SECTION VI: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS ONCE ENROLLED IN PSET?

As noted in the Introduction to this Toolkit, data indicate that college students with disabilities complete programs at rates far-below those of individuals without disabilities. Results for individuals participating in non-degree programs or employer training programs are less definitive. In the end, simply enrolling temporarily in a PSET program is not enough. Students want to participate and complete such programs to gain skills for future employment or better employment, to develop important life skills, and to engage in learning and living with other young adults. Ensuring that students succeed in PSET must all be important to the planning and services students engage in while in secondary school.

What do programs designed for students with disabilities in PSET settings do to help young adults succeed?

There are programs that work to improve PSET completion rates for all students: see College Completion Toolkit (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some sample aspects of programs include:

- systematic use of data to identify struggling students
- increased frequency of academic advising
- imbedding remediation "courses" in credit-bearing introductory level courses
- addressing remediation through summer bridge programming – with opportunities to earn credits
- interdisciplinary team (academic affairs, residence life, athletics, counseling services) approach to supporting first year students

Additionally, there are PSET comprehensive programs designed to improve the success of students with specific disabilities. There has been an increase in the number of programs for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) to access college. Much of the resources and information contained in this Toolkit apply to students with intellectual disabilities when considering college as a post-school goal. Students with ID who participate in college classes with their peers without disabilities, access existing services on campus like disability support services, writing or math labs, or counseling assist students in meeting the challenges in higher education. Additionally, more specific supports including peer support or academic coaches can assist students with ID to fully participate in academic classes by helping students learn how to locate information, understanding instructions and organizing thoughts. Another significant support is technology. Students with ID who access technology for academic and social interactions are able to communicate with their college peers, faculty, and other staff on campus. The use of text to speech, Marco Polo app, and other assistive technology can assist students with ID in college and employment.

In a research study with recent college graduates with disabilities, researchers found that extra time on exams, test proctoring, and tutoring were the top three disability related services associated with degree completion for student participants (Huber, Oswald, Webb, & Avila-John, 2014). Madaus, Lalor, Lombardi, Gelbar, Dukes, Kowitt, & Faggella-Luby (2018) reviewed the intervention literature regarding the efficacy of support services provided for students with disabilities at four- and two-year degree-granting institutions. While authors noted the need for greater rigor in the quality of the implementation of future studies, a few implications for practice were shared including:

- early disclosure to the office of disability studies to access supports
- participation in study groups and advising opportunities with professors
- participating in extracurricular activities to engage in the college community.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability recently outlined strategies used by community colleges to increase the likelihood of program completion by all students, including students with disabilities (NCWD-Youth, 2016). The brief focuses on the importance of connecting students with physical and mental health services, academic assistance, housing and transportation support, workforce development, other adult services, and volunteer opportunities, as well as financial assistance to increase retention. Increasingly, faculty in postsecondary education institutions are provided with additional resources and supports to develop courses with all students in mind.

The What Works Clearinghouse has disseminated six researched recommendations to increase the success of academically underprepared students in PSET (Bailey et al., 2016). These recommendations included:

- use of multiple measures to assess and place students,
- incentivizing participation in enhanced advising activities,
- offering performance-based monetary incentives to students
- compress developmental education within course redesign
- teach self-regulated learning,
- implement comprehensive and integrated support programs.

More detail about these strategies is available here:
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_dev_ed_112916.pdf

Using universal design for learning (UDL) approaches to develop syllabi is another strategy to increase the likelihood of success of all students in postsecondary courses. Professors and instructors can access resources, such as UDL syllabus guidance from the website of Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education for explanations, resources, tips, and sample syllabi that consider a diverse group of learners in higher education classrooms. An example of university supports can be found on University of California Berkeley's Teaching and Learning Center website. Such resources can assist postsecondary institutions to be proactive in addressing the needs of students with disabilities, ensuring success for more students.

The statutory definition of UDL, provided through the HEOA (2008) was included in at least one grant program with funds designated to community and technical colleges. The $2 billion U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants required all grant recipients to use UDL to ensure students with disabilities were fully included in TAACCCT-funded courses and programs. The content and courses must be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA (http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/). Other provisions in the HEOA address students having information on the cost of textbooks, which may also have implications for instructors providing syllabi in a timely manner to account for braille or audio files of required materials. The National Center on Universal Design for Learning provides resources for both professionals and students on its website (http://www.udlcenter.org/advocacy/faq_guides/higher_ed) related to these issues.

Various assistive technologies have also been used to help students in areas such as written language (e.g., word prediction, outlining programs), reading comprehension (e.g., screen readers), organizational strategies (e.g., personal data managers), and listening aids (e.g., recording lectures; Mull & Sitlington, 2003; Raskind & Higgins, 1998). Shaw, Madaus, and Banerjee (2009) noted that not only is it important for students to possess the general technology competencies expected of college students (e.g., use of the Internet, spreadsheets, online research) but, assistive technology should be part of students' transition plans. While shown to be effective accommodations which compensate for functional limitations, frequently college students do not possess the prerequisite skills for using technology to augment their learning.

Some examples of universally available assistive technologies that may benefit some students with disabilities include

- Screen readers /text-to-speech (e.g., Read and Write Gold)
- Speech-to-text (e.g., Read and Write Gold)
- Audio books (mp3/mp4)
- LiveScribe© pens
- Calendar/Organizational software (e.g., Google calendar, Outlook)
- Online transcription apps (for note-taking; e.g., Sonocent)

Regarding technology use, directors and teachers in college programs strongly recommend high school students become familiar with using technology generally. For example, most colleges or universities require students to register for classes, retrieve and submit class assignments, and manage meal plan and other accounts through online systems. Many businesses only accept applications for employment through digital formats, rather than in person or on paper. Additionally, professors, advisors, employers, and peers often share information using email, in-house communication systems, or social media.

What roles can various stakeholders play in increasing the likelihood of a person's success once admitted to a PSET program?

It is frequently noted in resources regarding differences between high school and college that the role of the parent and others shrinks dramatically when a student transitions from high school to

postsecondary education. As noted earlier in the Toolkit in Sections I and III there are both legal and developmental reasons for this shift. However, the student is not – or should not – be expected to completely "go it alone."

Most traditional colleges have some level of expectation of parent or family contact. From family orientation and parent weekends, to sections of the website, family Facebook pages, or electronic messaging services, colleges and university programs understand the importance of parents having quality communication from the institution. Additionally, comprehensive programs for college students with disabilities are likely to have additional means of communication. In an online video-based discussion of "Family Engagement in Postsecondary Education" hosted by the National Collaborative on Workforce Development for Youth in February, 2017 parent and family program professionals from four universities shared suggestions for professional staff and family members. Some of the wisdom shared included:

- leveraging parent communication with students, (i.e., open communication between college, student, parent; "just-in-time" messaging; apprise parents of campus resources so they can direct their student to those resources);
- renaming campus disability resource offices/services for students with disabilities to "Student Access Services" for positive focus on services staff provide rather than challenges or obstacles students face;
- promoting Universal Design in ideas, programs, buildings, and environments and varying delivery and modality of information to parents and families;
- using student-first language; and
- organizing and involving parents in a campus family support network.

Parents and families are likely to continue to provide some level of financial support while a child is participating in postsecondary education. The degree of this support will vary. Parents and families are also likely to continue to provide emotional support, even for students who have moved out of the home to attend school and other logistical support (e.g., transportation, meals, schedule arrangements) for students who are living at home while attending postsecondary education.

When a student turns 18, rights to access educational transcripts and other documents transfer from the parents to the student, according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232g). These regulations and a desire for young adults to develop stronger skills of independent living and self-determination, parents and families and a young adult student should plan and clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities before and during the transition to postsecondary education. Professionals in this area advise parents and families shifting from a role of caretaker to advisor.

How can this inform my practice?

It is our hope that by teachers, students, parents, and other members of the IEP team developing clearer understanding of what PSET may entail – planning and service delivery and instruction will be better tailored to adequately prepare students with disabilities for success in postsecondary education and training opportunities, leading to increasingly positive adult outcomes.