



*Promoting Excellence for All*

# **FINDINGS REPORT**

## **Fall 2006 Survey of New Jersey Campus Programs for Students with Disabilities**

New Jersey Commission on Higher Education  
September 2007

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## **Introduction**

The State of New Jersey, in collaboration with New Jersey colleges and universities, has a long track record of commitment to serving students with disabilities. Those services continued in 2006, and findings about them form the basis of this report. As the number of such students rises, the need for appropriate and adequate services becomes more and more critical.

The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education plays an important role in supporting the state's higher education institutions and the students with disabilities who enroll in them. Under the Higher Education Services for Visually Impaired, Auditory Impaired, and Learning Disabled Students Act (P.L. 1985, C.493; 18A: 72H), the Commission administers a \$1.1 million grant known as the Special Needs Grant Program. The grant provides funding to support eight regional centers that provide direct services for students at their institutions, and technical assistance and outreach to other colleges and universities in the state. There are five centers that serve students with learning disabilities; they are located at Cumberland County College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Middlesex County College, New Jersey City University, and Ocean County College. The centers serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing are housed at Bergen Community College and Camden County College. The Adaptive Technology Center, located at The College of New Jersey, provides loans of assistive technology as well as technical support and training for faculty, staff, and students at New Jersey institutions.

This biennial survey, issued to all New Jersey postsecondary institutions, provides the Commission on Higher Education with current information about both the population of college students with disabilities in the state as well as the extent to which this population is served by the state-funded regional centers. The survey was sent to all senior public institutions, community colleges, and independent and proprietary institutions (except the University of Phoenix) in the fall 2006. [Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument.] For the purposes of this survey, each of the three campuses of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was considered a separate institution. A 94 percent response rate, 47 out of 50 institutions, was achieved.

The survey was sent to the person identified as the special needs service provider for the college. As the person responsible for coordinating accommodations for college students with disabilities, service providers generally have the greatest level of contact with these students. The data and opinions they have provided present an invaluable picture about the population of students with disabilities attending college in this state and the emerging trends and needs in this area.

## **Number of Students with Disabilities Enrolled Fall 2006**

The total number of students with disabilities reported for fall 2006 was 12,938 (12,661 undergraduate and 277 graduate students). Refer to Appendix B for a list of schools and student headcounts. The figure only reflects students who have self-identified as having a disability and/or who have benefited from accommodations. Since the previous survey, conducted in fall 2004, the percentage of undergraduate students with disabilities has increased by 5.6 percent while the number of graduate students has decreased by almost 37 percent.

Similar to the previous survey, over two-thirds (68%) of New Jersey's colleges and universities served 100 or more students with disabilities during the fall 2006 semester. The number of institutions serving 501 or more students with disabilities increased from five to seven. Overall

students with disabilities represent 3.3 percent of the total fall 2006 enrollment of institutions surveyed. Based on the total number of students with disabilities, the community college sector serves the largest number of these students (64.9%), followed by state colleges and universities (16.5%), independent institutions (12.9%), public research universities (5.5%), and proprietary institutions (.2%).

The following table highlights enrollments of students with disabilities by sector:

Sector	Total Student Enrollment	Total Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Percentage of Students with Disabilities	Number of Schools with < 100 Enrolled Students with Disabilities	Number of Schools with 101-250 Enrolled Students with Disabilities	Number of Schools with 251-500 Enrolled Students with Disabilities	Number of Schools with > 501 Enrolled Students with Disabilities
Community Colleges	154,085	8,401	5.5%	2	7	3	6
State Colleges and Universities	90,643	2,135	2.4%	1	3	3	1
Public Research Universities	63,646	706	1.1%	3	1	1	0
Independent Institutions	65,508	1,664	2.5%	7	5	2	0
Proprietary Institutions	5137 <sup>1</sup>	32	0.6%	2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>379,019</b>	<b>12,938</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>

Similar to the previous survey, students with learning disabilities, including those who also have attention deficit disorder, continue to represent the largest segment of students with disabilities; over 71 percent at the undergraduate level and almost 38 percent at the graduate level. Other categories are as follows:

- psychological disorders (9.6% undergraduate, 18.2% graduate)
- chronic illness (6.3% undergraduate, 14.8% graduate)
- neurological disorders (4.7% undergraduate, 5.3% graduate)
- orthopedic/mobility disabilities (3.9% undergraduate, 9.9% graduate)
- hearing impairment/deafness (2.4% undergraduate, 4.2% graduate) and
- visual impairment/blindness (1.6% undergraduate, 9.9% graduate)

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) accounted for over 18 percent of the responses under other types of disabilities. Survey respondents also indicated a greater number of students with multiple disabilities. For fall 2006, almost 22 percent (2,834 out of 12,938) of the total number of students reported had multiple disabilities compared to only 12.9 percent (1,602 out of 12,427) for fall 2004.

In fall 2006, the two institutions with regional centers for deaf and hard-of-hearing served 34 percent of the 300 hearing impaired/deaf students reported in the survey. The five institutions housing the regional centers for students with learning disabilities served over 1,000 students with learning disabilities, about 12 percent of the total population for this type of disability. Overall the

institutions hosting the eight regional centers served 4,559 students with disabilities, over 35 percent of the total reported number of students with disabilities.

Although the number of students with disabilities continues to increase and the types of disabilities have become more complex, the number of staff serving students at the colleges has remained level. Similar to the previous survey, half the respondents indicated that there are fewer than 1.5 FTE staff to serve students with disabilities.

### **Campus Concerns/Issues**

Institutions were also asked about their level of concern about specific disability issues. Some of the survey respondents did not complete this section or did not respond to all the concerns listed. Similar to the findings from the 2002 and 2004 surveys, the two issues that generated the most 'concerned' ratings were students with psychiatric issues and unqualified students. In addition, this year survey respondents had greater concerns about finding and hiring qualified disability support staff; previously only 18 percent responded as very concerned while 31 percent were mildly concerned.

CONCERNS/ISSUES	VERY CONCERNED	MILDLY CONCERNED	NOT A CONCERN CURRENTLY
Assistive technology	29%	32%	39%
Documentation	21%	38%	41%
Faculty cooperation/training	11%	52%	38%
Finding/hiring qualified disability support staff	29%	20%	52%
Parental issues	14%	36%	50%
Providing sign language interpreters	25%	21%	52%
Real-time captioning	9%	29%	61%
Students with psychiatric issues	38%	41%	21%
Unqualified students (i.e., unable to handle college even with support)	36%	41%	23%
Class related: foreign language courses	5%	29%	63%
Class related: math substitutions/waivers	18%	34%	45%
Class related: online issues	11%	34%	50%

NOTE: Responses may not total 100% because some survey respondents did not provide a reply

### **Awareness and Use of Regional Center Resources**

All except one of the responding institutions had some awareness of one or more of the regional centers. Not including the institutions housing the regional centers, over 87 percent of respondents reported having been assisted in some way by a regional center, and 70 percent had attended a workshop presented by a regional center.

The survey results indicated that almost 82 percent of the institutions (not including those with regional centers) were familiar with the diagnostic assessment service for students with learning disabilities. Of these institutions, about 80 percent had actually referred students for testing. For the institutions who provided a rating for the diagnostic service, almost 79 percent were either highly or very satisfied; only one institution indicated they would not use the service in the future. For a list of responses by centers refer to Appendix C.

### **Suggested Areas for Improvement**

There were a variety of responses to the question about improvements related to the regional centers and/or for the general delivery of services for postsecondary students with disabilities. Many of the responses were about the diagnostic testing assessment service, ranging from more testing slots for students with faster turnaround time to expansion of testing to include other types of disabilities, as well as testing slots for graduate students. Some other suggestions included the following:

- Additional regional centers to serve more students as well as different types of disabilities;
- Documentation issues including consistency and procedure guidelines;
- More information about regional center services;
- Additional onsite training for colleges; and
- More workshops at different locations on various topics such as new faculty training and improvements/changes in adaptive technology.

The respondents listed many suggestions for topics that would be of interest for future conferences and workshops. The most common recurring topics cited by the respondents were serving students with autism, Asperger's Syndrome, or psychological disorders; knowledge of legal issues (ADA, section 504); documentation procedures and practices; and advances in and use of adaptive technology. Among the community college sector, the issue of open admissions and transitioning out of college also were identified as topics of interest.

### **Summary and Implications**

Since the initial survey conducted in the fall 1994, the population of students with disabilities has grown by over 86 percent. As a result, the demand for support services for students with disabilities has also increased. Student needs have become more complex and the types of disabilities continue to expand as reflected by the significant increase in the number of students with multiple disabilities.

It is evident that New Jersey colleges and universities are trying to provide services to assist students with disabilities, but fiscal constraints and limited resources are serious challenges faced by service providers. For example, while enrolling the greatest number of students, the community college sector has fewer staff serving students with disabilities. Not including the five institutions housing regional centers, over 83 percent of the community colleges (10 out of 12) have less than 2 FTE staff serving students with disabilities.

Responses from the survey participants about assistance and outreach provided by regional centers were predominantly positive, but it should be noted that the Act which funds the regional centers is limited to three specific disabilities--deaf and hard of hearing, visual impairments, and learning disabilities. Data from the New Jersey Department of Education indicates that since 2002, the number of students with disabilities has gradually been increasing. With this trend in K-12 education, more students with disabilities will be planning to obtain a college degree from New Jersey institutions and will need support services to do so.

*NOTE: Additional data resulting from the survey may be obtained by contacting Ms. Iris Duffield at the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, 609-292-2955.*

# NJ Survey of Campus Programs for Students with Disabilities

Please fax response to Iris Duffield, Commission on Higher Education at (609) 292-7225 or mail response to P.O. Box 542, Trenton, NJ 08625 by **Thursday, November 30, 2006**. If you have any questions about the survey or how to answer a particular question, please call Iris Duffield at (609) 292-2955.

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please provide the number of students with disabilities enrolled at your institution in the **Fall 2006** semester:

	# of Undergraduate Students
Full-Time	
Part-Time	
Total	

	# of Graduate Students
Full-Time	
Part-Time	
Total	

2. Please provide the number of students (U=undergraduate / G=graduate) by their **primary** disability in the **Fall 2006** semester. (*Estimates are acceptable; if data is not available, please indicate with N/A.*)

	#U	#G		#U	#G		#U	#G
Limited vision			Learning disabilities			Orthopedic/mobility disabilities		
Blindness			LD with AD/ADHD			Chronic illness		
Hard-of-hearing			Neurological disorders: head injuries, seizure disorders, Asberger's Syndrome			Other: _____		
Deafness			Psychological/ Psychiatric disorders			Other: _____		

3. How many students have multiple disabilities? Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many FTE staff do you have at your institution dedicated to providing services for students with disabilities?
- Less than .50       1.0 to 1.49       2.0 to 2.99       4.0 to 4.99  
 .50 to .99       1.5 to 1.99       3.0 to 3.99       5.0 or greater
5. Indicate the primary issues/concerns you have about services for students with disabilities on your campus:

CONCERNS/ISSUES	VERY CONCERNED	MILDLY CONCERNED	NOT A CONCERN CURRENTLY
Assistive technology			
Documentation			
Faculty cooperation/training			
Finding/Hiring qualified disability support staff			
Parental issues			
Providing sign language interpreters			
Real-time captioning (C-Print, CART)			
Students with psychiatric issues			
Unqualified students ( <i>i.e., unable to handle college even with support</i> )			
Class related: foreign language courses			
Class related: math substitutions/waivers			
Class related: online course issues			
Other (specify): _____			
Other (specify): _____			

6. Please identify the person at your institution who has the primary responsibility for purchasing assistive technology: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

Job Title

7. As part of the Special Needs Grant Program, the regional centers for students with learning disabilities provide diagnostic assessments for college students. Please indicate your experience with this service.

a. Are you aware of the diagnostic assessment service?  Yes  No

b. Have you referred students for this service?  Yes  No

If yes, please rate your experience with the service:

Highly satisfied  Very satisfied  Satisfied  Would not use in the future

8. New Jersey has eight regional centers that provide comprehensive services for college students with disabilities and technical assistance to other colleges and universities in the state. Please indicate your awareness and experience with each in the table provided below.

Regional Center	Are you aware of this center? (Yes/No)	Have you referred students to this center? (Yes/No)	Have you been assisted in any way by this center? (Yes/No)	Have you attended any workshops or events held by this center? (Yes/No)	Please rate your experience with this center. (1=poor / 5=excellent)
Center for Collegiate Deaf Education (Bergen Community College - Director: vacant)					
MidAtlantic Postsecondary Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Camden County College - Director: Josie Durkow)					
Project Assist (Cumberland County College - Director: Sandy Sheard)					
Regional Center (Fairleigh Dickinson University - Director: Mary Farrell)					
Central Regional Connections (Middlesex County College - Director: Mary Jane Warshaw)					
Project Mentor (New Jersey City University - Director: Jennifer Aitkin)					
Project Academic Skills Support (Ocean County College - Director: Maureen Reustle)					
Adaptive Technology Center (The College of New Jersey - Director: Amy Dell)					

9. Please describe the nature and quality of the assistance you have received from the regional centers.

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10. What improvements would you recommend for the regional centers or for the general delivery of services for postsecondary students with disabilities in New Jersey?

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11. The Commission on Higher Education and the regional centers sponsor conferences and workshops on topics related to services for students with disabilities. Please identify topics (and, if possible, speakers) who would be of interest to you for such events and your preference for the type of event format.

Topics: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Preference for event formats (using a scale from 1 to 6, with 1=most preferred and 6=least preferred):

\_\_\_\_\_ All-day conference      \_\_\_\_\_ Part-day workshop      \_\_\_\_\_ Teleconference  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hands-on training      \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar series      \_\_\_\_\_ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please fax this survey to the Commission at 609-292-7225.**

INSTITUTIONS		UNDERGRADUATE			GRADUATE		
		PT	FT	TOTAL	PT	FT	TOTAL
Community Colleges	Atlantic Cape Community College	69	128	197	0	0	0
	Bergen Community College	741	1729	2470	0	0	0
	Brookdale Community College	*	*	900	0	0	0
	Burlington County College	118	270	388	0	0	0
	Camden County College	193	241	434	0	0	0
	County College of Morris	*	*	790	0	0	0
	Cumberland County College	22	100	122	0	0	0
	Essex County College	*	*	715	0	0	0
	Hudson County Community College	10	113	123	0	0	0
	Mercer County Community College	*	*	520	0	0	0
	Middlesex County College	*	*	581	0	0	0
	Ocean County College	79	304	383	0	0	0
	Passaic County Community College	146	34	180	0	0	0
	Raritan Valley Community College	114	86	200	0	0	0
	Salem Community College	12	8	20	0	0	0
	Sussex County Community College	53	71	124	0	0	0
	Union County College	*	*	232	0	0	0
	Warren County Community College	12	10	22	0	0	0
Independent Colleges & Universities	Bloomfield College	1	41	42	0	0	0
	Caldwell College	0	121	121	0	4	4
	Centenary College	12	115	127	0	3	3
	College of Saint Elizabeth	0	34	34	6	0	6
	Drew University	1	75	76	0	3	3
	Fairleigh Dickinson University	0	102	102	0	0	0
	Felician College	3	71	74	0	0	0
	Georgian Court University	13	73	86	0	0	0
	Monmouth University	25	258	283	21	7	28
	Princeton University	0	102	102	0	0	0
	Rider University	16	206	222	3	0	3
	Saint Peter's College	0	47	47	0	3	3
	Seton Hall University	11	208	219	17	37	54
	Stevens Institute of Technology	0	24	24	1	0	1
Prop.	DeVry University	5	24	29	0	0	0
	Gibbs College	0	3	3	0	0	0
Public Research	New Jersey Institute of Technology	11	92	103	7	0	7
	Rutgers (Camden)	17	11	28	0	0	0
	Rutgers (New Brunswick)	45	350	395	20	40	60
	Rutgers (Newark)	0	86	86	0	0	0
	UMDNJ	0	6	6	1	20	21
State Colleges & Univ.	Kean University	19	40	59	5	0	5
	Montclair State University	68	499	567	33	6	39
	New Jersey City University	46	83	129	2	0	2
	Ramapo College of New Jersey	13	209	222	0	1	1
	Richard Stockton College	0	286	286	0	3	3
	Rowan University	22	298	320	4	2	6
	The College of New Jersey	5	228	233	8	2	10
	William Paterson University	*	*	235	*	*	18
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1902</b>	<b>6786</b>	<b>12661</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>277</b>

NOTE: \*These institutions did not separate students by part-time and full-time status. The total by student status does not include students from these institutions.

REGIONAL CENTERS	AWARENESS OF CENTER		REFERRED STUDENT TO CENTER		RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM CENTER		ATTENDED A CENTER WORKSHOP		RATE EXPERIENCE WITH THE CENTER	
	# responses	%	# responses	%	# responses	%	# responses	%	# responses	avg. rating
Center for Collegiate Deaf Education at Bergen Community College	32	82.1%	7	17.9%	11	28.2%	12	30.8%	15	2.9
MidAtlantic Postsecondary Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing at Camden County College	30	76.9%	4	10.3%	15	38.5%	12	30.8%	17	4.4
Project Assist at Cumberland County College	27	69.2%	3	7.7%	4	10.3%	3	7.7%	7	3.7
Regional Center at Fairleigh Dickinson University	24	61.5%	15	38.5%	10	25.6%	1	2.6%	19	3.5
Central Regional Connections at Middlesex County College	31	79.5%	13	33.3%	15	38.5%	13	33.3%	18	4.8
Project Mentor at New Jersey City University	30	76.9%	13	33.3%	12	30.8%	8	20.5%	12	4.6
Project Academic Skills Success at Ocean County College	31	79.5%	8	20.5%	13	33.3%	13	33.3%	15	4.6
The Adaptive Technology Center at The College of New Jersey	37	94.9%	24	61.5%	27	69.2%	17	43.6%	27	4.7

## NOTES:

- (1) The '**# response**' column reflects the total number of yes replies to the question asked about the regional center.
- (2) The '**%**' column shows the calculation based on total survey responses(47) minus the eight regional centers, N equals 39.
- (3) The '**avg. rating**' column reflects the total of the rating scores divided by the number of responses. The range for a rating score was 1(poor) to 5(excellent).