Preparing for the High School to College Transition:  
Are We Supporting What is Needed?  
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Legislation History
PL 94-142 and Subsequent Reauthorizations
Least Restrictive Environments
Full Inclusion
Transition Planning IDEIA 2004 begin no later than 16 years-old 
(training, education, employment, and independent living skills)

Some Students with Disabilities, like their peers, complete K-12 educational experience  
with the intention of attending colleges and universities

Enrollment of Students with Disabilities Increasing
Rothstein, 1991; Albert & Fairweather, 1990; Fairweather & Shaver, 1990; Rothstein, 1997

Thomas (2000) cites 1998 HEATH Resource Center
140,142 documented college freshman in 1996 self-identified as disabled
9% of all freshman compared to 2.6% in 1978

1.4 million students (10.3%) of 14.5 million enrolled students
reported at least one disability 40% orthopedic and neurologic origin
17% (National Council on Disability and Social Security Administration, 2000)

Legislative Support for Post-Secondary Students
1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, PL 101-336)
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Provide equal education for “otherwise qualified handicapped individuals”
“affirmative action obligation”on part of higher education institutions
Paul, 2000

College Entrance/Admission
Disability is defined according to ADA
FAPE does not extend to higher education
College students must meet a program’s admission, academic, and technical standards
with or without accommodations (Thomas, 2000)
   Barrier-free Design; Academic modifications; Disability Services
Transfer of Responsibility from school to individual to self identify and seek services
**Campus Access**
Having Students On Campus is Most Significant Impetus for Access  
(Misquez, McCarthy, Powell, & Chu 1997)

What To Do to Promote and Support High School Students Transition?  
Students request to sit in on a college class  
Travel across campus grounds  
Visit university centers, libraries, and dormitories

IEP Goal: Student will critically assess accessibility of two college campuses via different means that could include web page searches, telephone inquiries, and on-site visitations by end of fall term.

**Students with Disabilities Preparation**
Success in taking courses  
Finding the supports they needed  
Advocating for their rights

Self-Determination Skills  
Problem-solving  
Understanding one’s disability, awareness of strengths and weaknesses  
Goal setting  
Self management  
Ability to discuss accommodation needs with faculty and staff  
Ability to access information, services, or supports when needed  
(Thoma, C. & Getzel, E. 2005)

**College Dormitory Living Arrangements**
Room accessibility, Sleeping, Bathroom, Dining, Social Interaction

IEP Goal: Student will independently transfer between wheelchair and bed 3 times/day.  
IEP Goal: Student will direct an attendant in her/his physical management of bathroom routine.  
IEP Goal: Student will advertise, interview, and hire a personal attendant during mock role-play scenario in her/his communication class.

**Confidentiality**
Policies of who can be informed; should be informed; must be informed; should not be informed; and when and how related waivers should be obtained. (Rothstein, 1991)

80% of Higher Education Disability Service Providers < 10 years experience  
(Dukes, 1998)

100% of students have lived entire life with disability
**University Faculty Interactions**
Comparison of students, disabled and nondisabled, with faculty (Amsel & Fichten, 1990)
- Students should initiate contact re: accommodations
- Professors have decreased comfort level with students with disabilities
- Students with disabilities less likely to request assistance

Likely to know the law, minimal to no knowledge or skills to accommodate
No requirement for higher education faculty to know about disabilities

IEP Goal: Student will schedule her/his fall IEP meeting, making contacts, and set date and location.
IEP Goal: Student will generate list of accommodations needed to complete IEP document.
IEP Goal: Student will list criteria that will indicate goal attainment.
IEP Goal: Student will create an information packet to distribute to perspective faculty that includes an autobiographical sketch.

**College Campus Disability Services**
Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- 32 members in 1978 grown to 1,900 in 1999 (Dukes & Shaw, 1999)

Professional Background
- counseling, law, social work, special education, higher education

Universities actively involved in improving their Offices of Disability Services
- PT/OT not listed, could be an new professional niche or consultation opportunity

**Education is a Liberating Force**
“We know that equality of individual ability has never existed and never will, but we do insist that equality of opportunity still must be sought.”


As physical therapists serving young men and women as they transition to college campuses, we need to support client/student centered goals that increase the equality of all opportunities that can lead to higher education matriculation and graduation.

Afford secondary students with disabilities the opportunity to meet college students with disabilities


Misquesz, E., McCarthy, B., Powell, B., & Chu, L. (1997). University students with disabilities are the chief on-campus accommodation ingredient. Paper presented at the Annual California State University, Northridge, Conference.


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