Navigating the College Search for Students Who Learn Differently

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Landmark College
“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

- Albert Einstein
THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF KNOWLEDGE

- Who am I and what do I want from my college experience?
- What type of learner am I?
- What are my strengths & weaknesses?
- What accommodations do I need?
- What types of support do I need?
- In what environment do I learn best?
- Why do I want to go to college?
- What type of college do I want to attend?
THE PATH AHEAD — BY THE NUMBERS

In Secondary School
➢ 94% of students with LD’s receive assistance in high school.
➢ Fewer than 25% of these students utilize the resources available in college.

College Outcomes
➢ Nationally, fewer than 60% of students seeking a Bachelor’s Degree earn one.
➢ Only a third of students who have LD’s earn their degree.

Improve the odds.
Access AND utilize supports!
COLLEGE SUPPORT STRUCTURES

- LD/ADHD/ASD exclusive colleges & postsecondary programs (Embedded)
- Structured learning support programs (Comprehensive)
- Accommodations and some skill building (Service)
- Accommodations only (Compliance)
WHO PROVIDES THESE SERVICES?

2007 AHEAD Survey

- Faculty: 39%
- Peer Tutors: 37%
- Other: 20%
- LD/ADHD Specialists: 4%
HOW THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE CHANGES AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & Section 504

VS

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) & Section 504
### What Are the Differences?

#### K-12 (IDEA & 504)
- Federal law of entitlement: Education is a right.
- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in least restrictive environment.
- District is responsible for identifying and evaluating students with disabilities and must cover costs.
- IEP or 504 plan is developed by the team, based on evaluation results.
- Parents are included in developing the plan.
- IEP is legally binding. Annual meetings to formulate goals and review the plan.
- Students can receive a modified curriculum based on an IEP.
- IEP’s must include transition plan. (Section 504 doesn’t require one.)

#### College (ADA & 504)
- Federal civil rights law. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability but doesn’t look at education as a right.
- Students must gain admission on academic merit. Professors do not alter course content.
- High School IEP not legally binding.
- The college bears no responsibility. Students choose whether to disclose.
- To receive supports, student must self-identify and provide proof of disability. If additional documentation required, student bears responsibility for cost.
- “Reasonable” accommodations must be requested by student.
- If student is over 18, no parental involvement.
MAKING THE TRANSITION EASIER

✓ Transition Planning
✓ A good college match means understanding what you expect, need, and want from your college years.
✓ Aligning these factors with what a college offers and delivers.
✓ ACCESS IMPACTS SUCCESS!
DISCLOSE
OR
DON’T DISCLOSE?
WHY STUDENTS DON’T DISCLOSE

• To establish an identity independent of disability status
• Shame or fear - being perceived as lazy or unintelligent, or of getting an unfair advantage
• Fear of receiving no response or a negative response from faculty
• Not knowing what services are available or how to access them
• Underestimating how important accommodations are to their success

...I RECOMMEND DISCLOSING EARLY

Best opportunity to evaluate a college’s services, the attitude of the school towards learning disabilities, and how easy or hard it is to access the services that will ensure success.
Evaluating Disability Services

• Identify the Services You Need
  • Review your IEP or 504 plan
  • Make a list
  • Compare what you think your needs are with what your parents, teachers, and counselors think
  • Have a discussion of your college needs as part of an IEP or 504 meeting

• Investigate
  • Explore college websites: disability services & universally available services
  • Call/email Admissions or Disability Services
  • Determine location of Disability Services

• Use Disability Services Worksheet
Disability Services Evaluation Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability Services Office Name:</td>
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| Type of Office: | □ **Compliance** - The primary focus is ensuring access to students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.  
□ **Service** - The primary focus is the provision of accommodations and the delivery of some beyond-access services.  
□ **Comprehensive** - The focus is on the provision of accommodations in addition to the delivery of services beyond accommodations such as strategy and skills training, academic coaching, tutoring, and so on.  
□ **Embedded** - All accommodations and beyond-access services are built into the natural teaching and functioning of the institution. |
<p>| Office Hours: | |
| Number of Staff: | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Offered:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Tutoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Study skills workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Academic/executive function coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Assistive technology support/evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Diagnostic testing</td>
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<td>□ Mentorship programs</td>
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<td>□ Honor societies</td>
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<td>□ Support groups</td>
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<td>□ Social programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Orientation services</td>
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<td>□ Other: ____________________________</td>
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<th>Pros:</th>
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<th>Cons:</th>
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<th>Notes:</th>
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<th>My Rating:</th>
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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
EVALUATING ACCOMMODATIONS: AN ONGOING PROCESS

• Students should meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of accommodations
• Disability can vary as can courses and life
• Important for students to monitor the extent to which they are able to access the content
• If access is diminished at any point, SELF-ADVOCATE.
Finding a College Match: More to Consider

- Student Life & Campus Connectedness
- Availability of Social Pragmatic Support
- Mental Health Services
- Covid-19
SERVICES & ACCOMMODATIONS:
- What accommodations and services are offered?
- Can students take a reduced course load?
- Who delivers these services?
- What types of LD’s does the college serve?
- Are there services both in and out of the classroom?
- What are the attitudes of the campus community and faculty?
- Is assistance 1:1 or in a group?
- What is the student to support specialist ratio?
- Who does the academic advising for LD students?
- Is it a fee for service structure?

APPLYING:
- What documentation is required?
- Is the college test-optional?

OUTCOMES:
- What are the college’s retention, graduation, & placement rates for students with LD’s?
VISIT— IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY!

✓ Large and Small
✓ Urban and Rural
✓ Traditional Colleges, Schools with LD Programs, Schools Exclusively for Students Who Have LD’s
✓ Attend Open Houses
When college isn’t the “Best” Next Step

- Transition Programs
- GAP Year
- Travel
- Volunteer
- Job Internships Training
LANDMARK COLLEGE

#1 Most Innovative College
#1 Best Undergraduate Teaching
US News & World Report 2022
Regional Colleges – North
**LANDMARK FAST FACTS**

- **Location:** Putney, VT, **125** acres
- **450** Students from 38 U.S. States & 12 countries
- **6:1** Student/faculty ratio, **8-12** average class
- **11** Associates & Bachelor’s Degree Programs, + concentrations
- **40%:** The number of students who transferred to LC in search of a better college experience.
- **65%** LC associate degree grads earn a Bachelor’s Degree
LC HIGHLIGHTS

✓ Different Paths: Online Dual Enrollment, Summer Programs, Bridge Experience, College START, TaC, Associate and Bachelor’s Degrees

✓ Perspectives in Learning: Students learn how they learn

✓ Community

✓ Landmark College Institute for Research and Training (LCIRT).

✓ Center for Neurodiversity

✓ Centers for Diversity & Inclusion

✓ Activities: Sports, Speaker Series, Clubs, Social Events, Trips off Campus

✓ Study Abroad led by LC Faculty.
LANDMARK LD SUPPORT

✓ Wraparound, fully integrated support services
✓ No additional fees.
✓ Academic advising and executive function coaching
✓ Drake Center for Academic Support - Faculty-run
✓ Educational technology
✓ Counseling & health services
✓ Residential support system
✓ Therapy Dog Program
✓ Social Pragmatics Support for Students with ASD
✓ Career Connections
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