue
In any given year, it has been estimated about one in five Americans experience a diagnosable psychiatric disability that includes major depressive disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and anxiety disorders. By their very nature, a number of psychiatric disabilities remain dormant, manifested only at critical stages of human psychosocial development. It has been observed that the onset of major mental illness occurs between the ages of 18-25—a time when many young adults are seeking postsecondary education, preparing for future careers, and developing significant social relationships. However, little actuarial information exists regarding their presence in postsecondary settings. For example, in a 1999 Statistical Analysis Report by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 1999), “psychiatric disabilities” was not included as a separate disability category. Nevertheless, emerging evidence suggests that students with psychiatric disabilities are enrolling in postsecondary institutions at rapidly increasing rates.

Findings
• In a series of surveys it has been found that within one year, five of the Big Ten institutions encountered an increase from 30% to a 100% in the number of students served with psychiatric disabilities.
• The failure of students with documented psychiatric disabilities to request accommodations often results in academic failure, social isolation, withdrawal, and expulsion.

Implications
• There is a need to gather more information regarding the prevalence of students with psychiatric disabilities in postsecondary settings. Little is known regarding the types of support services available to them and the outcomes they have achieved.
• There is a need to explore how the growing numbers of students with psychiatric disabilities in postsecondary settings impacts ADA related liability issues for disability service providers, postsecondary educators, and administrators.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu;
Project Grad

Brief Author Michael Sharpe
Issue
As required by the IDEA of 1997, school districts nationwide provide educational services to students with significant disabilities, aged 18 – 21, who remain in public school. Unfortunately, school districts often offer a continuation of the same “life skills” curriculum students have participated in for the previous four years, in many instances with the same group of students and teachers, and often in the same high school-based classroom. The expectations of educators and rehabilitation professionals for students with significant disabilities are exceptionally low. Research reveals that individuals with developmental disabilities have the lowest participation rate of all students with disabilities in postsecondary education. Students with significant disabilities are often not offered the choice of postsecondary coursework, nor are parents aware that postsecondary education options even exist for their children.

Findings
• When available, postsecondary education programs typically fall within three types of models: (1) Substantially separate programs; (2) mixed programs; and (3) individual supports.
• Services and supports presently available in postsecondary education may not include all of those needed by students for success in inclusive settings (e.g., educational coaches).
• Students with significant disabilities are not provided the academic preparation, self-determination training, or technology that they need in order to succeed in postsecondary education and employment.

Implications
• Fund research-based demonstration programs on individual support models that provide students with significant disabilities the needed supports for success in postsecondary education and employment.
• Conduct further research linking student outcomes, cost-sharing strategies, and supportive linkages from postsecondary education to employment.
• Evaluate promising practices (e.g., policies, instructional strategies, accommodations) that support students with significant disabilities in postsecondary education.
• Provide training and support for families and students with significant disabilities to explore postsecondary education options.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Case Study of Student-Parent-Faculty-DSO in PSE; PSE Practices for Indiv w/MR: Review of Lit; Creating Access to College for All Students; Serving Students w/Disabil. Reflection of CC teacher; Hart, Zimbrich, & Gilmore, 2002

Brief Author Debra Hart
Issue
Postsecondary school is a time when most youth have the opportunity to experience the freedoms associated with adulthood, including the ability to make independent choices and succeed based upon their own merits. Many postsecondary students with disabilities rely on supports that are provided by their college or university in order to access their program of study, student housing, and other opportunities that postsecondary schools have to offer. Given the importance of these supports to a student’s success, the types of supports that a student receives should ideally be based upon the preferences and needs of the individual student. However, there is evidence that the range of supports that many postsecondary schools offer do not sufficiently take into account the preferences of students with disabilities in general, nor the expressed needs of individual students.

Findings
• Postsecondary educational supports for students with disabilities tend to be focused on instructional, low tech and inexpensive accommodations. Students with disabilities indicate that the supports that they view as most important are on-campus transportation, advocacy training, access to technology, and financial aid. These are among the supports that are least offered to students with disabilities by postsecondary institutions.
• Many postsecondary schools tend to focus upon the “reasonableness” of support provision practices as defined by the ADA, rather than what is needed for the student to be successful.

Implications
• There is a need to explore research-based practices in the provision of postsecondary supports that emphasize student choice and their need to be successful in their program of study.
• Government must develop incentives for postsecondary institutions to provide supports based upon student preference and need rather than upon “reasonableness”, expense and convenience.

Supporting Documentation: www.rRTC.hawaii.edu; Focus Group Study: National Survey; Doc Effective Models of Ed Support; Trend of Tech Support In PSE; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth for PSE (NCSET Pub #3); Supports & Accoms (NCSET Pub #1): www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET pub #5

Brief Author Megan A. Jones
Issue
A national survey of postsecondary support provision for students with disabilities in postsecondary education was conducted in 1999 and provided a comprehensive national baseline of data to address issues concerning educational support provision. This national survey was replicated in 2001 in an effort to identify potential trends over a two year period. Results from the two surveys provide crucial information for researchers seeking to ascertain the current status and trends in educational supports and provisions to students with disabilities in postsecondary education programs.

Findings
• There is an upward trend in postsecondary offering of educational supports/services for students with disabilities as assessed over a two year period. Areas that indicate significant improvement are the provision of assistive technology (AT) and instructional accommodations (e.g., translators, tutors and note takers).
• The most commonly offered educational supports identified in both surveys were testing accommodations, advocacy, and personal counseling.
• The areas of support provision where postsecondary providers have consistently fallen short are transfer of supports to the work setting, related services, and evaluation of support services (e.g., disability-specific scholarship, support for study abroad, accessible transport on campus, disability-specific assessment/evaluation and AT evaluation for students with disabilities).

Implications
• Although postsecondary institutions are increasing their commitment to students with disabilities by offering greater access to support services, the supports, services, and accommodations offered today continue to not adequately meet the needs of students.
• Continued research is required to improve the effectiveness of postsecondary educational supports/services for students with disabilities.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Types & Freq of ED Supports; Stodden, Current Status of Edu Support Provision; Tech. Report; 2 yr follow up study; Services, Supports and Accommod. (NCSET Pub #1)

Brief Authors Teresa Whelley, Chuan Chang, Joie Acosta
Issue
College students with disabilities may have high career aspirations but low expectations of ever completing their postsecondary education. Students with disabilities tend to exhibit a greater uncertainty about their career choices than do their peers without disabilities. These students may be uncertain about their strengths and limitations and how these fit with different career choices. Virginia Commonwealth University has been implementing an individualized career-planning model, which is student directed and incorporates an array of university services and community supports. Data have been collected on type and duration of career planning and related employment services received, types of supports received by students, employment outcomes, and satisfaction with services.

Findings
- Students with disabilities need opportunities to explore career options while in school, in order to better link their program of studies with their career goals.
- Students with disabilities are able to obtain valuable information about the demands of their projected career choices when they are able to experience the actual work environments.
- Comprehensive career planning for college students with disabilities should include a student’s academic program, access to university resources, employment opportunities while in school, job placement assistance in coordination with university services, and post employment follow along services in conjunction with community based services.

Implications
- Comprehensive career planning is needed to assist students with disabilities to succeed in postsecondary education and to enter their self-chosen careers.
- Further training of university career counselors and cooperative education staff is needed in how to provide career counseling and placement services to students with disabilities.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Comp Career Plan: VCU; Transition from PSE to Work; Getzel and Briel, 2001 & 2002; Self-Det & Career Devel (NCSET Pub #2)
Issue
Although the benefits of the use of technology may be even greater for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities, persons with disabilities are less than half as likely as their non-disabled counterparts to own a computer, and they are about one-quarter as likely to use the Internet. Additionally, technological tools have access barriers of their own. Two of the greatest barriers to the use of technology by individuals with disabilities are lack of knowledge by stakeholders (support personnel) about appropriate assistive technology (AT) and lack of funding. Further, there is a profound need to explore technological supports and how they transfer once a person with disabilities graduates and moves on to the labor market. Generally, technology as an educational support does not seem to carry over into the work setting.

Findings
• When comparing secondary or postsecondary educational settings to the workplace setting, assistive technology devices are used less frequently in the workplace setting.
• A majority of individuals with disabilities indicate that a computer is the most useful technology in their place of employment.

Implications
• Develop systems to provide more and improved information about AT devices for use by professionals, individuals with disabilities, and their families.
• Emphasize the role of self-determination and self-advocacy for persons with disabilities to explain and obtain the supports and technology they need.
• Ensure that all individuals with disabilities have access to and learn to use technology in ways that contribute to positive career outcomes.
• Encourage students to participate in internships and work-based learning experiences where they can practice using technology as applied to work settings.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth w/ Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub # 3); National Survey; Trend of AT in PSE; Assistive Tech Supports

Brief Author Nghí Thai
Issue
Students with learning disabilities are a unique subgroup of individuals with disabilities that deserve special attention when transitioning from postsecondary education to work settings. These individuals have special needs and skills that may be manageable in college, but often become a barrier when transitioning to the workplace. In order to achieve their full potential in the employment arena, individuals with learning disabilities need to be aware of the opportunities and difficulties that await them during their transition from college to employment. Further, they require strategies to advocate with employers for appropriate supports, accommodations and services to access and succeed in an employment setting.

Findings
• Although they may still need transition to work supports, many college graduates with disabilities are no longer eligible for disability support services through their postsecondary disability support office.
• Students with learning disabilities are initially eligible for assistance from vocational rehabilitation. However, once they have a college degree it becomes more difficult to obtain services because they have often surpassed the expectations of their vocational rehabilitation counselor.
• Students with learning disabilities often have a more difficult time securing employment because employers indicate a preference to hire individuals with physical disabilities rather than individuals with “hidden” disabilities (i.e. learning disability).
• Nearly half of postsecondary students with disabilities report a learning disability.

Implications
• There is a need to provide transition supports to individuals with learning disabilities.
• Because of their unique situation, individuals with learning disabilities would benefit from peer mentoring on disclosure issues and accommodations, and/or some peer support "on the job" when transitioning from school to professional employment.
• Students with learning disabilities should be encouraged and taught skills to advocate for themselves when seeking support in employment settings.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Effect Instruct Strateg for LD; Comp Career Plan: VCU; Transition from PSE to Work: www.ncset.hawaii.edu; National Capacity Building Institute Proceedings, March 2002

Brief Authors Madeline Harcourt & Joie Acosta
Issue
The process of finding and accessing services and supports for students with disabilities in secondary school, as they prepare to attend postsecondary education and/or engage in employment, is often overwhelming and confusing. Bureaucratic constraints dominate the process in the form of funding stream constraints, conflicting regulations, and a variety of organizational cultures, all of which impede collaboration. There are policies in place in IDEA 1997, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and in the New Freedom Initiative (NFI) that promote collaboration and reduce barriers to the full use of community supports and services by people with disabilities. In order for these initiatives to be as effective as possible, they must be implemented in a coordinated, streamlined, consumer friendly and culturally responsive manner.

Findings
• The Local Educational Agency (LEA) is virtually the sole source of services and supports for children with disabilities. Community based supports and services are typically used only after the exhaustion of supports and services from the LEA.
• Student data collected by one agency or institution is not usually in a form that is readily useable by the receiving institution.
• Each of the agencies has a case management structure that impacts communication. Case managers range from being very helpful to acting as restrictive gatekeepers to services for their agency.

Implications
• Provide grants to states to develop models that foster inter-agency collaboration during a student’s secondary school years.
• Streamline eligibility definitions for community based supports and services at the federal and state level.
• In keeping with NIF, develop state and local interagency agreements to establish unified policies and practices such as issues of common intake and referral procedures, unified consumer database, common service plans, and comprehensive planning.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Resource Mapping Matrix; Role of Rehab in Transition to PSE; Coordination & Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub # 4); Coordination of Support Services; Secondary Influ & Outcomes; Secondary Curricula Issues; Policy & Ed Supports: www.ncset.hawaii.edu; NCSET Pub # 9

Brief Author Teresa Whelley
Part-time employment during secondary school and postsecondary school are important ways for youth to develop critical work experience and to help support themselves financially. Working while attending school can be a challenge for youth with disabilities because of the difficulties in balancing employment with school and other support services, in addition to their lack of understanding about Social Security benefit work incentive programs. Two Social Security benefits programs for individuals with disabilities, SSI and SSDI, can provide youth with disabilities financial support and medical benefits, also allowing them to work and retain benefits at the same time. Many youth with disabilities and their families, as well as teachers, career counselors and disability support personnel, lack information about these programs and related work incentives. There is also a lack of assistance in negotiating the paperwork and eligibility requirements that come with participation in these programs.

Findings

- Only 8.3% percent of postsecondary students with disabilities participate in SSA disability benefit programs. Students who participate in these programs are more likely to be from lower income households than are students who do not participate.
- Postsecondary students with disabilities receive less financial aid from postsecondary institutions than do students without disabilities.
- There is a lack of awareness about SSA disability benefit work incentive programs and negotiating paperwork is a major barrier to participating in these programs.

Implications

- There is a need to examine the SSA disability benefit policy to ensure that procedural barriers do not impede work and education incentive programs.
- There is a need to better inform youth with disabilities, counselors and other supporters about the potential of SSI and SSDI, along with related work incentives, as a means of support in postsecondary school.
- There is a need to assist youth with disabilities to coordinate the necessary paperwork in order to take advantage of SSA benefits and work incentive programs.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Coordination & Manage of Supports; Coordination and Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET Pub # 4): [www.ncset.hawaii.edu](http://www.ncset.hawaii.edu); NCSET Pub # 6; NCSET Pub #12; NCSET Pub #13
Role of Faculty, Students, and Disability Support Personnel in Coordinating Supports

Strategic Plan of Research: Cell C2

Issue
In pre-college education parents are often the primary advocates for students with disabilities, but in postsecondary education families do not always assume a prominent role in helping to obtain the accommodations that their children need. On postsecondary campuses, students with disabilities need to advocate for themselves and communicate effectively with faculty members who may have very little, if any, experience in working with students with disabilities. The differences between disability services at two-year schools and those at four-year schools can add to difficulties in obtaining the accommodations that students need.

Findings
• Of the students who attend college, a greater percentage of students with disabilities than their non-disabled peers attend two-year schools.
• Not all students with disabilities identify themselves as having disabilities and some students do not (and perhaps cannot) tell faculty which accommodations work well for them.
• Students with disabilities need to coordinate their own support services on campus, often involving disability services counselors, faculty members, librarians, career counselors, teaching assistants and computing support staff.

Implications
• Pre-college programs should help students understand their disabilities, technology needs, and other accommodation needs prior to entering postsecondary settings.
• Disability service directors should take steps to assure that faculty members, librarians, career counselors, teaching assistants and computing support staff are aware of their services.
• Institutions should improve the coordination between students, staff and faculty as well as policies that enable, rather than hamper, access recommended by participants.
• Disability services support staff at two-year colleges should offer services to help students transition from two-year to four-year schools, including the establishment of linkages with four year institutions in their area.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; National Survey; Role of Tech in Prep of Youth w/ Disabil for PSE (NCSET Pub #3); Professional Dev for Faculty; Transition from 2yr to 4yr School for Students w/ Disabil; Faculty Awareness of Disability Rights; Case Study of Student-Parent-Faculty-DSO in PSE

Brief Authors Sheryl Burgstahler, Margo Izzo, Liz Getzel
Issue
Students with disabilities in two-year postsecondary schools face challenges as they transition to four-year schools. Some are similar to those faced by their non-disabled peers (i.e. changes in academic requirements, poor study skills, inadequate financial support). However, others are related to disability (i.e., differences in disabled student services between the two types of schools). To improve the postsecondary outcomes and, ultimately, career outcomes for people with disabilities, two-year and four-year schools should take action to make their campus services more supportive of this important transition.

Findings
• Students with disabilities experience difficulties in transferring between 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions due to differences in level of support services, differences in curriculum, and inexperience with self-advocacy.
• Campus staff at both four-year and two-year schools (i.e., recruiters, admissions, counselors, faculty), lack information and often fail to communicate about how to assist students with disabilities in transferring between two-year and four-year schools.

Implications
• Two-year and four-year student support staff should begin to work together by visiting each other campuses in order to become more aware of campus climate, program offerings, and services.
• Two-year and four-year student support staff should work to develop a cooperative relationship between disabled student services offices, share resources, and consider creating a state or regional advisory group of faculty, staff, and students to address programmatic and policy issues.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Transition from 2yr to 4yr School for Students w/ Disabi; Coordination and Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET #4): [www.ncset.hawaii.edu](http://www.ncset.hawaii.edu); NCSET Pub #8

Brief Authors Sheryl Burgstahler and Joie Acosta
Supported Education Model: Bringing Together Supports and Related Services
Strategic Plan of Research: Cell C2

Issue
Further study in higher education about a supported education model for students with disabilities is needed. Students served through this model typically have significant academic obstacles and life skill issues (e.g. medications, personal assistance services, financial assistance) to overcome in order to successfully complete their education. Supported education includes a consumer-driven, individualized support system, utilizing community and university resources. Existing models primarily focus on students with psychiatric or attention deficit disorders, and are not fully integrated into the services provided on campus. During the 2001-2002 academic year, Virginia Commonwealth University conducted a study on the effectiveness of a supported education model for students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. A cohort of 17 students with disabilities participated in the study to determine the effectiveness of the model and the services and supports provided.

Findings
• Coordination and collaboration between the supported education staff and the DSS office have resulted in the expansion and intensity of services provided to students with disabilities in need of these types of services.
• The model has assisted faculty and administrators to better understand the need for intensive specialized services for specific students with disabilities who need these services to remain in postsecondary education.

Implications
• Preliminary findings from the VCU study indicate that a supported education model can be incorporated into the spectrum of services provided on an academic and medical campus.
• Further research is needed to study the effectiveness of the model in blending community and university resources to provide a range of services and supports for students in need of services beyond those available through a college’s DSS Office.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Cultural Empowerment of Students in PSE; Essential Tools for College Students w/Disabil; Promising Practices For Students W/ Disabil; National Survey of Ed Support; Services, Supports & Accommodation (NCSET Pub #2)

Brief Author Liz Getzel
Considerable federal and state resources have been allocated and innumerable efforts have been made to create a “seamless” transition for students with disabilities from secondary school to typical options in adult life. These attempts, however, have not had as significant an impact as intended on the quality of post school outcomes for students with disabilities. Studies have found that only 27% of students with disabilities go on to postsecondary education as compared to 68% of students without disabilities. IDEA 1997 stresses the need for collaboration on an individual planning level and an interagency systems level. Research on promising practices uniformly emphasizes the need for collaboration among Local Education Agencies (LEAs), adult service agencies, service providers, students, families, generic community organizations, and employers to eliminate service gaps, avoid service duplication or discontinuation, and increase efficient use of limited resources. Despite emphasis on collaboration post-school placement, service decisions are often agency-driven or dependent upon the availability of service slots.

Findings

• At present, each organization is structured to focus on its own particular goals, mission, priorities and particular programmatic need area contributing to fragmentation of supports and services.
• Often, student needs must fit an existing array of services and the system's response is not individualized or flexible.
• There are service gaps and duplication in services as funding and eligibility sources vary.
• No one agency or regional or state institution is directly responsible for charting out cross-system services and locating gaps.

Implications

• Fund research and demonstration projects on alignment strategies, such as resource mapping, and disseminate nationally.
• Create templates to coordinate resource mapping among federal, state and local levels.
• Conduct research on pooled funding strategies on both state and local levels.
• Implement innovative funding strategies on state and local levels that enable co-funding of service coordination.

Coordination of university and community services designed to effectively meet the employment preparation needs of students with disabilities throughout their college experience is critical for students to successfully transfer from an academic to employment setting. Currently though, there are few partnerships that establish interagency cooperation at the state and local level. Further, there are no coordinated mechanisms for information sharing, communication, and coordination of services and supports across agencies. Therefore, there is a need to identify these service gaps and determine why there has been a failure to address these gaps. There is also a need for collaboration between education agencies, adult service agencies, students, families, community organizations, and employers to eliminate service gaps, avoid service duplication or discontinuation, and to increase efficient use of limited resources.

Findings

- A number of individuals with disabilities who are currently employed indicate that they either found the job by themselves or through an informal network of family and friends opposed to other forms of assistance.
- While service providers are not frequently identified as a resource to help individuals with disabilities find their primary job, 18% of respondents from one survey indicated that a staff member from an agency or program still “keeps in touch with them to see how things are going on the job.”

Implications

- Coordinate resources from postsecondary education institutions, community, and employers to effectively assist and prepare students for transition to the workplace.
- Fund employment agencies or programs to assist persons with disabilities throughout their employment career, rather than at the initial time of employment.
- Conduct further research on the use of natural supports or family members that result in professional employment.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Whelley, Hart, & Zafft (NCSET Pub #4); Stodden, Whelley, Chang, & Harding, 2001; Getzel, Wehman, McManus, & Briel, in press

Brief Author Nghi Thai
Issue
Strategies are needed at the postsecondary level that address several of the difficulties still faced by students with disabilities as they prepare for future employment. Virginia Commonwealth University has been implementing an individualized career-planning model, which is student-directed and incorporates an array of university services and community supports. Data have been collected on type and duration of career planning and related employment services received, types of supports received by students, employment outcomes, and satisfaction with services.

Findings
• Internship or practicum experiences are a strong predictor of a student’s future employment services and support needs. Students are unaware of how their disability impacts their job performance and what accommodations they will need in a work setting.
• Students with disabilities are in need of a career planning process that is comprehensive in nature and provides continuous career planning throughout college, involves employers, and coordinates university and community services.
• University career counselors and coop staff are in need of specific training on how to provide services to students with disabilities, as well as training in career counseling and placement for individuals with disabilities.

Implications
• Develop and expand programs that encourage and support students with disabilities to pursue internship and practicum experiences while in college so that they can begin developing a network of contacts in their field and practicing the skills and techniques that they will need in their career.

Supporting Documentation: www.rrtc.hawaii.edu; Comp Career plan: VCU; Transition from PSE to Work; Project Grad; National Survey of Ed Support; Coordination and Manage of Supports & Services (NCSET #4)

Brief Author Liz Getzel
Issue
Several sources agree that any type of postsecondary education benefits students by allowing them to explore their interests and by teaching them skills they might not gain in high school or subsequent work experiences. Individuals who participate in postsecondary education participate in the labor force at a higher rate and generally have higher earnings than those who do not continue their education beyond high school. The overall participation rate in postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities has not kept pace with the rate for the general population and for students with significant cognitive disabilities this gap is even wider. Of note are the simultaneous increase in the need for a postsecondary education to secure meaningful employment and the ever-increasing disparity in employability and earning potential between those with, and those without, a postsecondary education.

Findings
• For students with significant cognitive disabilities, participation in postsecondary education correlates positively with two employment variables: competitive and independent employment.
• Interagency collaborative teams assist students with significant disabilities, who have needs across multiple adult agencies, in gaining access to services and supports in postsecondary education and employment.
• Earnings for students receiving postsecondary education are consistently higher over time than those not participating in postsecondary education.

Implications
• Training for educators, families, students, and rehabilitation professionals about the benefits of postsecondary education to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
• Outreach to transition-aged students with significant cognitive disabilities should begin early in secondary school and such services should be included in the IEP/ITP and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) process for students involved with vocational rehabilitation.
• Research on the intensity of on-the-job supports for students with significant cognitive disabilities who have had a postsecondary education.

Supporting Documentation: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Hart, Zimbrich & Gilmore, 2002; Gilmore, Bose, & Hart, 2001; Case Study of Student-Parent-Faculty-DSO in PSE; PSE Practices for Indiv w/MR: Review of Lit; Serving Students w/Disabil; Reflection of CC Teacher; Creating Access to College for All Students

Brief Author Debra Hart
**Issue**

Even with the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation and the implementation of federal statutes that mandate equal access to postsecondary institutions for individuals with disabilities (Individual’s with Disabilities Education Act in 1997 et al., the Rehabilitation Act of 1995 et al., the inclusion of the Rehabilitation Act in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act et al., and the Americans with Disabilities Act et al.), differences between people with disabilities and those without disabilities in postsecondary education persist into the employment arena. Students with disabilities in college, planning to pursue a career are a minority population that is often overlooked. In order to successfully guide people with disabilities into a career path, postsecondary educational supports, transition support services, and workplace support services need to be in place and properly managed and/or coordinated to encourage career exploration and adaptation.

**Findings**

- Earnings for people with disabilities in professional positions that received vocational rehabilitation during their postsecondary education are consistently higher over time than for those not receiving such services.
- Students’ with disabilities satisfaction with and understanding of the provision of preparatory, transition, and employment supports in postsecondary education settings is at best neutral.
- Students with disabilities who received education supports in postsecondary education are less likely to be receiving SSI or SSDI income supports, as well as other TANF supports.
- The number one area of least focus and understanding where universities have fallen short is in coordination of vocational related supports is in the coordination of transferring supports for students with disabilities into their post-graduate employment setting.

**Implications**

- Federal programs (i.e., Vocational Rehabilitation, Ticket to Work & WIA) need to actively include postsecondary education as a workplace preparation setting, when considering the provision of supports and services.
- Postsecondary schools need to explore different models for assisting students with disabilities in transitioning educational supports from education settings to employment.

**Supporting Documentation:** [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu); Transfer of Support to Employ; Transition from PSE to Work; Nat’l Survey of Ed Support; Current Status of Ed Support

**Brief Authors** Joie Acosta & Chuan Chang