



# Quarterly Update

## 2005-2008 Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education

Each year, an increasing number of students with disabilities enter postsecondary education (HEATH, 1999). With the current school reform efforts, particularly the high standards requirement by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, more students with disabilities will graduate from high school and will enter postsecondary education (Quick, Lehmann, & Densiston, 2003). After entering postsecondary education, however, students with disabilities have a higher attrition rate and a lower graduation rate than students who do not have disabilities (Izzo, Hertzfeld, Simmons-Reed, & Aaron, 2001; NCES, 1999).

Efforts to solving the above problems have primarily been focused on helping students with disabilities make adjustments to post-secondary education (e.g., self-advocacy, systematic planning, awareness of differences between college and high school). But, an important area that has not been adequately addressed is the faculty and administrator's lack of training in instructional strategies, particularly pertaining to students with disabilities. In fact, the majority of postsecondary education administrators and faculty members do not have any formal training in effective instruction and lack of basic knowledge in terms of how to interact with or help students with disabilities. Recent studies indicate that institutions of higher education fail to effectively implement evidenced-based practices in teaching and serving students with disabilities (Johnson, Studden, Emanuel, & Mack, 2002; Parker, Shaw, & McGuire, 2003).

Recognizing this problem, Sections 762 and 763 of the Title VII, Part D, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, authorizes demonstration projects to ensure students with disabilities receive a quality higher education program. Section 762 of the statute authorizes grants to institutions of higher education to "provide professional development and technical assistance in order for students with learning disabilities to receive a quality postsecondary education" by carrying out one or more of three types of activities: teaching methods and strategies, synthesizing research and information, and professional development and training sessions.

Currently, there are 23 colleges, universities, and university systems (including the Texas A&M University System) that are developing and implementing demonstration projects designed to

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ensure that postsecondary students with disabilities receive a quality education. Here, brief descriptions and website addresses of three of the projects are provided so that faculty, staff and administrators can utilize their information and trainings.

**The Access to a Quality Higher Education Project  
Kent State University**

<http://www.classaccommodation.org/>

This project features a number of training, dissemination, and technical assistance services designed to promote a clearer understanding of the needs of postsecondary students with disabilities. Components of the project include a faculty mentoring program that matches students with disabilities and Kent State university faculty members, a summer professional development institute on disability issues that includes 20 Kent State faculty each year, and a toll-free and web-based technical assistance service for faculty members wishing to learn more about classroom accommodations and universal design for instruction.

**Postsecondary Academic & Curriculum Excellence 3 (PACE 3)  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock**

<http://www.ualr.edu/pace/>

PACE 3 provides faculty with tools to help them reach all students, utilizing principles of Universal Design for Instruction. PACE 3 follows two successful model demonstration grant projects at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock that focused on educating a core group of 90 academic department chairs and faculty who serve as a resource to other faculty (PACE 1) and who guide faculty to make changes in their courses and departmental processes based on principles of Universal Design (PACE 2).

**AccessCollege  
University of Washington**

<http://www.washington.edu/doit/Resources/postsec.html>

AccessCollege builds on earlier demonstration projects by training faculty, academic administrators and student services administrators; refining the successful professional development training and nation-wide resources for faculty and administrators; as well as identifying, validating and applying Systemic Change Indicators to document institutional change toward more accessible courses and services. The staff builds project methods and materials from earlier work and current research through a nationwide collaboration with a team of faculty and administrators representing 24 two- and four-year institutions.

**Productive Learning Strategies (PLuS)  
DePaul University**

[http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus/faculty\\_staff\\_perspectives.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus/faculty_staff_perspectives.html)

This train-the-trainer model includes video and print media, web-based resources and a summer training institute for faculty, staff and administrators of DePaul University. Over 200 students with documented learning disabilities and/or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder currently attend DePaul University and receive services through the university's comprehensive support program.

