Facilitating an Inclusive College Experience for Young Adults with IDD and/or Autism

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Institute on Disabilities
Pennsylvania’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Education, Research, and Service
VISION
A society where all people are valued and respected, and where all people have the knowledge, opportunity and power to improve their lives and the lives of others.

MISSION
The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University learns from and works with people with disabilities and their families in diverse communities across Pennsylvania to create and share knowledge, change systems, and promote self-determined lives so that disability is recognized as a natural part of the human experience.

Today’s Learning Objectives

1. Provide an overview of the L&CS Program
2. Discuss the creation and implementation of Accommodation Plans for an inclusive classroom
3. Highlight our program’s Peer Coach component
4. Compare and contrast expectations and goals of students as they transition from High School to College
Leadership & Career Studies
Program Overview

Leadership & Career Studies Mission

Leadership & Career Studies at Temple University develops students’ academic abilities, career skills, and social maturity while promoting self-determination and independence so that graduates fully live the life of their choosing in the community.
Leadership & Career Studies Goals

• Academic Inclusion

• Career Exploration and Skill Development

• Social Inclusion

Leadership & Career Studies Values

• Presume competence; make no assumptions about one’s abilities

• All People have the potential to learn and grow

• Nothing about me without me

• It’s all about Inclusion: All means All, No exceptions

• Self-direction is the key to Living a Quality Life

• We are all Interdependent and need support from one another
Outcomes of the Academy for Adult Learning (AAL)

• From 2006 through 2018, the Academy has seen success in graduation rates, student supports, academic interest, & employment
  • 101 Graduates
  • 250 Mentors and Tutors
  • 240 Undergraduate classes audited
  • 635 Continuing Education classes

Inclusive Higher Education Transition

• During Fall 2017, the Academy for Adult Learning becomes Leadership & Career Studies, a four-year certificate program expanding the following areas:
  • Increased Academic Involvement
  • Leadership & Diversity Certificate
  • Expanded Employment Opportunities
  • Inclusive Enrichment Sessions
  • Capstone Project
Peer Coaches

• Coaches are trained and supervised by professional staff

• Each student is matched with a team of coaches

• Coaches provide social and academic supports to students based on their Person-Centered Plan (PCP)

• Support students in developing and following their class and extracurricular schedule

Academic Courses

• Students are required to take:
  
  • 10 Electives
  
  • 4 Core Courses
    • Interpersonal Communication
    • Leadership and Diversity
    • Inclusive Education
    • Understanding Urban Communities
      • Leadership and Diversity Certificate will be earned if taken for credit
  
• Enrichment sessions
Academic Courses Continued

• Students select classes based on their interests

• Courses are offered through Temple’s Pan-African Studies Community Education Program (PASCEP)

• Students audit traditional undergraduate courses
  • Accommodations are made individually with each professor

Enrichment Sessions

• Cause students to think about long and short term goals to take the steps needed to succeed in their courses and careers

• Gives students practical tools they can use to succeed in the following areas:
  • Technology, time management, learning styles, critical thinking, listening and taking notes, reading, communication, testing, diversity, majors and careers, managing stress, and building healthy relationships

• Relate work ethic, workplace relations, workplace diversity, and workplace communication skills to career development
Schools and Colleges

- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Public Health
- Boyer College of Music and Dance
- College of Education
- School of Media and Communications
- College of Theatre, Film and Media Arts
- College of Science and Technology
- Fox School of Business
- School of Tourism, Hospitality Management
- Tyler School of Art & Architecture

Employment Opportunities

- Starting in the second year students will be required to complete five semesters of:
  - Job rotation
  - Internships
  - Supported work
  - Competitive employment
- This experience will be based on each student’s Person-Centered Plan (PCP)
Senior Capstone Project

• Prior to graduating Leadership & Career Studies students and their coaches will work together to create the following:
  • Employment Plan
  • Resume
  • Cover Letter
  • Linked-In

Creating and Implementing Accommodation Plans for the Inclusive Classroom
What is an Accommodation Plan?

• Accommodation plans adapt the syllabus to meet the needs of the student.
• It asks the question, how can the student get the most out of the class by doing work that is meaningful to them?

What does an Accommodation Plan Include?

• Written assignments
• Group projects
• Note taking
• Readings
• Exams
• Quizzes
How is the Accommodation Plan Created?

1. Email the professor for an updated copy of the syllabus
2. Review the syllabus and establish assignments that the student will complete and be exempted from
3. Review assignments and adapt them to meet the learning ability of the student (Use the Person Centered Plan)

Examples of Accommodations

What’s In The Syllabus
• A 5 page research paper
• 6 reading reflections
• Attending 4 off campus events
• Midterm and Final

What’s In The Plan
• A 2 page summary
• Choosing 3 reflections over the semester
• Attending 2 off campus events
• Exempt from the midterm and final
Things to Consider About the Student

• What is the student interested in?
• What subjects did they enjoy in high school?
• How much in class support might be needed?

Managing the Work Load

• It is important to look at the students entire course load while creating plans.
• Does one class have more writing?
• Does one class have more projects?
• Stick with the hands-on assignments!!
What is the Coach’s Role in Implementing the Accommodation Plan?

• Coaches receive a copy of the plan and are expected to review it with the student
• Students are responsible for understanding the plan, but coaches are a good resource for professors if they have any questions

What if the Accommodation Plan Isn’t Working?

• Change it!
• Students, especially Freshman students, are still learning how to navigate college classrooms.
• Work with the students, coaches, and professors to see what is working and what can be changed.
Recruiting and Sustaining a Successful Peer Coach Component

Who are L&CS Coaches?

- Matriculated, degree seeking Temple Students
- Pursuing a variety of majors or disciplines
- Undergraduate and Graduate level studies
- International Students
- Work Study eligible and not eligible
- Identify with a disability, others don’t
Recruiting Coaches

• Temple University’s Career Portal, called “Handshake”
• Word of Mouth
• On-Campus Career Fairs
• Inclusion on electronic bulletins or newsletters
• Guest speaker at Student Organization and/or Club Meetings, University classes, or campus workshops
• University-approved flyers posted in public spaces or forums

Interviewing Coaches

• Transparency with applicants
  • Weekly Commitment
  • Expectations of program and position
  • Opportunities for enrichment
  • Applicability to any future profession and/or career path
• Projected availability and class schedule for hiring semester
• Program literature and resources provided ahead of interview
• Timeline of hiring process clearly stated
• Coach position is compensated at $9 an hour
Training Coaches

• Orientation prior to the start of each academic semester
• Bi-Weekly Coach Meetings throughout the semester
• Regular contact with L&CS Supervisory Staff
  • Email
  • Office visits

Variety of Coach Support

• In-class academic
• Extended academic
• Campus engagement and resource utilization
• Extra-curricular involvement
• Career guidance
• Social Capital and Community Building
• Emotional
Coach Accountability

- Bi-Weekly Time Sheets
- Electronic Monitoring Forms
  - Social
  - Academic
- Bi-Weekly Circle of Support Meetings
- Advisory Meetings with Students

Best Practices and Advice

- Consistency with expectations
- Impart regular reminders
- Provide timely responses
- Imbue outreach, when applicable, with zest and personality
- Balance accountability with empathy
Navigate the Changing Expectations and Goals of Students as They Transition from High School to College

Navigating the Transition

• Any student in a post-secondary program is an adult.
• Students in post-secondary college programs are there for the academics, but also the college experience.
• Establish these expectations in the interview and person centered planning process—this includes speaking with the family and the student
Person-Centered Planning

- The PCP process explores a student's interests, experiences, and expectations in the following areas:
  - Social
  - Academics
  - Career
  - Independence
- The PCP is used to guide the expectations and goals for the students

Parent Expectations

- Understanding the parent expectations is essential
- What parents expect versus what actually occurs may be different—but that’s okay!
- Family meetings keep families in the loop, but remind them that the students are the center of the program
Orientation

- Students attend a week long orientation that covers academic and social expectations
- Parents attend the first day of orientation and returning students attend one day
- Leadership and Career Studies Staff invite organizations from across campus including Student Activities, the Technology Center, Career Center, and the Health and Wellness Center to engage students in campus life

What to Expect

High School
- You are there because you have to be
- Parents and teachers will remind you of responsibilities
- You will likely be told what you need to learn

College
- You are there because you want to be
- You are in charge of managing time and setting priorities
- It is up to you to read and understand materials—professors will assume that you do
Common Difficulties

- Finding a way to effectively utilize coaches
- Lack of communication (for many students it is the first time they are relying on email/phone calls)
- Getting used to a new schedule--class is not everyday and there may be breaks during the days that students are not used to.
- Advisory meetings are essential during this time to make sure students are comfortable and making progress

Addressing Difficulties Early

- Regular contact with students
- Prioritizing students with larger and more complex difficulties
- Scheduling team meetings with supports coordinators and families in a timely fashion
- Actively monitoring progress on electronic forms
Questions?

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