

Improving the Persistence and Engagement of Students with Disabilities through Skill Development
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The National Council on Disability (NCD; 2003) reports that one in eleven students that enrolls in a full-time undergraduate program has a disability; however these students are less likely than their peers to persevere toward their degree, take on average twice as long to graduate, and a vast majority require additional services to manage/coordinate their educational and related services. The disparity of outcomes can be attributed to numerous causes, both systemic/bureaucratic and disability-based. However, researchers agree that a resounding barrier to participation, retention, and persistence is the inability of the student to integrate into and take full advantage of the college experience.

The research presented is a qualitative investigation of the perceptions of barriers to and supports for success in the college academic environment for students with disabilities. Stakeholders interviewed included successful college alumni with disabilities, parents, Disability Support Services personnel, community services providers, and other college personnel. Pertinent themes will be presented, as well as an action plan for addressing needs and barriers on Hofstra's campus. An outline for a semester-long workshop for students with disabilities will be presented. This program will be piloted in Spring 2012 through the Rehabilitation Counseling program, in collaboration with Services for Students with Disabilities and The Career Center.