**Abstract**

**National Center for College Students with Disabilities**

**Organization Name**: University of Minnesota - Institute on Community Integration

**City/State**: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Project Title: The National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD)

The University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration (ICI-UMN), in full partnership with the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), proposes continuation and expansion of the National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD). The NCCSD has been based at AHEAD for the past seven years but will now be housed at ICI-UMN. This partnership will combine expertise, expand NCCSD’s activities, and provide access to resources available only at large research university.

The overarching focus of the NCCSD will continue to be improvement of enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of college students with disabilities with a special focus on the rights of and advocacy for students with disabilities. This will be accomplished through the provision of information, resources, and services to prospective and current college students and their families, K-12 professionals, IEP and Transition Planning Teams; the delivery of information, resources, and trainings to institutions of higher education (IHEs) and their per- sonnel; maintenance and expansion of the existing CeDaR Database; and the collection and dissemination of resources to enhance the effectiveness of student disability services in HE.

In its second cycle, the NCCSD will utilize existing programs and resources, including its comprehensive technical assistance services, online Clearinghouse, educational programs, and training materials for IHE personnel with and without disabilities; the CeDaR Database with disability resource information for all degree-granting IHEs, a weekly newsletter about transition and disability in HE, findings from retention research, research briefs, and the national DREAM student group with campus-based chapters and affiliates.

These activities will expand with an extensive network of new partners. Teams of ICI- UMN and AHEAD staff will engage in activities including: 1) enhanced technical assistance with partners; 2) expansion of the CeDaR Database with more documentation questions and inclusion of non-degree-granting IHEs; 3) surveys for Phase II of the NCCSD needs assessment;

4) a study of whether a student affairs’ curricular approach could create more inclusive campuses; 5) new transition and retention research with large-scale datasets; 6) expansion of the *DREAM* group; 7) creation of a national advocacy network for students with disabilities and their families; 8) development and piloting of a *Student Connect* program, and 9) a Minority- Serving Institution (MSI) consortium that will build a network of MSI service providers, researching culturally responsive practices for transition, disability services, and campus climate.

The NCCSD will have internal and external evaluators, an Advisory Board, and the DREAM student board to guide and oversee activities. External evaluation will be provided by RTI International. The project will use formative and summative data, and use Cycle of Continuous Improvement methods. These methods will provide regular evaluation reports to the NCCSD, creating ongoing opportunities to refine and improve the NCCSD based on information from evaluators.

PR/Award # P116D210002

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