

## Editorial

---

# Postsecondary Education and Disability

This special issue is a long term result of planning by myself, Elizabeth Getzel, Phillip Rumrill, and Bob Stodden. We wanted to pull together a major issue of the Journal which was devoted to postsecondary issues for persons with disabilities. Hence three Centers were involved – the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports, which I direct, the Center on Disability Studies at Kent State that Phil Rumrill heads up and the National Center on Postsecondary Education at the University of Hawaii under the direction of Bob Stodden.

Going to college is a dream and aspiration for many students in high school. Students with disabilities are no different [2,3]. There are several reasons why college, especially 4 year college, is an important experience and outcome. First, the clearest path to a meaningful career that pays a good income continues to be a college diploma. The actual grades achieved and status of the college is less important than actual completion. Persons with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities. College can make a major difference.

Second, the personal and emotional adjustment associated with learning to live away from home on a college campus is an excellent bridge to adulthood. The financial, academic, mobility, and interpersonal skill and planning that are required in college, along with the ability to self-advocate, are invaluable and absolutely necessary for success in college.

A third reason for going to college is to create new friendships and social networks can be established. Living on campus helps to create a different social support group than family and local community friends.

This network is one more resource for students to draw upon as they enter adulthood.

Clearly, the number of students identified by schools as disabled has increased significantly [1]. It is evident, however, that many students with disabilities do not identify or self disclose to college officials so this number may significantly understate the total. Many of these students hope to pursue education beyond high school. As they do educational professionals must be prepared to help students with disabilities face the realities of the more competitive college level environment.

It is our hope that this issue will provide a critical mass of information to help teachers, counselors, and family members in the college decision making process. A job is not enough – a college education is the first goal to which students with disabilities should point.

Paul Wehman  
Editor

Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation

## References

- [1] M. Gordon, L. Lewandowski and S. Keiser, The LD Label for Relatively Well-Functioning Students: A Critical Analysis, *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32(6) (1999), 485.
- [2] M. Hall, H.L. Kleinert and F.J. Kearns, Going to college! Postsecondary programs for students with moderate and severe disabilities, *Teaching Exceptional Children* 32(3) (2000), 58–65.
- [3] A. Halpern, P. Yovanoff, B. Doren and M.R. Benz, Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities, *Exceptional Children* 62 (1995), 151–164.