



April 15, 2015

ICI's Check & Connect Marks 25th Year with National Conference

Check & Connect, the K-12 student engagement intervention developed at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), turns 25 this year and ICI is marking the occasion by holding the first-ever Check & Connect National Conference on October 7-8 at the University of Minnesota. Check & Connect is a comprehensive intervention designed to enhance student engagement at school and with learning for marginalized, disengaged students in grades K-12. The conference will bring together leading experts and practitioners from around the country to address the topic of student engagement among at-risk youth, share lessons learned, and gain tools for implementing and sustaining Check & Connect to support youth in reaching their goals and graduating from high school.

Check & Connect began in 1990 when the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs awarded a five-year grant to enable a group of ICI researchers to develop a dropout prevention program in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools. The project targeted about 200 middle school students with emotional/behavioral disorders and/or learning disabilities for intervention, with mentors checking their students' performance of alterable variables weekly (e.g., attendance, behavior, academics) and providing timely intervention focused on problem solving, skill building, and support from school personnel, families, and community service providers to enhance engagement. The program succeeded. Compared to control groups, many more students who received the Check & Connect intervention stayed in school and were, by grade 9, on track to graduate within five years.

Since 1990, Check & Connect has been implemented in K-12 schools in over 27 states, including statewide use in three states, and in other countries. Of the dropout prevention interventions reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse in 2006, Check & Connect was the only program found to have strong evidence of positive effects on staying in school. It has also been adapted for use in other settings, including postsecondary education and the juvenile justice system. One of the model's developers, Sandy Christenson, Professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Educational Psychology, notes the importance of Check & Connect's approach to the whole student: "Engaging students is more than promoting academic engaged time or attendance. We must pay attention to students' emotional and intellectual responses to school in order to improve their schooling experiences and school completion. Enhancing students' sense of belonging and motivation to learn is a core feature of Check & Connect."

The Check & Connect National Conference will be held at the McNamara Alumni Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, on October 7-8. It is for professionals interested in learning more about student engagement in general and Check & Connect specifically, as well as current sites implementing Check & Connect's model. In addition, on October 6, there will be a pre-conference training offering a condensed version of Check & Connect's typical two-day implementation training for those considering or beginning use of Check & Connect. For information on the implementation manual, training, and consultation services, visit <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu>.

FFI and registration visit <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/conf/>. Or contact the main office at checkandconnect@umn.edu or 612/624-2097.

Staff Update

- **Staff Hires:** **Susan Kane**, Temporary/ Hourly Employee, Adult Services; and **Macdonald Metzger**, Education Program Specialist 1, Adult Services. **Staff Departure:** **Gretchen Hatch**, Principal Office & Administrative Specialist, Transition.
- **Amy Hewitt** presented on the "Prevalence of ASD in Minnesota" at the Minnesota Autism Initiative conference at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital on March 27.
- On March 30, **Jean Echternacht** presented at the National Johnson O'Malley Indian Education Conference in Portland, Oregon on the topic "How to Prepare Indian Youth for the Differences between High School and College."
- **Jerry Smith** presented on "Social and Video Tools for Information Dissemination and Knowledge Translation" at AUCD'S TA Institute in Bethesda, Maryland on March 27.
- **Barb Kleist** and **Mark Olson** presented at the 2015 Minnesota Self-Advocacy Conference in St. Paul, March 27-28. Barb presented "Be Happy Be Safe" and Mark co-presented "BEATLES!"

Dates to Remember...

- April 20: ESUP goes live.
- April 21: ICI Council, 10:30-12, 118 Pattee
- April 21: CEHD Spring Assembly, DQ Room, TCF Bank Stadium, 2-4 p.m.
- April 24: ICI Organizational Redesign Listening Session, 11-12:30, 325 Ed Sciences
- May 5: ICI Organizational Redesign Listening Session, 9-10:30, 325 Ed Sciences
- May 6: ICI Organizational Redesign Listening Session, 3-4:30 p.m., 214 Pattee
- May 12: ICI Council, 10:30-12, 118 Pattee

From the Front Office

News from ICI's Administrative Staff

- **ESUP Goes Live.** On April 20, the new Human Resources (HR) and Financial system upgrade will be completed, and the online training we all have done will come into use. You may complete the trainings as many times as necessary and the Job Aids are always available for viewing, printing or saving to your system for reference. There will be a learning curve and the system may be a little slow for the first few days. Everyone's patience is needed and appreciated. For questions or concerns related to HR and Payroll in the new system, please contact Amy (4-2380, kuro0008@umn.edu) or Beth (6-8042, nelso106@umn.edu). For Financial-related questions, please consult your accountant. You can also refer back to the e-mail that Amy Kurowski sent on March 31 to the listserv for links and other information.
- **Workgroup Calendar Users.** This is a reminder that Workgroup Calendar will be discontinued on April 19. All requests for vacation and/or sick time starting or after April 20 should be made in the new ESUP online system, using "MyU > My Time > Request Time Off."
- **GRA Summer Appointments.** Information about continuing current Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Appointments

Miscellaneous

- **Sensory-Friendly Bell Museum.** The University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of Natural History now offers Sensory-Friendly Saturdays this spring for families with children who have sensory sensitivities. The museum's dioramas, Touch & See Room, and planetarium will all have lower lighting, quieter sounds, and fewer visitors on Saturday mornings on April 18 and May 23. To register, call 612/626-9660 or e-mail info@bellmuseum.org.
- **Assistive and Instructional Technology.** Since 1999, the Family Center on Technology and Disability (FCTD), a project of Family Health International (FHI360), has been a source of information and resources on assistive and instructional technology for children and youth with disabilities. In partnership with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and PACER

into Summer Term (5/25-8/30) was sent to supervisors and students on April 14. This information is due no later than May 4. Note that Spring appointments end May 24. Questions? Contact Amy at kuro0008@umn.edu.

- **Building Temperature Transition.** Facilities Management will soon transition University buildings from heating to cooling. As outdoor temperatures rise, it may become warm indoors. Until this transition is complete, you may open windows (and close them when you leave) or acquire a small desk fan if you are too warm. This transition usually happens in mid-April and depends on the weather.
- **ICI Staff to be Recognized.** The CEHD Spring Assembly and Recognition Event will be held in the TCF Stadium – DQ Room on April 21, from 2-4 p.m. ICI employees being recognized for their years of University Staff Service are: **Brooke Nelson, Hannah Carney, Amanda Ryan, Jennifer Hall-Lande, and Sharon Mulé** (5 years); **Amy Kurowski** (15 years); **Susan O'Neil, Sandra Pettingell, and Angela Amado** (20 years); **Ruth Berman** (25 years); and **Trisha Beuhring** (retiring 6/14/15).
- **Center, FCTD has launched the Center on Technology and Disability (CTD).** Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, CTD provides, through its online institute, a CTD Library, "Café," and Learning Center. FFI, visit <http://www.ctdinstitute.org/>.
- **Olmstead Plan Video.** A new video, *The Olmstead Plan... A Path to Progress for People with Disabilities* (9 minutes), has been released on YouTube by The Arc Minnesota and the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkQuqxcHN3w>.
- **Birthdays.** **Michael Moore** (5/6), **Sandy Pettingell** (5/8), **Amanda Ryan** (5/15), and **Amy Hewitt** (5/19). Did we miss your birthday? Let us know! Call 4-2380 or e-mail kuro0008@umn.edu.

Bits & Pieces

New Publications and Web Resources

- **New Publications.** The following new ICI publications are available:
 - *LEND Brief: ASD and Culture* (Spring 2015). Published by the Institute's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (MN LEND) Program. Available on the Web at http://lend.umn.edu/docs/ASD_and_Culture_FINAL.pdf.
- **New NCEO Series.** The Institute's National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has launched *Data Analytics*, a new interactive data series that uses Tableau. The first issue, *Graduation Policies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Who Participate in States' AA-AAS*, was released in March. Available on the Web at https://public.tableau.com/profile/mvang#!vizhome/AA_AASv9_5/RegularDiploma.
- **ICI's Research Day Presentations.** Four of the poster presentations by ICI staff at the College of Education and Human Development's Research Day on March 24 are now available on the Web at <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/research/news/rd.html>. They are:
 - "States' Graduation Policies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Who Participate in Alternate Assessments." (Authors: Martha Thurlow, Sheryl Lazarus, Deb Albus, and Mai Vang)
 - "State Vocational Rehabilitation Program Delivery and Hourly Wages: A Multilevel Analysis." (Authors: Youngsoon Kang and Derek Nord)
 - "Making a MAP: Finding My Way Back." (Authors: Eileen A. Klemm and Cheryl Vanacora)
 - "Trends in Residential Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities: Three Decades of Change." (Authors: Libby Hallas-Muchow, Lynda Anderson, Sheryl Larson, and Sandra Pettengell)
- **FYI Deadline.** Items for the next *FYI* should be submitted to Tom (donag003@umn.edu) by May 11.