

The State of the Art: An Introduction to the
Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education* (JIPE). JIPE fills a significant void in the field of higher education for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). In the last decade, post-secondary education has become an increasingly available opportunity for students with IDD; with this increase comes new research. While formal programs exist at fewer than 5% of American colleges and universities, the growth in the last decade has been remarkable. Post-secondary students and their families, researchers, faculty members, administrators, teachers, service providers, and others are clamoring for information. Research about inclusive post-secondary education is at a critical growth point.

JIPE grew out of a decade-long annual meeting, the State of the Art Conference in Inclusive Higher Education. Begun in 2009, this conference gathers professionals, advocates, families, and allies in the aim of increased research, technical assistance, and information dissemination on postsecondary opportunities for students with IDD. In 2017, the conference added a second arm, the Student Leadership Conference, a first-ever summit designed by and for college students with IDD. As an outgrowth of these conferences, the mission of JIPE is to publish original research on the topic of inclusive postsecondary education for students with IDD. The journal will provide a forum for qualitative, single subject, quantitative, and mixed methodological studies conducted in a university, community college, or related post-secondary environment.

Inclusive postsecondary opportunities for students with IDD vary widely in terms of how many students they serve, age range of students, geographic location, and academic, social, and residential opportunities. Some programs are designed for dual enrollment students, those who are participating in a college environment while still supported through their school district under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other programs are designed for traditional college-age students, while others serve a range of traditional and non-traditional students. Inclusive postsecondary opportunities exist in 2-year colleges and community colleges, in 4-year colleges and universities, as 1-year programs within a college, and as high school extension programs. Some opportunities serve only a few students while others have 100 or more. Some universities offer student housing and residential supports, some have fully inclusive academic programs while others offer specialized classes, and many provide a myriad of social opportunities for students. This first issue reflects the diversity of program options in the field.

In the first article in this issue, Kelley and Prohn begin with their study, *Postsecondary and Employment Expectations of Families and Students with Intellectual Disability*. Kelley and Prohn used a survey tool of families, students, teachers, and administrators to measure expectations for future achievements (e.g., postsecondary education, employment, independent living) for students with intellectual disability. Based on their results, Kelley and Prohn urge school districts to involve families in transition planning early, and they argue that postsecondary programs need to increase awareness of inclusive opportunities in higher education for families and school districts.

In the second article, Hua, Woods-Groves, and Yuan examine academic supports in *Literacy Interventions for Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Inclusive Postsecondary Education Settings: A Review of a Program of Research*. These authors discuss the importance of literacy instruction for individuals with IDD and emphasize the development of cognitive strategies. The authors also highlight motivation as a key to persistence; in other words, students must see literacy skills as useful or interesting in order to engage in them. The authors conclude that strong academic support can result in better outcomes such as increased graduation rates from postsecondary programs.

Next, Smith Lee, Rozell, and Will present *Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living*. The authors propose increasing guidance from the US Department of Education on the implementation of the WIOA, including the use of IDEA and Vocational Rehabilitation funding for postsecondary opportunities for students with ID. This recommendation could have significant effects on the field.

In *The Use of Smart Technology on Improving Time Management of College Students with Intellectual/Developmental Disability*, Wennerlind, Baker, Devine, and Nasir-Tucktuck show that Smartwatch interventions can be beneficial in the overall development of daily living skills. Finding successful strategies to assist with transitions is especially important as students graduate and obtain employment.

Collectively, the papers in this inaugural issue accomplish a great deal in the field. These studies include policy positions and quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research on key topics that impact inclusive postsecondary education. JIPE, as the first stand-alone journal of its kind, achieves a critical turning point in the research. JIPE reflects a diverse field that is engaged with critical work in higher education at the intersection of disability. This work is important because it affords the opportunity for documenting ideas, influencing current practices, investigating interventions, and reflecting on progress within inclusive postsecondary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities.