PHASE II
PROPOSAL BRIEF #6
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University of Hawai`i at Manoa Center on Disability Studies
National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports
A Rehabilitation Research & Training Center
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Secondary Data Analysis of Promising Educational Support Practices for Students with Disabilities as found in Two-Year Postsecondary Settings

Study Overview
Over the past twenty years changes in the nation’s labor market have increased the importance of postsecondary education in order to be able to compete in the labor market. Whether it is college, adult and continuing education, or technical preparation, postsecondary education plays a major role in preparing persons for employment and career opportunities. Students who continue their education after high school maximize their preparedness for careers in today’s changing economy as they learn higher order thinking and technical skills necessary to take advantage of current and future job market trends. Yet youth within special populations have often experienced limited access to and success in postsecondary education programs, resulting in poor employment outcomes.

Given the increasing need for youth within special populations to be able to succeed in postsecondary education programs in order to be able to access and participate successfully within the workforce, it is imperative that we understand the availability and use of educational supports in postsecondary programs and subsequent employment environments. During the past 15 months, the National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports conducted a national survey of educational support provision, across a large range of four and two year postsecondary programs. The national survey focused upon the provision of supports for a targeted population - students with disabilities. The survey database includes information on a wide range of supports including: academic, technological, career/vocational, community and related agency coordination, and the use of mentors and other supportive roles. Initial analysis of the national database indicates that two-year postsecondary schools, especially those with a vocational/technical focus, provide significantly more educational supports for students with special needs than other postsecondary institutions. Initial analysis points to the significant value of two-year postsecondary programs to support the diverse needs of students from special populations, contributing to their success in life-long learning and employment.

The national survey has yielded a rich data source for further analysis of data
specific to two-year postsecondary programs and their status in the provision of supports to youth with disabilities and other special needs. A more in-depth analysis and reporting of the national survey data with a focus upon the provision of supports within two-year postsecondary programs (including those with vocational-technical programs), could answer several important questions of relevance to researchers concerned with the success of students with special needs in career and technical education, as well as subsequent employment. Research questions include:

- What are the types of educational and career supports offered to students with disabilities and other special needs in two-year postsecondary programs?

- What types of technology and web-based supports are offered to students with disabilities and other special needs in two-year postsecondary programs?

- What types of career assessment and planning supports are offered to students with disabilities and other special needs in two-year postsecondary programs?

- What types of community and employer linkages and supports are maintained and offered for students with disabilities and other special needs in two-year postsecondary programs?

- How do two-year postsecondary programs (with and without a vocational-technical focus) compare in the provision of supports for students with disabilities and other special needs with four-year postsecondary programs?

- What are the issues and concerns for two-year postsecondary programs when providing supports to students with diverse and special needs?

**Proposed Project Method**

The proposed study will seek to answer the listed research questions by conducting a secondary analysis of two-year institutional data from a national survey conducted this past year at NCSPECS. The study will involve the following work scope:

1. Review and conduct an analysis of the demographics pertaining to the two-year institutional sample within the national survey database.

2. Conduct a secondary analysis of the two-year institutional data from the national survey and review findings for areas of significance.

3. Conduct further in-depth analysis of the data in areas of significance to determine contributing factors and provide further clarity to the status of educational support provision in two-year postsecondary institutions, as compared to other types of postsecondary programs.

4. Summarize all information generated through analysis with recommendations and implications for (1) further research to be conducted, (2) policy changes that might further the status of educational support programs in two-year postsecondary institutions, and (3) practice implications for service and support providers.
working in two-year postsecondary institutions.

**Products**

Three products will be developed as a result of this study proposal. The products would be developed in collaboration with The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education at the University of Minnesota for dissemination through the networks of both involved programs. The three proposed products include:

- Ten or more “Findings Briefs” sharing targeted information from the secondary analysis of data concerning two-year postsecondary support provision to youth with disabilities and other special needs.

- An Executive Summary report focused upon policy implications produced for distribution to key federal policy makers.

- A Comprehensive Report of the current status of educational support provision for students with disabilities and other special needs in two-year postsecondary programs (emphasis upon programs with a vocational-technical focus)

**Staffing**

- Dr. Robert Stodden, Director of NCSPES at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa will direct and supervise the project (contributed time).

- Two research assistants (Mr. Tom Harding and Ms. Chuan Chang) currently involved with the national survey database will conduct the required analysis and participate in the writing of report documents.

- NCS PES collaborating researchers will contribute significant expertise and staff support to the development of projected products and dissemination activities within existing national networks.

**Timeframe**

The timeframe for the proposed project is July 1, 2000 – December 31, 2000. Data set-up and analysis will occur during the summer months and review/input and report writing tasks will occur in the fall and early winter months. Master discs of all products will be provided with a minimum number of hard copies.