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MOMENTUM

WIDENING COLLEGE PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY



WINTER 2024–25

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STUDENT PROFILE

Ahead: A Colorful Future

I'm going to the University of Delaware. They have a really good program for students with autism and intellectual disability called the Career and Life Studies Certificate. The program supports us in joining inclusive classes, clubs, and activities for students with and without disabilities. I will also have job exploration, training, and internships that meet my interests.

I love playing video games and have loved art since elementary school when I started drawing and using oil pastels. Today, I like visual arts, especially photography, video production, digital art, and graphic design. I usually draw on my iPad in Adobe Creative and enjoy learning different parts of Adobe



Creative. I like colorful art with a good mixture of colors and textures.

I've always wanted to go to college. All my siblings went to college. I got to see my sister graduate this year, and I want to graduate one day, too, and be prepared for my future, be more independent, and have a job I like.

[Read more about Kellie Shaw and other college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](#)

NEWS

Lake Superior College Awarded First Inclusive Higher Education Grant

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education has awarded Lake Superior College in Duluth a 2024 Inclusive Higher Education Grant. The \$200,000 grant will help college staff increase enrollment and access for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

"If we want every Minnesotan to see themselves as college material, then we need to remove any barriers to access," Higher Education Commissioner Dennis Olson said. "My hope is that more colleges apply for this grant in the future and that Lake Superior College can provide best practices for supporting students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that can be shared with campuses across the state."

Established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2023, the grant program recognizes that students with IDD deserve the opportunity to pursue postsecondary education with the same rights, privileges, experiences, benefits, and outcomes as enrolled students. Colleges that receive the grant may apply for renewed funding.

As a grant recipient, Lake Superior College will offer enrollment to students with IDD, update financial aid forms to accommodate students with IDD, and adopt and promote inclusive higher education.

Fall Conferences

[Mary Hauff](#) and [Katie Parry](#) participated in the [Minnesota Partners in Policymaking](#) Education Roundtables on October 18, sharing information about inclusive higher education. Partners in Policymaking is an eight-month advocacy and leadership training program that gives people with disabilities and their families the resources and skills needed to communicate effectively with elected officials. The Partners class includes around 40 self-advocates and parents.

On October 25, Hauff and Parry presented "Inclusive Higher Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" at the [Minnesota Library Association](#) (MLA) Conference in Rochester, Minnesota. MLA is an ally organization that facilitates educational opportunities among members and connects the library community with various constituencies. Libraries assist students with IDD on college campuses and in their communities. Libraries also inform families and educators about inclusive higher education resources.

On November 18, Hauff presented at the [Educational Opportunity Association](#) (EOA) Conference, introducing midwestern TRIO staff to inclusive higher education and the technical assistance center. EOA levels the educational opportunity playing field for first-generation, low-income, underrepresented groups, veterans, and students with disabilities. TRIO and inclusive higher education aim to eliminate barriers for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who want to attend college.



On November 19, Hauff (pictured second from left) and Parry (third from left) presented at the [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Summit](#), introducing inclusive higher education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the Minnesota Technical Assistance Center. This session was delivered in conjunction with “Bridging the Gap: CTE Pathways for Students with Intellectual Disabilities,” presented by Drew Andrews (pictured at left) and Christian Zimmerman (right), who lead the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, which expands postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities in Florida. The CTE Summit is Minnesota's largest conference convening career and technical education educators, leaders, community partners, workforce, and business and industry in K-12 and higher education. Practitioners come together to share impactful strategies to close the equity gaps for career and technical education learners.



State of the Art Award

MIHEC director Mary Hauff was awarded the 2024 State Level Leadership Award on October 30. The award is from the State of the Art Conference, organized and led by Syracuse University's Taishoff Center. Hauff (center) is pictured with Julie Lackey (director of OK IPSE Alliance) and Jonathan Lidgus (director of the Office of Inclusive Postsecondary Education at the University of Missouri - St. Louis).

[SOTA](#) is a national conference that convenes colleges, universities, researchers,

program staff, parents, and students to discuss the current state of research and effective practices in inclusive postsecondary and higher education.

Technical Assistance Center Advisory Committee

The advisory committee met on September 9 and November 13. The committee reviewed the fall educational offerings, the TA Center annual report, and outreach plans. The committee has welcomed one new member: [Josiah Litant](#), executive director of the P-20 Education Partnership. The next committee meeting is scheduled for February 12.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring 2025 Learning Community Events

Save the dates:

Tuesday, February 11, 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

Tuesday, March 4, 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

Tuesday, April 8, 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm.

Community of Practice Webinar Miniseries and Open Office Hours

Prepare for the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Grant

This spring, MIHEC is replacing its community of practice gatherings with a webinar miniseries and open office hours. The webinars will help prepare your institution's team to submit a competitive grant application that aligns with Minnesota's standards for high-quality inclusive higher education. The open office hours will be unstructured question-and-answer sessions. The webinars and open office hours will be offered in early 2025 leading up to the release of the Request For Proposal. More information is coming soon.

RESOURCES



Vocational Rehabilitation Resources from Think College

Internships and employment are key components of inclusive higher education. The goals of inclusive higher education and vocational rehabilitation align. Think College formed a National Employment Partnership Workgroup led by Virginia Commonwealth University staff. The workgroup developed vocational rehabilitation resources that are available on the Think College website:

- [Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership Resources](#)
- [Vocational Rehabilitation - Resources by Topic](#)
- [Top 10 Questions VR Counselors Have for Staff of Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability](#)

This quarterly newsletter was sent by the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance (TA) Center at the Institute on Community Integration, 2025 East River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN, 55414, USA. The MIHEC TA Center and ICI are located at the University of Minnesota, which is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

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The Higher Education Omnibus Bill of 2023 funded the development of the Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance (TA) Center. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education provides the funding through a contract with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration to establish and operate the TA Center, which aims to create access to self-sustaining postsecondary education options across the state for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to earn postsecondary credentials.

The University of Minnesota stands on *Miní Sóta Makhóche*, the rightful homelands of the *Dakhóta Oyáte* . ICI recognizes that the U.S. did not uphold its end of these land treaties. It is the current and continued displacement of the *Dakhóta Oyáte* that allows the University to remain today. At ICI, we affirm our commitment to address systemic racism, ableism and all other inequalities and forms of oppression to ensure inclusive communities.