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Supporting Students with IEPs Transition to Higher Education

UConn Aspiring Leaders
Cohort 3 , Capstone Presentation
June 2025

Mission

A modern day where all students with disabilities transition **confidently** and **successfully** from K-12 special education to post-secondary education, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support systems they deserve to thrive in an advocacy-driven environment.



Vision

To ensure students graduate informed, and connected—prepared to advocate for their needs and access the support systems that foster independence and academic success.



Best guesses

1

Lack of clarity on IDEA vs. ADA

2

Inconsistent transition facilitating across districts

3

Students underprepared for self-advocacy demands

Goal

✧ Equip students with self-advocacy skills for postsecondary success. ✧

✧ *legal rights, available supports, shift toward student-led advocacy* ✧



5 Step Process

1

**Early
Identification &
Outreach**

2

**Educate
Students &
Families**

3

Skills Building

4

**Mock Interviews
& Real-Life
Scenarios**

5

**Warm
Handoff**



Stage 1: Early Identification & Outreach

Goal: Identify and engage seniors with IEPs early in the school year

Key Activities (Spring of Junior year, early Fall of Senior year):

- Identify college-bound seniors with IEPs
- Use interest forms to determine postsecondary plans
- Information about the transition from IDEA to ADA



Stage 2: Educate Students & Families

Goal: Build awareness of how Disability Services work in college.

Key Activities (November, March, May):

- Evening Information sessions & School Workshops
 - The role of a Disability Services Office
 - Differences in legal protections (IDEA vs. ADA/504)
 - The importance of self-advocacy and student-led communication



Stage 3: Skills Building

Goal: Equip students with tools to manage the transition independently.

Key Activities (Semester Long Courses or Workshop Model):

- Self-advocacy and communication skill
- Understanding their disability and how it impacts learning
- How to talk about accommodations and needs clearly



Stage 4: Mock Interviews

Goal: Build confidence through practice and real-world simulation.

Key Activities (By April, May, June):

- Partner with local colleges
 - Practice self-disclosure
 - Describe needed accommodations
 - Ask questions about the support available
- Provide feedback and coaching



Stage 5 – Warm Handoffs

Goal: Support students connection to their college DSO before graduation.

Key Activities (June):

- Support contact the Disabilities Office at their future college
- Provide electronic copies of required SOPs, IEPs, evaluations, etc.
- Invite collaboration



5 Step Process - Recap

1

**Early
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**Mock Interviews
& Real-Life
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**Warm
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Thank You!



What questions can I answer?



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