

## Paving the Career Employment Transition Path: Making the Commitment to Maximize Success

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*AHEAD Conference  
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### The Statistics...

- The unemployment rate for college graduates is estimated in a range of **33% to 45%** *AHEAD Journal Summer 2006*
- A college graduate with a disability is **8 – 12 times more likely** to be unemployed than his peer without a disability
- Students with disabilities are **1/3 as likely** to use Career Services as their peers
- By 2010, it is projected that the population of college students with disabilities will be at or above **10% or 1.2 million students**



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### Research Hypotheses...

- Disconnect between Disability Services and Career Services offices on campus
- Career Services under utilized by students with disabilities
- Students with disabilities not seen by employers seeking to recruit a diverse slate of candidates
- Employers are unsure of which office to go to on campus and often become frustrated

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## Research Results

**University**

- No active “model program”
- Several attempts that ended due to funding issues and other factors

**Employers**

- Great enthusiasm and recognition of need to hire people with disabilities
- More questions than answers

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## Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD)

- COSD is a national association of 900 employers and higher education institutions focused on the career employment of college graduates with disabilities
- COSD is a resource for professionals in higher education to better prepare students with disabilities to be competitive in their career search
- COSD helps employers create strategies to search for college students with disabilities and to successfully recruit them

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**COSD**  
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Save the Date:  
November 8-10, 2009

**career gateway**

**Learn more**

Student Login

Employer Login

**Some employers feel uncomfortable hiring the "disabled." Some don't.**

**full ACCESS** November 7-8

**Sponsors**

BNY SunTrust Medtronic EgonMobil

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- A nationwide recruitment site specifically focused on college students with disabilities
- Students with disabilities register with confidence that only COSD member employers will be posting jobs and viewing resumes

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- Students post their resumes, browse jobs and directly communicate with employers
- Employers have a central point to find students with disabilities
- Employers and Students can access Career Gateway™ at [www.cosdonline.org](http://www.cosdonline.org)

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### **COSD Employer Sponsors**

AIG	Merck
AT&T	Microsoft
Aetna	Motorola
Blue Cross Blue Shield MA	Nordstrom
Central Intelligence Agency	PepsiCo
Dow Chemical	Procter & Gamble
Ernst & Young	Safeway
Exxon Mobil	SunTrust
Lockheed Martin	Wal-Mart Stores
Medtronic	Yahoo!

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### **COSD Higher Education Members**

Adelphi University	UCLA
Brigham Young University	University of Illinois
Catholic University	University of Kansas
CUNY – Baruch College	University of Memphis
George Washington Univ.	University of Minnesota
Ohio State University	University of Tennessee
Rice University	University of Missouri
San Jose State University	Univ. of South Carolina
Southern NH University	University of Texas
University of Arkansas	University of Washington
UC Berkeley	Virginia Tech

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### **UTK Solution**

- Creation of the Disability-Careers Office
- Liaison between Office of Disability Services and Career Services
- Serve students who are registered with the Office of Disability Services and/or are supported by Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Provide services to over 650 current UTK students



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### **Disability-Careers Office (DCO)**

In cooperation with UT Career Services and the Office of Disability Services, the purpose of the DCO is to assist individual college students and alumni, with various disabilities, by providing career planning services and guidance pertaining to their specific disability related issues.

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**DCO Services Provided  
General**

- Career path and major exploration through assessment tools
- Job seeking skills
- Interview techniques and preparation
- Informational resources for students, staff, faculty and employers
- Referrals to UT Career Services and the Office of Disability Services

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**DCO Services Provided  
Disability Specific**

- Self-advocacy skill development
- Self-disclosure techniques
- Process to request appropriate workplace accommodations
- Rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

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**Outreach and Referral**

<b>Student Outreach:</b>	<b>Employer Outreach:</b>
Email listserv	On-campus recruiting
Orientation	Employer site visits
Student newspaper	UT Diversity Job Fair
Career Fairs	COSD

**Referral sources:**  
DS professional staff members  
CS professional staff members  
VR Counselors

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## Common Concerns and Fears About Entering the Workforce

Student Responses - University of Tennessee

- "I don't want the employer to link disability to inability."
- "I am scared of how the employer will react."
- "I fear that disclosing my disability will create misconceptions in the employer's mind."
- "Once I disclose, I won't be given a chance."
- "How can I disclose in a way that puts my disability in a positive light?"

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## Self-Advocacy

Two transitions:

- Transition from high school to higher education
- Transition from higher education to work
- Examples of successful self-advocacy
  - Able to articulate ones own disability
  - Able to set reasonable goals
  - Used the available resources
  - Open to opportunities, internships
  - Prepared for the career search

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## Disclosure Process

- Preparing to disclose
  - *Balance abilities with job functions*
- When should a person disclose?
  - *Refer to Disclosure Options for Employment*
- Prepare a Script

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## Rules for an Effective Disclosure

- BE POSITIVE
- Rehearse and anticipate some common questions
- Ensure that discussion quickly returns to abilities
- Focus on employers primary concerns
  - Will you be at work?
  - Can you do the job as well or better than others?
  - Will you bring value to the company?

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## Students Need to Keep in Mind...

- If accommodations are needed, it is important to disclose that fact. Notifying an employer before negative performance issues occur is the employee's responsibility.
- The ADA does not protect anyone from poor performance. An employer has every right to dismiss an employee if he/she is performing poorly.
- Disclosing the disability and requesting an accommodation at that time will not help

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## Experiential Education

- Students are more likely to land permanent placement with a prior internship. The percent of interns converted to full-time employees has increased from 35.6% in 2001 to 50.5% in 2008. (NACE)
- In 2008, 90% of employers identified recruiting full-time college hires as the main goal of their internship program.(NACE)
- Students gain knowledge of whether this career is a good fit for them

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### Experiential Education

- Management gains an understanding of disability and would generally be more comfortable in hiring a person with a disability
- Real work experience is as important if not more important than grade point average
- Students gain confidence in a work-based situation to appropriately disclose and request reasonable accommodations
- Students develop lasting mentor relationships and their wider network

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### Bringing It All Together

#### *Employers*

- Specifically searching for students with disabilities
- Specific recruiting programs
- Specialized personnel in Disability Services role
- Greater sophistication in disability



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### Bringing It All Together

#### *Career Services*

- Understanding of key role as liaison between student and employer
- Need to be more helpful and attuned to needs of students with disabilities
- COSD encouraging CS to reach out to DS through multi-campus training

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## Bringing It All Together

### *Disability Services*

- Expanding the “continuum of service”
- COSD encouraging involvement of DS with employers to meet their needs
- COSD encouraging outreach to CS through multi-campus training

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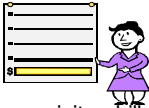
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## The “Bottom Line”

- Students with disabilities are no different than other students in their career search
- Students with disabilities are not all the same
- **Expectations of students**
  - Effort to earn “good” grades and graduate
  - Realistic expectations
  - Self-advocacy
- **Expectations of employers**
  - Match functions of position with requisite skills



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## Presenter Contact Information

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