Problem to be addressed

Results of the *National Survey of Post-Secondary Supports for Students with Disabilities* provided crucial information for researchers seeking to ascertain the current status of educational supports in postsecondary programs. The survey and the sub-analyses have provided a comprehensive baseline of data to address issues concerning educational support provision. According to the survey results, availability and delivery of these services appear to vary with regard to institution “type” (i.e. 4-year vs. 2-year, public vs. private). As intended, the survey was helpful in describing the current status of nature and range of supports available to students.

Although the survey has provided researchers a national baseline of supports services that are available to students with disabilities, it’s not known if there exists any ‘trends’ in the availability of supports services across the nation. This study will contribute to one of four priority areas of the Strategic Program of Research being conducted within the RRTC on Postsecondary Educational Supports at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, which includes a longitudinal study of supports for students with disabilities. This two-year follow up survey is a replication of the original survey and will allow researchers to collect data for comparison, which will allow researchers to identify any positive (or negative) changes, or trends that may exist in support services. Positive changes will be defined as an increase in supports provision, and a negative change will be defined as a decrease in support provision. This survey will complete the longitudinal study, thereby allowing the RRTC to fulfill its commitment to this endeavor.

Research Questions:

Because this study is a replication of the original survey, all research questions and methodological principals will mirror the original instrument. Study questions are as follows:

1. What educational supports are available to students with disabilities in a range of postsecondary educational settings? What is the nature and range of these supports?
2. What technical supports and Assistive devices are available to students with disabilities in
postsecondary educational settings?

3. Do educational supports carry over from educational settings to placement in subsequent workforce settings or employment?

Survey Distribution

The survey will be distributed to 1,500 institutions throughout the nation as before, via two methods of selection of institutions. The first method involved a long-standing partnering organization, the Association for Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD). The AHEAD membership list is composed of Disability Support Coordinators of both public and private schools, comprised of 2-year and 4-year institutions. 750 hard copies of the survey will be mailed out in September 2001 to randomly selected AHEAD members to ensure access to survey. Additional copies will be sent out to any members who contact us and request a copy.

In order to address any bias issues regarding participant selection, a second institution list of 750 non-AHEAD participants will be generated from a randomized, regionally stratified list of institutions that represented less than 2-year, 2-year, 4-year and professional schools, including both public and private sectors. This list of non-AHEAD schools will selected from the 1995 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) CD ROM database, maintained by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.

The IPEDS sampling frame includes data on some 3,000 primary providers (institutions) of postsecondary education. It is the core postsecondary education data collection program of the U.S. Department of Education. It was designed by NCES to meet its mandate to report national statistics on the condition of postsecondary education in the United States. It is a single, comprehensive data collection system developed to encompass all institutions and organizations that provide postsecondary education as their primary goal.

Data Analysis and Write-Up

Data analysis will be performed using the SPSS Data Analysis System (DAS). Descriptive statistics to obtain frequency counts will be used on the general data. Further analyses to determine statistical significance between groups of question items will be calculated using such tests as Chi-square and analysis of variance (ANOVA). After analysis of data from second survey has been performed, this data will be compared with data from the original survey using trend analysis techniques in order to detect any existing trends between the two data sets.

As before, a technical report will be developed of the project detailing methods, procedures, and significant findings. The final report of the longitudinal study will include a discussion of any significant findings or trends that was discovered between the two data sets, along with recommendations about future research efforts or written policy regarding the provision of support services for students with disabilities.

Products and Intended Audiences

The purpose of the effort is to develop data that will be disseminated via technical reports, journal articles, and various other publications that will
help service providers and researchers better understand the type and range of postsecondary supports services for students with disabilities. It will also provide information regarding the availability of these support services to the consumers and their families, and to have better knowledge as to how often and what type of institution provides the supports services they may be in need of. With this type of knowledge, consumers and their families can make better decisions as to where to pursue their post-secondary education.