



# RESEARCH FINDINGS BRIEF

APRIL 2000 • STUDY AREA 4d, VOLUME 1

## Overview of RRTC's Purpose

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) is to conduct a strategic program of research, training, technical assistance, and information dissemination focused upon educational supports that increase access and improve outcomes for persons with disabilities in postsecondary education programs and subsequently, in the labor force. Addressing this priority, the primary goals of the RRTC are as follows: 1) To identify the nature and range of educational supports 2) To identify new technologies that improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities; 3) To identify effective supports and models of support delivery that contribute to improved outcomes for students with disabilities; 4) To investigate methods by which the supports in postsecondary programs can be extended to the employment environment, including students with severe disabilities; and 5) To provide training, technical assistance and information to educational support personnel, public and private rehabilitation personnel, career placement specialist, and students with disabilities concerning the effectiveness of specific educational supports and models of delivery in improving postsecondary educational and career outcomes of the people with disabilities.

## National Survey: Types and Frequency of Educational Support Provision in Postsecondary Programs

**AUDIENCE** Disability Support Coordinators, Career Placement Specialists, Faculty Instructors, Teaching Assistants, Students with Disabilities, Administrators, Related Agencies (Vocational Rehabilitation), Employers, Other Researchers and Policy-makers (Federal and State Agencies).

### ISSUE

There is scant literature regarding the current practice of providing educational supports to students with disabilities at the postsecondary level. A national survey of disability support personnel was conducted, providing information for researchers seeking to ascertain the current status of educational support provision in postsecondary educational programs. Information shared in this Brief contributes to one of the four priority areas as identified in the Strategic Program of Research for the RRTC on Postsecondary Educational Supports. The survey and the sub-analyses will provide a comprehensive baseline of data to address issues concerning educational support provision in postsecondary educational settings.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the type and frequency of various educational and related supports offered to students with disabilities in postsecondary education programs?

### METHOD

A survey instrument was developed and distributed to a national sample of more than 1500 disability support coordinators in postsecondary educational programs. More than 650 respondents completed the survey, providing a national profile of educational support provision. The respondents within the sample were profiled as follows: 422 were from public schools vs. 193 from private schools; 246 were from two-year or less than two-year schools vs. 369 from four-year schools.

Disability support personnel were asked to indicate the capacity of their institution to offer various types and of educational and related supports to students with disabilities.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Percentage of Time that Different Types of Supports were offered to Students with Disabilities

0 = not offered

1 = offered less than 25% of time

3 = offered 51-75% of time

4 = offered more than 75% of time

2 = offered 25-50% of time

|  | Percentages: based on 650 respondents |    |    |    |     |
|--|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
|  | 0                                     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4   |
| a) Summer orientation program                | 57%                                   | 9% | 3% | 4% | 27% |
| b) Priority registration                     | 24                                    | 12 | 5  | 6  | 54  |
| c) Class relocation                          | 16                                    | 15 | 6  | 11 | 53  |
| d) Testing accommodation                     | 4                                     | 3  | 2  | 6  | 84  |
| e) Disability specific scholarships          | 59                                    | 21 | 7  | 4  | 10  |
| f) Disability specific assessment/evaluation | 54                                    | 12 | 7  | 7  | 21  |
| g) Advocacy                                  | 9                                     | 6  | 5  | 11 | 69  |
| h) Supports for study abroad                 | 63                                    | 15 | 4  | 4  | 14  |
| i) Learning center laboratory                | 27                                    | 5  | 8  | 10 | 51  |
| j) Special learning strategies               | 13                                    | 11 | 15 | 16 | 46  |
| k) Developmental/remedial instruction        | 28                                    | 10 | 8  | 9  | 47  |
| l) Personal counseling                       | 7                                     | 5  | 9  | 11 | 69  |
| m) Accessible transport on campus            | 57                                    | 6  | 5  | 5  | 27  |
| n) Interpreter/translator                    | 20                                    | 11 | 6  | 7  | 57  |
| o) Note takers/scribes/readers               | 10                                    | 6  | 7  | 10 | 67  |
| p) Tutors                                    | 14                                    | 5  | 11 | 15 | 56  |
| q) Real-time captioning                      | 71                                    | 9  | 3  | 3  | 15  |
| r-1) AT evaluations for students             | 59                                    | 14 | 7  | 5  | 16  |
| r-2) Skills training on equipment/software   | 29                                    | 16 | 14 | 11 | 30  |
| r-3) Equipment or software provision         | 35                                    | 16 | 12 | 12 | 26  |
| r-4) AT supports across campus               | 25                                    | 12 | 14 | 15 | 35  |
| r-5) Adaptive furniture                      | 23                                    | 15 | 11 | 16 | 35  |
| r-6) Document conversion                     | 34                                    | 14 | 11 | 10 | 31  |
| s-1) Communication skills                    | 26                                    | 16 | 13 | 11 | 35  |
| s-2) Study skills                            | 9                                     | 9  | 10 | 13 | 59  |
| s-3) Memory skills (e.g. use of mnemonics)   | 22                                    | 16 | 14 | 11 | 38  |

|  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|
| s-4) Meta-cognitive strategies                     | 27 | 16 | 16 | 10 | 31 |
| Percentages: based on 650 respondents              |    |    |    |    |    |
| s-5) organizational/time management skills         | 11 | 10 | 11 | 16 | 53 |
| s-6) Self-advocacy skills                          | 15 | 8  | 13 | 16 | 48 |
| t) Career/vocational assessment/counseling         | 11 | 6  | 10 | 13 | 61 |
| u) Work exp. or work study opportunity             | 15 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 44 |
| v) Internships/externships                         | 23 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 39 |
| w) Job placement services                          | 21 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 46 |
| x) Facilitate transfer of supports to work setting | 54 | 18 | 9  | 5  | 13 |

#### Overview of Findings:

- The support offered to students with disabilities most often in postsecondary education settings is test accommodation (84% responded that they offered that service more than 75% of the time)
- Some of the more commonly offered educational supports are: 1) note takers; 67% indicated that note taking was a support offered more than 75% of the time; 2) personal counseling; 69% indicated that counseling was offered more than 75% of the time; 3) advocacy assistance; 69% indicated that advocacy assistance was offered more than 75% of the time. In contrast, students with disabilities indicated through a national focus group project that the type and timing of advocacy assistance was problematic. Their request was for more of a focus upon the development of self-advocacy skills rather than others providing advocacy and advice.
- Offering related supports was fairly common across all types of postsecondary institutions and included: 1) organization skill assistance; 61% indicated that organizational skill development activities

were offered more than 75% of the time; 2) study skills; 59% indicated that study skill assistance or training was offered more than 75% of the time. Students with disabilities through national focus groups indicated organization and time management or coordination of supports within and across their personal, educational, and social life was a major concern, often not addressed by related agencies or postsecondary institutions. This was often a reason for dropping out of school or for not progressing at a pace with other students without disabilities.

- Offering career related supports was fairly common. (it is not known whether such supports are part of the generic student services or provided by disability support staff) in postsecondary programs. 61% offered career assessment services more than 75% of the time; 46% offered job placement services more than 75% of the time.
- Of concern to students with disabilities is the extent to which supports provided during their educational years will transfer to subsequent work or employment settings. Very few disability support personnel

indicated that their institution offered such assistance. 54% indicated that they offered such support less than 25% of the time, while 13% indicated they offered this support more than 75% of the time.

- Disability specific scholarships are rarely offered to students with disabilities in postsecondary programs.
- More than 50% of the responding institutions did not offer disability specific assessments or evaluations.
- Supports for study abroad were rarely offered to students with disability.
- Over 50% of the responding institutions did not offer accessible transport on campus for students with disabilities – this was viewed as an important and necessary support by groups of students with disability participating in a national focus group study.
- Real-time captioning is rarely offered in postsecondary educational programs; 71% indicated that they offered real-time captioning less than 25% of the time.
- Assistive Technology (AT) evaluations for students with disabilities are rarely offered in postsecondary programs; close to 60% indicated offered such a service less than 25% of the time.

## IMPLICATIONS

- The more common offering of disability specific assessment/evaluations and AT evaluations for students with disabilities could assist postsecondary schools to better identify student needs for supports and accommodations, as well as better ways to support students.
- Facilitation of transfer of supports to subsequent work settings is an important need and concern of students with disabilities. Efforts could be improved in this area by asking employers and students with disabilities how and which supports would be most useful in the work setting.

**For further information on this Brief or for an Executive Summary/Full Report on the National Survey of Educational Supports Provision, please contact Tom Harding at (808) 956 – 5344, [tharding1@yahoo.com](mailto:tharding1@yahoo.com), or go to the Center website [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu).**

The RRTC on Postsecondary Educational Supports is supported by grant #H133B980043 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) within the U.S. Department of Education. Opinions and perceptions as shared in this document are those of the researchers involved and no endorsement is implied by the funding agent.

### *Central RRTC Contact Information:*

Center on Disability Studies • University of Hawai'i at Manoa  
Director – Robert Stodden • (808) 956-9199 • [stodden@hawaii.edu](mailto:stodden@hawaii.edu)  
1776 University Avenue, UA 4-6 • Honolulu, HI 96822;

WEB: [www.rrtc.hawaii.edu](http://www.rrtc.hawaii.edu) • EMAIL: [rrtc@cds.hawaii.edu](mailto:rrtc@cds.hawaii.edu) •

Administrative Assistant: Juana Teheli Weir (808) 956-2075 • [juana@hawaii.edu](mailto:juana@hawaii.edu)