Examining Trends and Attitudes Towards Students with Disabilities

Disability Information Session
May 6, 2008
3 Current Trends

- Increase in number of students with intellectual/cognitive disabilities
- Increase in number of students with psychological/psychiatric conditions attending college
- ADA Restoration Act
Students with Intellectual/Cognitive Disabilities

- Attending post-secondary institutions in greater numbers than ever before
- At UC Clermont, we have 9 students currently; 7 of these are matriculated into a degree program
- Instructors may have to modify teaching styles to meet the needs of all students in a class
- Students may or may not complete a certificate or a degree – how does this affect retention numbers?
Intellectual Disabilities (Con’t)

- Students may incur financial aid debt which they may not be able to pay back depending on employment status
- Increased demand on advising services, tutoring services and instructor time
Increasing number of students with Psychological/Psychiatric Disabilities

- Improvements in medication have made it possible for individuals to attend post-secondary institutions in larger numbers than ever before.
- Pursuing grant opportunity to fund a counselor position here at UC Clermont.
- Many faculty have never received training on how to handle classroom disruptions or disturbances.
- It is not a crime to be “odd”
Psychological/Psychiatric Disabilities (Con’t)

- Most common disorders are depression; anxiety; schizophrenia; bipolar, and personality
- Stigma, whether perceived or real is a barrier to academic performance
- Other barriers are lack of support system and/or access to health care
- Not uncommon to see students in crisis without the means to purchase needed medication or the resources to see a counselor
ADA Restoration Act

- ADA was passed in 1990 to ensure protection from discrimination for people with disabilities.
- ADA defined “disability” as:
  1. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
  2. a record of such impairment; or
  3. being regarded as having such an impairment.
ADA Restoration Act (con’t)

- Major impact has been felt in employment venues
- Court system has decided to view definition in a strict manner to set a higher standard for qualifying as disabled
- “Mitigating measures” must be examined to determine if an individual’s impairment substantially limits a major life activity
Research shows that 90% of cases are lost because an individual is not “impaired enough” or their substantial limitation doesn’t qualify as a “major life activity”

The Restoration Act proposes to amend the recognized definition of disability; prevent the courts from using “mitigating measures” in determining who is protected by law; and make an equitable decision in court cases where discrimination is alleged due to disability status
How do Trends Affect UC Clermont?

- We will see an increase in the number of students with cognitive/intellectual disabilities pursuing post-secondary education options – we need to increase support services to handle the unique needs of these students.

- The number of students experiencing a crisis will also increase – we need to have supportive services available and we need to train faculty and staff on how to identify, respond, and refer before an incident occurs.
How do Trends Affect UC Clermont?

- ADA Restoration Act could potentially increase the number of students who now “qualify” as a student with a disability – will we be ready to meet their accommodation needs?
Student Panel

- Introductions
- Please ask your questions!
Reference Material

- http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/psych.html