Fulfilling the mission of helping all students meet their postsecondary goals: Special considerations for students with disabilities

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Goals of the Session

Why is this topic time sensitive and important to college counseling?

- Learn about the unique needs of students with a variety of documented disabilities and potential barriers to receiving a college education
- Look at the Importance of partnerships and vocational support for students with special needs
- Examine the role of the counselor and admissions counselor in the postsecondary application process
- Inclusion at work: Tapestry Public Charter School’s post-secondary counseling program
- Two real life examples of high school seniors preparing for postsecondary education from the viewpoint of a college counselor parent
- Conclusion and Next Steps: Q&A from the audience
Who are the students we are talking about?

- Developmental
  - Autism spectrum disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome (now part of ASD),
  - Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Down’s Syndrome

- Physical
  - Vision Impaired
  - Hearing Impaired
  - Loss of Mobility
  - Other Physical Disabilities

- Emotional
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Other Psychological Disorders

- Cognitive/Behavioral
  - Learning Disabilities, Cognitive Impairment, Speech and Related Disorders
Opening Activity. What are some of the needs and challenges of high school students transitioning to college or the workplace?

List three needs on the LINED side of the index card and write ALL STUDENTS

What unique challenges and needs face students with disabilities in this same situation?

Use the UNLINED Side and list two or three unique challenges
Challenges and Needs

All students:

- Independence and Time Management
- Distance from Home
- Self-Care (laundry, living on own, meals, finding resources, budgeting)
- Self-Advocacy in classes
- Juggling demands of school and work
- Meeting new friends and learning new city
- Role of Parents
- Sexual/Dating Relationships and Identify Development
- Becoming involved on campus
- Career Development
- Course Selection
- Learning Campus Resources

Students with special needs: Same challenges/needs as all students, but also...

- Self-Disclosure
- Mental Health
- Medical management
- Self-care
- Barriers to campus access
- Tutoring options
- Specific Campus Resources
- Executive Functioning Needs
- IDEA vs IEP/504
- Social Skills Training
- Personal Safety
- Transition to College Life
What do we know? Research on College Counseling Students with Disabilities

Taken from a 2014 article in the Hechinger Report: Only 25% of students who received help for their disabilities in high school acknowledge in college that they need the same assistance, according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

31% of youth with disabilities attend college in the first two years after high school, according to a 2005 report by the U.S. Education Department.

While 94 percent of high school students with learning disabilities get some kind of help, just 17 percent of learning-disabled college students do.

“Many students [with learning disabilities] first get to college and really want to do it on their own,” said Sarah Williams, an East Carolina University professor of special education. “They’re really tired of the whole system.”

Link:

https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/people-with-a-disability-less-likely-to-have-completed-a-bachelors-degree.htm Among people age 25 and older in 2014, 16.4 percent of people with a disability had completed at least a bachelor’s degree. By comparison, 34.6 percent of people with no disability had completed at least a bachelor’s degree.

https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64
University Services for Students with Disabilities

- Wide Range of Services for Students with Disabilities
- Issue of Self-Disclosure and Self-Advocacy
- Section 504 vs IEP
- Disability Services: Standard Accommodations, books on tape, tutoring, “accommodations letter” delivered to student
- TRIO Student Support Services: Counseling, accommodations, tutoring, financial aid, other services
- Peer Mentoring, Support Groups, Counseling, Dorm Aide, Specialized programs (often for fee) providing additional support, pre-college programs
- Specialized universities for students with learning disabilities (Landmark College, Lynn University, Beacon College are just three examples)
- Post-Secondary Inclusive Programs (non-degree) focusing on vocational skills and the college experience
Tapestry Public Charter School (Atlanta, GA)

- Public Charter High School in Doraville, GA (close to the Atlanta, GA perimeter)
- Opened its doors in 2014. Students selected by lottery open to all residents of DeKalb County School System.
- The mission of Tapestry Public Charter School is to offer an inclusive, individualized learning environment that is academically engaging, both for neurotypical students and those on the autism spectrum, and to create a positive school culture that empowers all students to take possession of their innate talents and become creative builders of their own future.
- Approximately 50% of students are on the Autism Spectrum or have other diagnoses (learning, emotional, physical disabilities). Currently we have 221 students serving grades 6-11 and we will add a senior class for the first graduating Class of 2019 (22 students)
- One full time counselor/two part time counselor
- Process of creating a college-bound curriculum and assist with transition services and postsecondary goals
- Senior Internship and Transition Consortium
- Teaching Self-advocacy and awareness of disability
- Next Steps
Counselor Training: Are we ready and able?

- University training programs do not spend a great deal of time teaching college counseling to graduate students
- Most experience is “on the job”
- Courses in special education or identifying developmental disabilities and counseling students with emotional, physical, or cognitive disabilities
- Special Education Department versus Counseling Department
- Knowledge of College Admissions Counselors: College Fair Example
- Need for increased knowledge and awareness
College search for student with physical disability

Morgan Dunnigan - Class of 2017
St. Andrew’s Episcopal School
Ridgeland, MS
Background

- Born September 1999
- No health issues
- Itching/Tingling began in neck late spring 2005, blamed on psychological issue, skin issue, misdiagnosed by multiple physicians
Background

- MRI Thursday, December 8, 2005 (age six) reveals tumor C2 - C6
- Surgery set for Monday, December 12, 2005
- Morgan wakes up paralyzed morning of surgery; tumor is removed, non-cancerous, quadriplegia
Background

- Leaves hospital in Winston-Salem, NC on January 10, 2006, transfers to Kennedy Krieger Hospital next to Johns Hopkins
- Walks out May 4, 2006
- Ends first grade in Virginia with her class
Background

- Walks with crutches short/mid-range distances
- Wheelchair for classes beginning in 9th grade
- No bowel/bladder function; became fully bathroom independent late in high school
- Defined as “weak and uncoordinated” which she finds insulting
- Does not sweat
Physical status

- Fall risk
- Slow with most manual tasks; dressing herself is laborious; cutting meat challenging as left hand struggles
- Wears left hand brace at night to keep fingers more flexible
- Orthotics in shoes; limited shoe assortment
- Entitled to extended time on tests (rarely uses)
The college search

- Where should she look?
- Needs an adaptive campus & willingness of people on campus to make accommodations & be inclusive
- Weather matters: cold is misery but heat could kill
- Family/Friend support could be important
- What else is important to know?
Academics - status at end of junior year

- 5 on AP English Language, AP U.S. History, AP Calculus AB, and 4 on AP Physics 1
- Choir 9th & 10th grade, Speech & Debate 11-12
Academics

● 4.1 GPA
● 35 ACT (33, 32 in winter/spring junior year)
● English Literature 660
● Math Level II 730
● U.S. History 720
Academics

- Senior year schedule:
- AP English Literature
- AP Calculus BC (second semester)
- AP Statistics
Academics

- AP Human Geography/ Contemporary Issues
- AP U.S. Government
- AP Spanish
- Speech and Debate
So where should she look?
EXTRAORDINARY or ORDINARY...

Encourage Morgan to be extraordinary.

INSIDE: Information about applying to HPU
Morgan
Happy Birthday!
I hope it’s a
great one!
Jack Waller
Admissions Counselor
(a) \[ B(t) = 0 \]
\[ R \times (E(t) - E) = R \]
\[ R \times (E \times E) = R \]

\[ x \times (t^2 \cdot \vec{E}) = 0 \]

\[ u(x) = \frac{1}{x^2} \int \frac{e^{-i(k_1 \cdot x)}}{k_1 + k_2} \, dk_1 \]

\[ \theta(x) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{m} \left( \frac{2m}{3} \right)^{1/2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-i(k \cdot x)}}{k + \frac{m}{3}} \, dk \]
March 2016

Dear Ms. Dominguez,

Have you considered Harvard? Your strong grades and standardized test scores indicate that Harvard and other elite institutions may be a good fit for you. We encourage you to explore Harvard’s welcoming community and the nearly limitless opportunities here.

Academic Excellence: Choose from more than 3,300 courses in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and engineering with a student-to-teacher ratio of 1:8. You can study over 80 languages, and explore exciting new opportunities.

"One Harvard": Benefit from the unique resources of the entire University including not only undergraduate research centers, libraries, museums, and Innovation Labs.

Harvard’s Legendary House System: Enjoy a faculty-led "small college" experience with enhanced personal advising and a graduation rate of 98%.

Student Activities: Select from a vast array of co-curricular activities and athletics. Enjoy classmates from every cultural, ethnic, and economic background. Rooms with students from any of the 50 states or from countries around the world.

Revolutionary Financial Aid: Consider that Harvard is so affordable that it costs less than a state school for 90% of American families. Nearly 90% of our students receive financial aid. Their families pay an average of only $12,000 per year, and students are not required to take loans. We want our graduates to be free to pursue what they find meaningful in life without debt. In preparing your financial aid package, we calculate the costs of an education beyond tuition, including travel, books, housing and meals. International students are eligible for financial aid on the same basis as U.S. citizens. Please visit our website at college.harvard.edu/financial-aid. Our net price calculator can help you estimate your cost to attend Harvard. And if you need a fee waiver to apply, just ask.

Join us for an information session and tour. Visit historic Harvard Yard, your home freshman year, and find out what it would be like to join those who have lived and learned at Harvard since 1636.

Take a few steps beyond the Yard to explore the world-class laboratories, international research centers, and museums. Take a few steps in another direction into Harvard Square, a lively hub for student life. Take a 12-minute subway ride from Harvard Square, and you're in the heart of Boston, America's "college town." Find us at college.harvard.edu/admissions or like us on Facebook.com/HarvardAdmissions to keep up with College news.

At this important crossroads in your life, talk to your family and college counselor. An admission to Harvard and similar colleges is competitive, so we ask only that you take a moment to consider Harvard and learn more.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 617.495.1551 or email us at college@fas.harvard.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

William R. Fitzsimmons
Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Mary Y. đòNEGÁT
Director of Admissions

[Signature]

Director of Financial Aid

Administration Office 80 Brattle Street - Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
Victor Center Agassiz House - Radcliffe Yard - 5 Jones Street - Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
Congratulations on your incredible score on the PSAT/NMSQT.

You are exactly the kind of student that we want here at OU – a high-achieving and intelligent critical thinker with a bright future. Let us show you why we should be at the top of your “to visit” list.
CARLETON COLLEGE PRESENTS
COLLEGE BROCHURE BINGO

Students volunteering
Students traveling abroad
Resting in dorm room
Professor pointing at a book or laptop
Cheerful sustainability effort
Science student with a test tube
Campus clock tower
Library study session
Fun on the quad
Charming college town
Team mascot
Art student in a studio
Delicious food
Wacky college tradition
Scenic campus
Snowball fight
Student performing
Class outside on the lawn
Famous guest speaker
Aerial photo of campus
Successful alumni
Ivy-covered building
Seating graduate

Make sorting through your pile of college brochures more fun by looking for these common images. (Why stop at five in a row? Go for a cover-all!!)
Colleges she visited - Southeast/Virginia

Rhodes College
Vanderbilt University
Emory University
Furman University
Davidson College

Elon University
University of Richmond
College of William and Mary
University of Richmond
Colleges she visited - California

- Pomona College
- Scripps College
- Claremont McKenna College
- Occidental College
- University of Southern California
- Stanford University
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Are all buildings accessible? Are doors accessible? Are elevators needed?</th>
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Post Campus Visit Evaluation
School: [Blank]

Overall impression of campus and community

Dorms
Can be very noisy.

Cafeteria
Wasnt impressed. Many little stores.

Course offerings (pre-law, finance)

Clubs (mock trial, Greek life)

Can you see yourself here?

Yes

Overall grade:
Location (max. 20)
Academics (max. 20)
Social (max. 20)
Accessibility (max. 20)
Gut feeling (max. 20)

Total: 80/100
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<td>Size of School (# of students)</td>
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<td>Size of School (geographical)</td>
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<td>Campus Beauty</td>
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<td>Campus Accessibility</td>
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<td>Residence Halls</td>
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<td>Climate</td>
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<td>Distance from Home</td>
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<td>Student Clubs (Mock Trial, Model UN)</td>
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<td>On-campus Living (%)</td>
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<td>Dining Services</td>
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<td>Distribution of Classes</td>
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<td>Department Strengths</td>
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<td>Party Atmosphere</td>
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<td>Spiritual Strength</td>
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<td>Student Health</td>
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<td>Other Disabled Students</td>
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<td>Social Clubs</td>
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Colleges eliminated based on visits

Vanderbilt - getting around campus, city life
William and Mary - accessibility
Occidental - large hill in center of campus
College almost eliminated after visit

Davidson - tour guide used stairs with entire group while Morgan, mom, and grandmother were only ones told to use ramp every time
What’s the takeaway?

If someone on your tour is handicapped, use the ramp!
Colleges eliminated on second visit

Pomona, Claremont McKenna - American Airlines lost wheelchair, had to use a rented, broken scooter, smelled marijuana first time, felt that being two flights away/absence of family/friends was too much
Amazing thing Claremont McKenna did

No ADA room on campus, the college had an architect draw up how they would renovate a space to have a bathroom & be properly accessible
Revisits to Duke, Davidson

Met with paralyzed student at Duke whose room was renovated to create room for an aid; quote from university: “Whatever you need, we will make it happen.”
Revisit to Duke, Davidson

Spent night at Davidson, felt closeness of community, applied early decision
Main takeaways

- Who on your campus works with students with physical disabilities?
- Have you been around your campus in a wheelchair? Is it really accessible?
Main takeaways

● Who is nearby to support the student with a disability? What if wheelchair breaks....twice? What if student gets the flu? What if student needs to see a doctor?
Main takeaways

● There is no great online resource for accessible campuses; the student needs to visit and get around as much of the campus as possible.

● The “human” factor, from the high school counselor to the tour guide and support staff, is most important.
College search for a student on the autism spectrum

Harry Hazelton, Senior
Marvelwood School
Kent, CT
Background

- Harry born May 1999
- No health issues; hit early milestones
- 18 months: speech delays noticed; lack of awareness/response to surroundings; repetitive speech and behaviors
- Diagnosed at 22 months with PDD-NOS; Aspergers
Intervention

• REACH Program in Massachusetts: intervenes with disabled children from birth until public school eligibility
• Speech, Occupational therapy
• ABA Therapy
• “Floortime”
• Goals: Speech, Interaction (Parallel Play to Mutual Play)
Background

• Enters Early Childhood Program in Public Schools at 3 years old
• Integrated Classroom with Aide
• **Progress?**
  • Reading Skills
  • Better muscle tone and fine motor skills
  • Happy Child who “wants” to interact versus avoiding interaction
  • Speech came along very rapidly; strong vocabulary and academic skills
  • Continual challenges: Peer Interactions, Understanding Social Cues, Reading Situations
Status in Middle School and HS

• By 2nd grade: No aide and no formal services
• Elementary and middle school: social groups, peer lunches organized by guidance.
• Plays team sports
• Continual struggles: reading peers, understanding cues, relationships
• Middle School/Puberty/Adolescence is tough: feeling isolated, exacerbated by town programs that cut children from athletic teams in 4th and 5th grade
• Sent to private MS for 7th and 8th grade for social needs/physical needs; healthier culture
High School

- Private High School (day/boarding); under 200 students
- Range: “typical” students; others on spectrum—bit more of a peer group
- Learning center with instructor versed in autism spectrum. Functions as a life coach, role playing, deconstruct social situations, coaching
- Challenges still persist
- Day student, but boarding component. Allowed to stay over—gradual over time; develop independence for college
College Search

- **Identify Needs**
  - Psychological supports on campus and in region
  - Dedicated Autism Program? Necessary?
  - Peer Counselors and Peer Networks
    - Network that will “look out” for him and nurture while expecting independence/accountability
  - Campus Culture
  - Pressures of Social Scene
  - Strong communication between professors and health/learning services
  - Housing Needs
  - Access to home?
College Search

• **Identify Goals**
  • A degree
  • Ability to become independent
  • Academic rigor while allowing room for missteps and struggles
  • Liberal arts vs. discernible trade?
  • Improved peer relationships
Academics

• B average
• Couple of APs and Honors
• 4 years of English, Math (through Pre-Cal), Science, History, Spanish
• Mid 1000 on SAT/comparable ACT
• Extracurriculars
  • Dorm Proctor
  • Peer Advisor
  • Wrestling, baseball, soccer
  • Camp Counselor (summer); Zoo volunteer
Where did he look?

- Schools with autism programs: Adelphi, St. Joseph’s (PA)
- Liberal Arts Colleges with a history of close student support: Hobart, Ursinus, Susquehanna, Curry, Wofford
- Local Colleges/Universities: Marist, College of Mt. St. Vincent
- His “wish” list to “keep up with the Joneses”: Union, Trinity, Gettysburg, Dickinson, and Connecticut College
Resources and References

- Promoting Disability-Friendly Campuses to Prospective Students: An Analysis of University Recruitment Materials http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/673/850
Resources

Students with Disabilities: Preparing for Postsecondary Education [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)


Best value colleges for students with disabilities

[https://www.bestvalueschools.com/rankings/students-with-learning-disabilities/](https://www.bestvalueschools.com/rankings/students-with-learning-disabilities/)

18 best colleges for students with learning disabilities