

## Abstract

### **New Postsecondary Education Options in Delaware: TPSID Model Demonstration Project**

For more than 15 years, the University of Delaware (UD), through its Center for Disabilities Studies, has collaborated with school districts to provide campus- and community-based education services to young adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID). School-district and University students alike have benefited from the opportunity to engage each other in academic, work, and social settings. Within the last two years, UD expanded transition-related services to include a 1-week intensive residential campus experience, an “early start” to supported employment service, and a Jr. Partners in Policymaking program. Based on program evaluations, discussions with state and local partners, and inquiries to UD from families of individuals with disabilities, it is the consensus among stakeholders that there is a statewide need for postsecondary education options for individuals with ID who desire more than a secondary education certificate or diploma, but who have not qualified for or succeeded in traditional postsecondary education programs. UD proposes to help fill this gap by establishing a Career & Life Studies Certificate program on its campus. Also, a consortium of UD, Delaware State University, and other institutions of higher education (IHE) that have a commitment to students with ID will work in partnership with Delaware State agencies, school districts, businesses, families, and individuals with ID to extend postsecondary education options statewide through systems change, replication, and sustainability initiatives. An Advisory Council representing all major constituents will oversee project implementation and evaluation, which will be undertaken across 3 project goal areas and integrated with the national TPSID coordinating center activities.

**Goal 1: *Expand UD’s current services for individuals with ID to include a comprehensive, inclusive, and customized postsecondary education program leading to a recognized Career & Life Studies Certificate.*** The 2-year Certificate will be housed within UD’s Professional & Continuing Studies unit. Students may concurrently pursue additional standards-based certificates in specific academic or career areas. Students will engage in typical campus life and services and receive individualized supports as identified through person-centered planning. As of summer 2011, 15 students will be enrolled each year (75 in 5 yrs); graduates first exiting in 2013 (60 in 5 yrs).

**Goal 2: *Extend postsecondary education options for un(der)served individuals with ID statewide by collaborating with partners on systems change initiatives and model replication.*** A system for focused, regular monitoring and specification of the demand for postsecondary education services among students and adults with ID statewide will be established. Also, new forms of postsecondary education funding for Delaware students with ID will be identified based on similar models for typical students (e.g., SEED Grant) and through creative use of existing disability supports, modeled on Delaware’s successful Early Start to Supported Employment systems change initiative. The IHE consortium will be engaged at all levels of the project and receive support to develop proposals for program replication, with funds allocated to assist with start-up at a minimum of 2 other institutions.

**Goal 3: *Ensure program sustainability by securing new sources of federal financial aid for students with ID and further integrating program services into IHE operations.*** UD will apply under Title IV Federal Student Aid Programs for recognition of the new Career & Life Studies program to enable students with ID to access funding that is now available as authorized in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Information about financial aid, campus life and services will be integrated into UD and other IHE materials and disseminated in multiple formats and locations. Program evaluation data on degree and types of program participant integration into campus life and systems will be used for program improvement and to identify new options for postsecondary education experiences for individuals with ID statewide.