Defining Inclusion: Faculty and Student Attitudes Regarding

Postsecondary Education for Students with

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Abstract

Inclusion across education contexts is critical to acknowledge and inspire the full potential of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In the early stages of a postsecondary education program's development, peers and faculty are integral stakeholders to promoting an inclusive campus life. We conducted a campus-wide survey at a large public university to evaluate the perspectives of 1,867 faculty and students regarding their views of inclusion in student life and their attitudes toward prospective students with IDD. We incorporated a mixed-methods approach to summarize these views by using correlations, linear regression, and qualitative analysis of open-ended responses. We offer recommendations for research and practice aimed at increasing inclusive opportunities for students with IDD and their peers on college campuses.

Keywords: inclusion, postsecondary education, intellectual and developmental disabilities, attitudes

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Institutions of higher education are viewed as venues in which students can develop

academic and social competencies intended to prepare them to be contributing members to

society (Folk, Yammamoto, & Stodden, 2012). Since the authorization of the Higher Education

Opportunity Act in 2008, many institutions have created opportunities for students with

intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to matriculate through certificate-based (i.e.,

non-degree seeking) programs (Hart, Grigal, & Weir, 2010). These opportunities include the

option to apply for federal financial aid, enter college without a traditional high school diploma,

and participate in college coursework. Overall, these programs demonstrate a positive impact on

the employment and adult outcomes of individuals with IDD and an improved sense of

independence (e.g., Hendrickson, Carson, Woods-Groves, Mendenhall, & Scheidecker, 2013).

Postsecondary education (PSE) programs for individuals with IDD increase in national

prevalence each year, currently with 268 programs across 49 states (Think College, 2018).

Recent trends in program expansion and implementation demonstrate an increase in inclusive

opportunities across all aspects of college life, rather than a subset of activities as has been the

precedent (Jones et al., 2015). This gradual move toward inclusive PSE represents a paradigm

shift for individuals with IDD, offering normative pathways for these students to pursue

competitive employment and community living outcomes that mirror their peers without

disabilities (Uditsky & Hughson, 2012).

As students in PSE programs spend more time integrated within the full "college

experience," their relationships with peers enrolled at the program's university become

increasingly important. In addition to the positive outcomes demonstrated for students enrolled

in the PSE program, the inclusive nature of these programs allows their peers to benefit

immensely as well. Prior research shows that expanding inclusive opportunities can lead to a

more tolerant, equitable, and cohesive campus community (Bruder & Morgo-Wilson, 2010). For

example, Griffin and colleagues (2012) surveyed 256 peers about their attitudes toward students

with IDD during the first semester of an inclusive PSE program. In general, peers reported

positive attitudes toward students with IDD; in particular, females and those with higher comfort

levels reported more benefits of inclusion and willingness to interact with these students on

campus. Jones and Goble (2012) explored the effects of a mentoring program to support students

with IDD in PSE settings. Participants expressed that focusing on the "big picture" of inclusion

could lead to a positive classroom climate, free of limitations for all students. Similarly, Izzo and

Shuman (2013) conducted a mixed-methods study to understand the extent of peers' attitudes

toward students with IDD. Peers' comfort levels and acceptance increased when they had

frequent opportunities to interact with students with IDD. These findings affirm the positive

impact of inclusive environments on students with IDD and their peers learning alongside them.

In addition to peers, faculty members are integral stakeholders to creating inclusive

spaces and increasing social and academic opportunities on campus. Peers shape the social

experiences, while instructors determine the culture of the learning environment (Cress, 2008).

Prior research demonstrates the impact of the values, philosophies, and attitudes of faculty

members on the overall climate of the university (Lundquist, Spalding, & Landrum, 2002; Rao,

2004), with faculty members' perceptions either facilitating or deterring overall student success

(de A Moreira, San Juan, Pereira, & de Souza, 2000).

However, little research exists about the attitudes of peers and faculty members on

campuses without inclusive academic programs for individuals with IDD. When the campus is

still a "blank canvas" in terms of widespread exposure to individuals with IDD, an understanding

of the current landscape of inclusion is especially critical to inform training opportunities or

develop resources to help a new program launch successfully. Gibbons, Cihak, Mynatt, and

Wilhoit (2015) conducted a preliminary analysis assessing campus-wide perspectives prior to the

development of a PSE program. They surveyed 499 students and 152 faculty members to

evaluate the overall campus climate, general views of inclusion, and their attitudes toward

sharing or offering classes (respectively) to students with IDD. Participants reported their

comfort levels toward having students with IDD on campus, beliefs about postsecondary options

and employment opportunities for students with IDD, and the perceived impact of having these

students on campus. Faculty and students generally responded positively about the idea of

offering inclusive coursework to students with IDD. While this study demonstrated the

willingness of students and faculty to accept students with IDD, a gap remains of what actually

constitutes *inclusion* on a university campus and how the realization of such an ideal would

consider students with IDD.

As new programs develop, establishing a vision of inclusion at the outset is critical to

shaping the program models, practices, and partnerships they pursue (Bumble, Carter, Bethune,

Day, & McMillan, 2018). Currently, the concept of "inclusion" in research and practice is

broadly defined and loosely interpreted, resulting in variability of participation in student life.

Many PSE programs claim they are inclusive, yet often demonstrate aspects of separate, non-

inclusive environments and supports, such as specialized curricula or courses designed only for

students enrolled in the PSE program (Hall, 2010). Furthermore, simply having a seat in a

college classroom is not equivalent to inclusion (Uditsky & Hughson, 2012), rather, it is

manifested through "pervasive attitudes of acceptance, belonging, value, and connection

throughout the community- a social justice perspective that offers equality and dignity to all

members of a higher education community" (Jones et al., 2015, p. 1; Hall, 2010).

Bumble and colleagues (2018) investigated how 172 diverse stakeholders across three

communities conceptualized inclusion and envisioned supports needed to launch new PSE

programs at their local campuses. Their findings revealed that the concept of inclusion must

emphasize inclusive skills, supports, and partnerships. In two of the three communities, the

authors acknowledged a gap of "inside campus" stakeholders, such as traditional college students

and faculty, who are more familiar with campus and are poised to make an immediate impact.

Hafner, Moffatt, and Kisa (2011) acknowledge the need for "a comprehensive approach

to inclusion with the goal of fully integrating [students with IDD] into academic and social life

on campus" (p. 19). Without a shared definition of what constitutes inclusion in higher

education, inclusive models and practices will continue to remain ambiguous. To address this

issue, several faculty and staff across PSE programs formed a Special Interest Group entitled

Building Inclusive Campus Communities. Jones and colleagues (2105) designed this inclusion

framework to be a reflection tool or evaluation model; yet there is no study assessing the extent

to which this framework actually resonates with the population it is intended to reflect.

Furthermore, as PSE programs develop and expand, it is essential to understand (a) how

students and faculty define the landscape of inclusion on their campus as it relates to the

framework prior to the development of an inclusive academic PSE program, (b) the perceptions

of the current level of inclusive opportunities on campus, (c) the extent to which students and

faculty are willing and comfortable welcoming students with IDD to co-create these inclusive

spaces, and (d) the factors predicting these attitudes. We developed a mixed-methods design that

used a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do faculty and students define inclusion *prior* to the development of an inclusive PSE program?

(2) How do faculty and students perceive the *current level* of inclusive opportunities?

(3) How do faculty and students report their willingness to accept students with IDD?

(4) What factors predict higher degrees of acceptance for faculty and students toward prospective students with IDD on their campus?

Method

Participants

Participants were 1,867 faculty and students of a large public research university in the south central United States. At the time of the study, the university consisted of 68,603 students and 4,955 faculty members. The university currently offered a one-year, employment-training program, designed for students with intellectual disabilities to attain certification within a specific career field. Students attending this PSE program have separated academic settings resulting in limited opportunities to interact with students and faculty across the university. During the time of data collection and analysis, a team of faculty members, students, parents, and campus leaders received university approval to develop another PSE program at the university – a four-year, fully inclusive PSE program designed for individuals with IDD. The survey was part of a larger study, including follow-up focus groups, that evaluated attitudes of inclusion on campus and the extent to which students and faculty would be receptive to a new inclusive PSE program.

To be included in the study, participants must have been affiliated with the university as a faculty member, undergraduate student, or graduate student during the 2017 fall semester. Most participants were undergraduate students ($n = 1,262$, 67.6%); 12.7% ($n = 238$) were doctoral students; 12.1% ($n = 225$) were faculty members; and 7.6% ($n = 142$) were masters students. See Table 1 for summary demographics of students and faculty.

Recruitment Procedures

We sought to attain broad representation from a sample reflecting the gender, racial/ethnic, economic, and discipline diversity of students and faculty from the university. We recruited participants primarily through two campus-wide email announcements (i.e., sent to all faculty, students, and staff) inviting them to participate in an online survey focusing on their views of inclusion on campus. We sent these announcements at the beginning of the survey window in October and at the end as a final reminder with the survey deadline in December.

Additionally, we collaborated with student organizations and departments to extend study invitations across campus. We used the university's student activities website to identify student organizations with the highest amount of members. We contacted 180 undergraduate student organizations with membership ranging from 50 to 1,000 students. Areas of focus for the targeted organizations included: cultural and international ($n = 42$), fraternity and sorority ($n = 31$), business ($n = 24$), engineering ($n = 21$), agriculture ($n = 16$), liberal arts ($n = 15$), education ($n = 11$), religious ($n = 9$), service ($n = 9$), military ($n = 1$), and athletics ($n = 1$). Additionally, we contacted 28 graduate student organizations with membership ranging from 10 to 1,000 students. Areas of focus for these groups included: academic ($n = 19$), cultural and international ($n = 6$), and student government ($n = 3$). Collaborating organizations could choose an appropriate way to recruit participants (e.g., fliers, phone scripts, personalized email invitations, social media

blurbs). We also recruited participants by distributing fliers at the student union. To reach faculty

participants, we sent emails to the chairs of each department at the university ($n = 83$) and

requested them to forward the message to their faculty members.

       Participants did not provide identifying information while completing the survey. We

requested voluntary contact information (e.g., email address) on a separate form not linked to

survey responses. They could share their contact information if they wanted to participate in a

focus group on the same topics, learn more about the program development, or be entered into a

drawing for one of 50 $25 Amazon gift cards. We designed the survey to take less than 20 min.

Measure

       We developed a survey to (a) learn how faculty and students define inclusion on a

university campus without an inclusive PSE program, (b) understand faculty and student

perceptions related to individuals with IDD, (c) understand the extent to which faculty and

students view opportunities for inclusion among diverse populations at this university, including

individuals with IDD; and (d) learn what resources and information students and faculty might

find helpful to create inclusive spaces on campus. We created the survey by drawing upon prior

research on inclusion in PSE programs (e.g., Gibbons et al., 2015) and the conceptual framework

for inclusion developed by Think College (Jones et al., 2015). We asked 10 graduate students,

eight undergraduate students, and six faculty members to pilot the online survey. They provided

feedback related to the length, formatting, and clarity of several questions via an open-response

question on the online survey draft.

       The final survey included six sections pertaining to: (a) participant's role at the

university, (b) student life, (c) views of inclusion, (d) experiences with individuals with

disabilities, (e) opinions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and interest in

potential training opportunities, and (f) demographic information. Student and faculty surveys

were identical, except for the role section and demographic information. These sections

comprised a total of 42 items for each version. Although all participants completed the survey

online via Qualtrics (2017), we offered print copies if participants requested them.

Role at the university. We asked four questions related to the participant's role at the

university. First, we asked them to identify their role from the following options: (a)

undergraduate student, (b) master's student, (c) doctoral student, or (d) faculty member. Students

and faculty selected from a drop-down menu their primary discipline (with 18 options and the

option to write in "other"), and their affiliated college (with 16 options of all colleges included in

the university). Faculty selected their professional rank (i.e., assistant professor, associate

professor, professor, chair, dean). Students reported their planned graduation date (ranging from

Fall 2017 to Fall 2021) and the number of academic years they have completed at the university

(ranging from 0 to 11 or more than 11). We also asked participants to complete demographic

information related to gender, racial identity, language, and household income (see Table 1).

Views of inclusion. Both faculty and student versions contained a section about inclusion

and student life. We included this section to provide a foundation for the current landscape of

inclusion at the university. Participants were instructed to think about student life in the context

of their own personal experiences at the university and evaluate the extent to which they

characterized these statements as indicative of the core values and purpose statement of the

university. Responses were provided on a 5-point, Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 =

strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for these five items was .81.

Next, participants were instructed to reflect on their views of inclusion at the university

and evaluate the extent to which they agree or disagree with these statements about inclusion

based on their own experiences. Cronbach's alpha for these six items was .86. Table 2 provides a summary of these items.

We also provided an opportunity for a write-in response to change the given description of inclusion based on their own personal view of inclusion (Jones et al., 2015):

Inclusion is realized when there is mutual and ongoing benefit among people of varying abilities, gender, identity, culture, socio-economic status, race, and other forms of diversity, with shared eagerness to create and sustain those relationships across all aspects of higher education.

Experiences with individuals with IDD. The next section asked participants about their interactions with individuals IDD throughout their lifetime, including experiences at the university. We provided the following definitions from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (2017). *Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. "Developmental disabilities" is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that are apparent during childhood. Developmental disabilities are severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. The disabilities appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be lifelong. Some developmental disabilities are largely physical issues, such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Some individuals may have a condition that includes a developmental and intellectual disability; for example, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, or autism.*

We asked whether participants were familiar with these terms, whether they have known someone personally with an IDD, and whether they identify as having an intellectual or

developmental disability. Response options were *yes* or *no*. If they indicated they knew someone

with an IDD, they could write in their relationship with this person or persons.

Opinions of individuals with IDD. The next section asked participants about the extent

to which they believed young adults with IDD would be successful in an inclusive PSE program

at their university. We slightly modified questions from Gibbons et al. (2015) related to

expectations of students with IDD and the impact they would have on campus and in class.

Response options were provided on a 5-point, Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 =

strongly agree). Table 4 provides a summary of these items.

Training interests. Since we know there are limited training opportunities related to

supporting students with IDD in college, we asked whether students and faculty members would

be interested in receiving training in this area at the outset of program development. Response

options were *yes* or *no*. If they indicated yes, we asked them to rank order the form of training

they would be most interested in receiving to help them support students with IDD to succeed in

college on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = greatest interest and 4 = least interest. Training types

included *online training modules*, *in-person workshops*, *1:1 coaching*, and *fact sheet or resource

guide*. Participants could also select "other" and write in a different type of training.

Faculty involvement. Faculty reported how many courses they taught each semester and

the types of courses they typically teach (i.e., online, face-to-face, hybrid) and which students

they typically teach (i.e., graduate, undergraduate). They indicated all the ways they engage with

students on campus aside from teaching, including academic advising, committee chair, research

team/lab leader, advisory board, or attending social events on campus. Participants also had the

option to select "other" and write in a different way of engaging with students on campus.

Data Analysis Procedures

We used descriptive statistics to summarize how participants evaluated the extent to which they felt the campus was currently inclusive (Research Question 1, Table 2). We reported percentages and models based on the number of participants who responded to the given item.

We explored the potential factors that could contribute to the attitudes students and faculty demonstrated toward the prospect of having students with IDD on campus (Research Question 2, Table 4). We selected independent variables based on demographic factors (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, multilingual status, income) as well as potential indicators of greater familiarity and experience with individuals with IDD (i.e., familiarity with the terminology, personal relationship with someone with IDD, diagnosis of IDD). Additionally, we were interested in knowing the extent to which faculty ranking, student enrollment type, and primary college affiliation may have been associated with the level of comfort faculty and students demonstrated toward the prospect of having students with IDD on campus.

We hypothesized that students' comfort levels would be strongly associated with their major area of study (i.e., higher for students in the College of Education and Human Development), familiarity with the terminology (i.e., higher for students who were familiar with the term "intellectual and developmental disabilities"), and their personal relationship with someone with IDD (i.e., higher for students who had a personal relationship to someone with IDD). We hypothesized that faculty willingness to offer their course to students with IDD would be strongly associated with professional ranking (i.e., higher for faculty members of lower ranking who are presumably younger), income (i.e., higher for faculty members with higher income), and their overall involvement in student life (i.e., higher for faculty members who were involved in more activities).

In addition to our hypotheses, we included demographic variables for both models, such as race/ethnicity, multilingual status, student ranking, and household income. We selected these variables because they are considered core components comprising one's identity composition that often contribute to issues related to diversity and inclusion in higher education (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2011).

In preparation for building a linear multivariate regression model for these continuous variables, we conducted correlation analyses to understand the relation between these dependent variables and a selection of independent variables. We computed Pearson correlation coefficients to examine associations among continuous variables and used point-biserial correlation coefficients for combinations of continuous and dichotomous variables (see Tables 5 and 6). We did not impute values for the marginal percentage of missing data across our large sample (i.e., approximately 7% of missing responses across questions included for analysis).

Variables for student model. We evaluated student responses to the statement: *I would be comfortable being in the same class as someone with IDD*. Response options were presented on a Likert-type scale, possible range 1-5, wherein 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*.

We used the following binary variables: female (1 = female, 0 = male); enrollment in education-related degree program in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD; 1 = primary affiliation with College of Education and Human Development, 0 = primary affiliation with any other college); race/ethnicity (1 = *White,* 0 = *non-White*); multilingual status (1 = speaks a language other than English at home or with family, 0 = does not speak a language other than English at home or with family); familiarity with the term "intellectual and developmental disabilities" (1 = yes, 0 = no); personal relationship with an individual with an

intellectual or developmental disability (1 = yes, 0 = no); and diagnosis of intellectual or developmental disability (1 = yes, 0 = no). Continuous variables included: student type (possible range = 1-3, wherein 1 = *doctoral student* or *professional student*, 2 = *masters student*, 3 = *undergraduate student*) and family's household income (possible range 0-6, wherein 0 = *I don't know* or *I prefer not to answer,* 1 = *less than $35,000*, 2 = *$35,000-$49,999*; 3 = *$50,000-$74,999*; 4 = *$75,000-$99,999*; 5 = *$100,000-120,000*, 6 = *more than $120,000*).

Variables for faculty model. We evaluated faculty responses to the statement: *I would be willing to offer my course to a student in a certificate-based program who has IDD.* Response options were presented on a Likert-type scale, possible range 1-5, wherein 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree.*

We used the same binary variables for faculty as we described for the student variables. Continuous variables included: faculty ranking (possible range 1-5, wherein 1 = *assistant clinical professor* or *assistant tenure-track professor*, 2 = *associate clinical professor* or *associate tenured professor*, 3 = *full clinical professor* or *full tenured professor*, 4 = *department head*, 5 = *dean* or higher) and faculty annual income (possible range 0-6, wherein 0 = *I don't know* or *I prefer not to answer,* 1 = *less than $35,000*, 2 = *$35,000-$49,999*; 3 = *$50,000-$74,999*; 4 = *$75,000-$99,999*; 5 = *$100,000-120,000*, 6 = *more than $120,000*). We also created a sum variable based on the number of response options selected by faculty when asked about other ways in which they engage with students aside from teaching: *academic advising, committee chair, manage research team, advisory board or advisor for student organizations, attend social events on campus,* or *other* (possible range 0-6; higher scores reflect involvement in more campus activities outside of teaching). Table 7 provides a summary of both models.

Qualitative data analysis. We coded the open-ended responses using the constant

comparison method (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The coding team consisted of four members who

worked in pairs to code and establish consensus. Our team included an assistant professor in

special education, two doctoral students in special education, and one undergraduate student in

economics with an interest in special education. First, each person independently coded the

response items in a spreadsheet using open coding to assign a preliminary code to each item and

then met with their coding partner for consensus. As appropriate, we used in vivo codes to name

a code using language from the response. After coding half of the responses, the team met to

compare codes and develop an initial set of open codes. Next, we used axial coding to condense

codes and identify patterns across the data used to create themes. A doctoral student in special

education, who was blind to the data, provided peer debriefing for the final set of themes.

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Results

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How Do Faculty and Students Define Inclusion Prior to the Development of an Inclusive

Postsecondary Program?

We used descriptive statistics to summarize how participants defined inclusion and how

they viewed the current level of inclusive opportunities on campus (see Table 2). Both students

and faculty members indicated strongest agreement with the following components of inclusion:

being valued for what one brings to the interaction (Faculty $M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.75$; Student $M =$

4.38, $SD = 0.78$); *access to opportunities* (Faculty $M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.76$; Student $M = 4.31$, $SD =$

0.79); and *being actively engaged alongside others* (Faculty $M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.84$; Student $M =$

4.27, $SD = 0.79$).

Participants were also asked about the extent to which they agreed with the definition for

inclusion based on the Think College framework (2015): "Inclusion is realized when there is

mutual and ongoing benefit among people of varying abilities, gender, identity, culture, socio-economic status, race, and other forms of diversity, with shared eagerness to create and sustain those relationships across all aspects of higher education." Overall, 508 participants wrote a response to this item. Less than half ($n = 224$, 44.1%) agreed with the definition or only suggested minor syntax changes. A small group of respondents ($n = 22$, 4.3%) suggested adding words to the definition to incorporate other elements of identity, such as gender identity, religion, neurodiversity, ideologies, political beliefs, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and mental health. Another small group ($n = 32$, 6.3%) recommended that words or terms be removed from the existing definition, including mutual benefit, choosing own path, eagerness, and identity labels.

We used open coding and axial coding to categorize the remaining responses ($n = 230$, 37.9%) across nine themes (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Overall, participants defined inclusion based on having access to a *community* (i.e., people with shared interests or characteristics) and membership in a *group* (i.e., subset of a community in which people form relationships). Participants characterized inclusion primarily across four themes: *group membership* ($n = 56$), *reciprocal engagement* ($n = 41$), *recognition of unique identity* ($n = 41$), and *respect and value* ($n = 39$). See Table 3 for the definition and frequencies of all nine themes.

How do Faculty and Students Perceive the Current Level of Inclusive Opportunities?

Next, we asked about the extent to which these tenets of inclusion are present on their own campus by changing the stem of the statement to, "I think all students at my university…" (see Table 2). Faculty members indicated strongest agreement with the presence of the following components of inclusion: *are valued in my class for what they bring to the discussion* ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.91$); and *are an integral part of the campus community* ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.08$); and *have access to a wide range of opportunities* ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.13$). Students indicated

strongest agreement with the presence of the following components of inclusion: *are free to choose their own life path* ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.92$); *have access to a wide range of opportunities* ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.98$; and *are an integral part of the campus community* ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.03$). Students only were given an additional statement on the same scale of response options about their personal experiences with inclusion: "I feel like I belong to a community at my university" ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.79$).

How Do Faculty and Students Report their Willingness to Accept Students with IDD on their Campus?

Approximately 91% of responding participants ($n = 1,529$) reported they were familiar with the term "intellectual and developmental disabilities." Moreover, 86% of responding participants ($n = 1,441$) reported they knew someone personally with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (e.g., sibling, cousin, friend, classmate). Additionally, 6.7% ($n = 106$) of responding participants reported having some type of intellectual and/or developmental disability.

Table 4 provides a summary of participants' views on the educational and employment opportunities for individuals with IDD and their willingness to accept students with IDD on their campus. Approximately 73% ($n = 129$) of responding faculty members and 85% of responding students ($n = 1,253$) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I think people with IDD can succeed in a four-year college or university." Approximately 69% of responding faculty members ($n = 121$) and 86% of responding students ($n = 1,273$) agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "I think students with IDD should have the opportunity to advance their education through a certificate-based inclusive program on a university campus." However, only 43.5% of responding faculty members ($n = 77$) and 62.8% of responding students ($n = 927$)

agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I think people with IDD can obtain the job of their

choice." Most of the responding students (92%; $n = 1,353$) indicated they would be comfortable

being in the same class as someone with IDD. Approximately 63% of responding faculty

members ($n = 110$) reported they would be willing to offer their course to a student in a

certificate-based program who has IDD.

What Factors Predict Higher Degrees of Acceptance for Faculty and Students Toward

Prospective Students with IDD on their Campus?

We used correlational analyses to understand relationships among factors associated with

degrees of acceptance toward prospective students with IDD on campus (see Tables 5 and 6).

Faculty member's willingness to offer their course to a student in a certificate-based program

with IDD was negatively correlated with professional rank. That is, faculty members of lower

rank tended to report higher degrees of willingness. Faculty members' willingness to offer their

course to a student in a certificate-based program with IDD was positively correlated with

speaking another language in addition to English.

Students' comfort level of being in the same class with someone with IDD was positively

correlated with being enrolled in the College of Education and Human Development, being

female, being white, being familiar with the term "intellectual and developmental disabilities,"

and having a personal relationship with someone with IDD. However, students' comfort levels

were negatively correlated with speaking another language in addition to English.

We used these correlations to construct a linear regression model to identify potential

predictors of degrees of willingness and acceptance for faculty and students toward prospective

students with IDD on campus. Table 7 provides a summary of the unstandardized regression

coefficients and standard errors for the faculty and student models. The faculty regression model

accounted for 13% of the variance in willingness to offer a course for students with IDD, $R^2 =$ .13(F 10, 96) = 1.46. The student regression model accounted for 4% of the variance in comfort levels of being in the same class as someone with IDD, $R^2 = .04$(F 10, 1340) = 5.39. Higher levels of comfort were associated with being familiar with the term "intellectual and developmental disabilities" and being female.

Discussion

Understanding the current landscape of inclusion at an institution of higher learning is integral to the development of opportunities for young adults with IDD. We asked faculty and students about their definition of inclusion and the current level of inclusive opportunities at a large university prior to the development of an inclusive PSE program. We also evaluated the extent to which students and faculty would be willing to accept students with IDD and explored the factors that might shape those perspectives. We offer several key insights drawn from this large-scale, campus-wide study.

Emerging Patterns in the Concept of Inclusion

First, faculty and students defined *inclusion* in similar ways and emphasized similar components. Specifically, both students and faculty indicated the strongest average level of agreement for the following tenets of inclusion: *being valued for what one brings to the interaction*, *access to opportunities*, and *being actively engaged alongside others*. This overlap indicates consistency among faculty and students. This content can help determine topic areas for training opportunities for faculty, students, and staff members at the campus prior to the program's implementation. Having common language to discuss the components of inclusion can help university faculty and students visualize and create inclusive spaces on their campuses in the preliminary stages of program development (Jones et al., 2015). These burgeoning ideas

can be fully realized when shared with and expanded by other stakeholders on campus, such as staff members and prospective students with IDD, as well as community members, such as families, self-advocates, civic leaders, and employers.

Inclusion Starts with "I": The Individualized Side of Inclusion

We encountered several challenges in attempting to construct a cohesive definition to encapsulate the complex philosophical concept of *inclusion.* Even when using the framework for inclusion as a guide (Jones et al., 2015), we noted many variations in how students conceptualized the idea. There were several areas of disconnect between how students evaluated the *concept* of inclusion and the personal experiences they reported. For example, in the open-ended responses, students seemed to view their participation in inclusion as a choice with the extent of involvement (i.e., active or passive) determined by the individual.

Additionally, we identified a gap between how students idealize inclusion and how they actually experience the feeling of being included. Although 88% of students agreed with the statement, "Inclusion involves belonging to a community of others," only 48% agreed with this similar statement when reflecting on their own experiences: "I feel like I belong to a community at my university." Therefore, it is important to acknowledge how *individualized* the inclusive experience is for each person when planning social and academic programming for students with and without IDD (Causton-Theoharis, Ashby & DeClouette, 2009; Izzo & Shuman, 2013). That is, how one student defines inclusion may be vastly different from another. Moreover, the extent to which one student feels included while navigating the same inclusive landscape may also vastly differ from another. An understanding of the individualized nature of the inclusive experience is critical for developing an inclusive PSE program that is responsive to the needs, interests, and aspirations of all students.

Factors Shaping Inclusive Attitudes

Many of the factors we hypothesized to be influential in understanding predictors of these attitudes were not statistically significant, which limits the extent to which we can draw conclusions about the sources for the variance in these viewpoints. Moreover, even the factors that were statistically significant (e.g., multilingual status) offer little indication to assess their importance. It could be that these beliefs stem from individual differences that are difficult to assess in a sweeping survey of this magnitude, such as religion, philosophical beliefs, or cultural differences. Similar to the experience of inclusion being highly individualized, so, too, may be the factors that shape one's willingness to practice inclusive behaviors. Future research could incorporate multivariate analyses to determine the extent to which underlying beliefs could affect perceptions toward individuals with IDD.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study indicate opportunities for future research. First, our findings are cross-sectional, limited to a single university at a single time. Future researchers could replicate this study at a different type of university in another region of the United States to determine if these findings transfer elsewhere. Additionally, a longitudinal study could explore how these perspectives change over time, particularly after the development of an inclusive PSE program for students with IDD.

Second, although we took concerted efforts to reach a representative sample of the campus community by using an all-campus listserv, there is an opportunity for people to opt out of these emails or overlook them. We recruited faculty systematically by contacting the chairs of each department; yet it is unclear how many of those individuals forwarded the announcement to their faculty. Our primary method of targeted student recruitment was through student

organizations, which could add an inherent bias to these findings. That is, the people who were likely to respond may have been those involved in student organizations that had an impact on the extent to which they felt included. Additionally, since the focus of the study is about the extent to which students with IDD could be included in academic classes at the university, we intentionally designed the survey to be completed by students and faculty members only (i.e., not staff), although we acknowledge this omission precludes a large and vital part of the campus community. Future studies with a broader focus on campus inclusion should also include the critical perspectives of staff members.

Third, although we used regression analyses to identify factors that may influence student and faculty attitudes of including people with IDD on campus, the high percentage of students who affirmed the prospect of inclusive courses may limit the appropriateness of the regression analysis. Future measures could include questions that yield more nuance in the responses and thus may help researchers understand the variance across student attitudes.

Fourth, all surveys are inherently limited in the extent to which they can provide clarification or extension on an item, topic, or question. Several examples of ambiguity in the survey measure present limitations for our findings. For example, we labeled the midpoint of the Likert scale as "neither agree nor disagree", which could be interpreted as either (a) somewhere between agree or disagree, or (b) I don't know or I don't have an opinion. Additionally, we asked participants to share their personal experience to IDD and provided definitions to assist participants with understanding IDD (AAIDD, 2017). Even though we provided the definitions for "intellectual disability" and "developmental disability," it is still possible that participants did not fully understand the types of conditions included in these categories and may have confused

them with others, such as learning disabilities or mental health disorders. Due to both of these potential discrepancies, we recommend these responses be interpreted with caution.

Fifth, we have limited information about the quality of the relationships people reported having with individuals with IDD. Future research could examine with whom these relationships exist and how they would be characterized by respondents (i.e., positive or negative). These studies could include focus groups or interviews to evaluate perspectives of inclusion in greater depth. Furthermore, adding the perspective of individuals with IDD would provide a rich insight about how they characterize inclusion and the extent to which they feel included on campus.

Implications for Practice

Our findings have several important implications for stakeholders committed to increasing access to PSE for individuals with IDD. The majority of students and faculty (54.1%) indicated an interest in receiving training related to supporting individuals with IDD to thrive in a collegiate environment. However, there is no comprehensive training available that addresses these issues. With the rapid increase of postsecondary programs for individuals with IDD across the country, inclusive education is gaining prominence across the country (Think College, 2018). Thus, training programs for students and faculty should parallel the growth of these opportunities to include topics such as disability awareness and universal design for learning. Specifically, participants indicated the strongest interest in the following training modalities: online training modules, in-person workshops, and individual coaching. Participants also wrote in suggestions about the ways in which they could receive this training, including a required humanities course focusing on disability issues, a faculty learning community designed for faculty members who are interested in offering their courses to students with IDD, and hands-on experiences interacting with individuals with IDD in the community.

In addition to faculty and students, this work also has implications for individuals with IDD and their families. As inclusive opportunities increase at campuses across the country, so too will the options for college attendance. As families explore the choices among universities offering PSE programs, an important consideration might be the characteristics defining inclusion on that campus as well as the perspectives of current students and faculty. Sharing responses of a similar survey tool could help families make a more informed decision.

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Table 1

Student and Faculty Demographics

Measures	Students n (%)	Faculty n (%)	All respondents n (%)
Gender			
Male	378 (25.8)	75 (43.6)	453 (27.8)
Female	1,063 (72.6)	92 (53.4)	1,153 (70.5)
Other	15 (1.0)	1 (0.0)	16 (0.9)
I prefer not to answer.	9 (0.6)	4 (2.3)	13 (0.8)
Race/Ethnicity			
Black/African American	56 (3.8)	8 (4.7)	64 (3.9)
Asian American	210 (14.4)	5 (2.9)	216 (13.2)
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	257 (17.6)	9 (5.2)	266 (16.3)
White (non-Hispanic)	816 (55.8)	131 (76.2)	947 (57.9)
Middle Eastern or North African	7 (0.5)	1 (0.6)	8 (0.5)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6 (0.4)	3 (1.7)	9 (0.6)
Native American or Alaska Native	4 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.2)
Multiracial	67 (4.6)	2 (1.2)	69 (4.2)
Other	4 (0.3)	2 (1.2)	6 (0.4)
I prefer not to answer.	36 (2.5)	11 (6.4)	47 (2.9)
Bilingual or Multilingual Status			
No, I only speak English.	972 (68.4)	142 (84.0)	1,114 (70.0)
Yes, I speak another language.	450 (31.6)	27 (16.0)	477 (30.0)
Family's household income			
Less than $35,000	315 (21.5)	3 (1.7)	318 (19.5)
$35,000-$49,999	140 (9.6)	9 (5.2)	149 (9.1)
$50,000-$74,999	168 (11.5)	13 (7.6)	181 (11.1)
$75,000-$99,999	131 (9.0)	25 (14.5)	156 (9.5)
$100,000-$120,000	167 (11.4)	31 (18.0)	198 (12.1)
More than $120,000	234 (16.0)	62 (36.0)	296 (18.2)
I prefer not to answer.	167 (11.4)	28 (16.3)	195 (11.9)
I don't know.	140 (9.6)	1 (0.6)	141 (8.6)
College/discipline affiliation			
Agriculture and life sciences	192 (11.7)	29 (12.9)	221 (11.8)
Architecture	57 (3.5)	12 (5.3)	69 (3.7)
Business administration	96 (5.8)	34 (15.1)	102 (5.5)
Dentistry	3 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.2)
Education and human development	357 (21.7)	34 (15.1)	391 (20.9)
Engineering	305 (18.6)	15 (6.7)	320 (17.1)
Geosciences	37 (2.3)	5 (2.2)	42 (2.2)
Government and public service	7 (0.4)	6 (2.7)	13 (0.7)
Liberal arts	250 (15.2)	38 (16.9)	288 (15.4)
Medical sciences	12 (0.7)	10 (4.5)	22 (1.2)
Public health	30 (1.8)	6 (2.7)	34 (1.8)
Science	112 (6.8)	12 (5.3)	124 (6.6)
Veterinary medicine	120 (7.3)	16 (7.1)	136 (7.3)
Other	64 (3.9)	38 (16.9)	92 (4.9)

Note. Percentages are based on the number of participants who responded to the given item.

Table 2

Characteristics of Inclusion on Campus and Prior Experience

Item	Percentage of students selecting rating (%)						Percentage of faculty selecting rating (%)					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	*M (SD)*	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	M (SD)
Inclusion means being valued for what one brings to the interaction.	1.2	1.8	6.2	39.7	51.2	4.38(0.78)	1.6	0.0	6.0	38.3	54.1	4.43(0.75)
Inclusion involves having access to opportunities.	1.3	2.5	5.2	45.7	45.3	4.31(0.79)	1.1	1.1	6.5	39.1	52.2	4.40(0.76)
Inclusion means being actively engaged alongside others.	1.1	2.1	8.4	45.0	43.3	4.27(0.79)	1.1	2.2	14.2	42.6	39.9	4.18(0.84)
I think all students are free to choose their own life path at my university.	2.2	4.6	8.0	42.1	43.2	4.20(0.92)	2.1	11.8	14.4	48.2	23.6	3.79(1.00)
Inclusion involves belonging to a community of others.	1.8	3.0	7.3	53.6	34.3	4.16(0.82)	1.6	1.1	15.8	53.3	28.3	4.05(0.79)
I think all students have access to a wide range of opportunities at my university.	2.7	6.1	6.9	41.6	42.6	4.15(0.98)	4.6	10.7	9.2	41.8	33.7	3.89(1.13)
Inclusion involves being able to choose one's own life path.	1.6	5.8	15.3	41.2	36.1	4.04(0.94)	1.6	2.7	21.3	36.6	37.7	4.06(0.92)
I think all students are valued for what they bring to the discussion.	3.9	11.1	16.4	43.7	24.9	3.751.07)	2.0	3.0	9.1	35.0	50.8	4.29(0.91)
I think all students are actively engaged with their peers at my university.	5.7	24.9	22.3	33.0	14.1	3.25(1.15)	4.1	28.9	33.5	25.9	7.6	3.04(1.01)
I feel like I belong to a community at my university.	34.6	6.3	11.2	4.0	43.9	3.16(1.79)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note. Percentages are based on the number of participants who responded to the given item. N/A = "not applicable"; item not asked of that group (i.e., students or faculty).

Table 3

Themes of Inclusion

Inclusion Themes

Theme	Frequency *n* (%)	Definition
An all-encompassing concept	14 (5.4)	Inclusion transcends institutions of higher education; these same principles should extend into other settings and stakeholder groups.
Choice of involvement	21 (8.1)	Inclusion means having the option to determine the extent of involvement that best suites the individual; participation can be "active" or "passive."
Diverse perspective	12 (4.6)	Inclusion means seeking to understand differences of all kinds, including thoughts, experiences, and personal characteristics.
Equal access to opportunity	25 (9.6)	Inclusion means ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate in desired activities and future opportunities.
Group membership	56 (21.5)	Inclusion involves being welcomed into membership of a group or community with shared values, identities, goals, or interests.
Reciprocal engagement	41 (15.8)	Inclusion consists of a network of reciprocity, in which all members feel involved and engaged by interacting, listening, and sharing responsibility with one another.
Recognition of unique identity	41 (15.8)	Inclusion provides an opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the unique qualities of each individual's strengths, culture, and identity.
Respect and value	39 (15.0)	Inclusion embodies the notion of valuing all community members without exception and respecting each individual's efforts and contributions.
Sense of belonging	11 (4.2)	Inclusion means having the feeling of importance, comfort, and/or belonging while interacting with others in the community.

Note. n = 230. Items could be coded as more than one theme; sum of themes adds up to more than 230.

Table 4

Views of Individuals with IDD

Item	Percentage of students selecting rating (%)						Percentage of faculty selecting rating (%)					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	M (SD)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	M (SD)
I would be comfortable being in the same class as someone with IDD.	1.0	0.9	6.3	38.9	53.1	4.42(0.73)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I think students with IDD should be able to take part in all aspects of university life.	1.2	1.2	5.5	39.2	52.9	4.41(0.76)	1.7	1.7	12.4	38.4	45.8	4.25(0.86)
I think students with IDD should have the opportunity to advance their education in an inclusive program at a university.	1.2	1.8	10.8	41.2	45.0	4.27(0.81)	0.6	1.7	28.6	44.6	24.6	3.91(0.80)
I think people with IDD can succeed in a four-year college or university.	1.1	2.4	11.6	49.9	35.0	4.15(0.80)	0.6	2.3	24.3	48.0	24.9	3.94(0.80)
I think people with IDD can obtain the job of their choice.	1.2	10.2	25.8	41.7	21.1	3.71(0.95)	2.3	11.3	42.9	30.5	13.0	3.41(0.93)
I think classroom modifications made on behalf of students with IDD will have no influence on other students.	3.1	16.7	23.2	34.5	22.5	3.57(1.10)	7.3	27.1	25.4	25.4	14.7	3.13(1.18)
I think students with IDD would require more of the instructor's attention than other students.	2.6	17.6	33.7	40.7	5.4	3.29(0.91)	0.6	13.0	32.2	46.3	7.9	3.48(0.84)
I think young adults with IDD should continue their education only at special schools.	32.6	43.5	16.3	5.1	2.6	2.02(0.96)	35.0	42.4	21.5	0.6	0.6	1.89(0.79)
I would be willing to offer my course to a student in the certificate-based program.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.1	5.2	30.5	40.2	23.0	3.79(0.90)

Note. Percentages are based on the number of participants who responded to the given item. N/A = "not applicable"; item not asked of that group (i.e., students or faculty).

Table 5

Student Correlations Among Predictor and Outcome Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. CEHD	-										
2. Female	.209**	-									
3. White	.086**	.094**	-								
4. Multilingual	-.059*	-.143**	-.550**	-							
5. IDD familiarity	.036	.054*	.163**	-.211**	-						
6. IDD relationship	.106**	.090**	.215**	-.204**	.234*	-					
7. IDD diagnosis	-.008	.015	.030	-.022	.036	.053*	-				
8. Income	.049	.028	.099**	-.098**	.015	.055*	-.004	-			
9. Comfort level	.057*	.133**	.074**	-.065*	.122**	.093**	.025	.040	.005	-	
10. Primary role	.070**	.059*	.078**	-.138**	.104**	.096**	.036	.089**	.033	.028	-

Note. Student *n* = 1,642. CEHD (1 = enrolled in CEHD); female (1 = female), white (1 = white), multilingual (1 = speaks more than one language); IDD familiarity (1 = yes); IDD relationship (1 = yes); IDD diagnosis (1 = yes).

Table 6
Faculty Correlations Among Predictor and Outcome Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Ranking	-										
2. CEHD	-.107	-									
3. Female	-.160*	.129	-								
4. White	.097	.149	.014	-							
5. Multilingual	-.024	.016	-.046	-.327**	-						
6. Income	.246**	-.031	-.181*	.030	.015	-					
7. Nonteaching activities	.209**	-.016	-.195*	.000	.009	.127	-				
8. Willingness to teach IDD	-.149*	.109	.096	.003	.170*	-.124	.029	-			
9. IDD familiarity	-.024	.048	.138	.140	.034	-.062	-.121	.051	-		
10. IDD relationship	.073	-.033	.061	.068	-.055	-.063	-.077	.040	.011	-	
11. IDD diagnosis	.013	.042	-.084	-.077	.136	-.017	.053	.021	.071	.076	-

Note. Faculty *n* = 225. CEHD (1 = employed in CEHD); female (1 = female), white (1 = white), multilingual (1 = speaks more than one language); IDD familiarity (1 = yes); IDD relationship (1 = yes); IDD diagnosis (1 = yes).

Table 7

Summary of Regression Analyses for Outcome Variables

Variable	Willingness to offer course to a student in a certificate-based program who has IDD		Variable	Comfortability of being in the same class as someone with IDD	
	B[a]	SE[b]		B	SE
Faculty ranking	-.103**	.101	CEHD	.032	.049
CEHD	.526	.250	IDD familiarity	.267**	.072
IDD familiarity	.073	.307	IDD relationship	.088	.060
IDD relationship	.148	.280	IDD diagnosis	.032	.081
IDD diagnosis	-.209	.504	Female	.094**	.023
Female	.002	.099	White	.053	.048
White	-.139	.232	Multilingual	-.024	.052
Multilingual	.498*	.250	Income	.008	.009
Income	-.039	.041	Student type	-.002	.028
Nonteaching	.085	.076			
R^2	.132		R^2	.039	
Adjusted R^2	.042		Adjusted R^2	.031	
F	1.461		F	5.389	

[a]Unstandardized regression coefficient. [b]Standard error of unstandardized coefficient.

*p < .05 (two-tailed test). **p < .01 (two-tailed test).