

Cornell University

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on  
Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities

**Edited Transcript of  
July 27, 2007  
Public Policy Forum**

**College Bound: Policy Recommendations  
for Improving Long-Term Employment  
Outcomes by Advancing Higher  
Education for Students with Disabilities.**

*Speakers:*

Jane West, Ph.D.

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

George Jesien, Ph.D.

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

Robert Weathers, Ph.D.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Stacey Millbern

Student at Methodist University, Mitsubishi American Electric Foundation/AAPD  
Congressional Intern

Arisa Nakamori

Student at UC Davis, Mitsubishi American Electric Foundation/AAPD Congressional  
Intern

*Facilitator:*

Andy Imparato

President/CEO, American Association of People with Disabilities

For further information about this policy forum contact:

**Michele Cowen**  
tel (607) 254-8311  
email [mtc11@cornell.edu](mailto:mtc11@cornell.edu)  
web [www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi)

The **collaborators** would like to thank the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) for funding our work on this paper. The opinions expressed are the speaker's own and do not represent official positions of NIDRR or Cornell University

The **contents of this policy forum** were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Edgar, 75.620 (b)).

This **policy forum is being sponsored in part** by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Economic Research on Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities at Cornell University. This center is funded by Cornell University, by the U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (Cooperative Agreement No. H133B040013). This center is an across college effort at Cornell University between the Employment and Disability Institute in the Extension Division of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Department of Policy Analysis and Management in the College of Human Ecology, and the Institute for Policy Research in Washington, DC.

**The Co-Principal Investigators are:**

**Susanne M. Bruyère**—Director, Employment and Disability Institute, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Extension Division, Cornell University

**Richard V. Burkhauser**—Sarah Gibson Blanding Professor and Chair, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University

**David C. Stapleton**—Director, Cornell University Institute for Policy Research

**Communication Access RealTime Translation (CART) Services** for this event were provided by VLI and RealTime Reporter Sherry Knox, CCP.

**Disclaimer:** CART is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

## Welcome and Introduction

### Susanne Bruyère:

Welcome and thank you for your patience as we tried to make our seminar today available to people at a distance. We have had many requests for folks who cannot attend either from the area in person and people from outside of the area to attend this seminar and we are trying to work out the mechanics to make that available. It does add another wrinkle of technology into our program.

The title of our program today is College Bound Policy Recommendations for Improving Long-Term Employment Outcomes by Advancing Higher Education for Students with Disabilities. We want to acknowledge the partners and the funding agency for these symposiums. Cornell is funded as a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on employment policy for persons with disabilities. This is a five year grant. U.S. Department of Education, and Edna Johnson our project officer is here as part of our efforts of this to promote policy changes and take our research to a broader arena. We have 12 to 15 policy forums over this five year period. AAPD is a critical partner in helping us to identify the people who we want to bring in on salient topics. The university partners are three: the Employment and Disability Institute, the Institute for Policy Research here in Washington DC and David Stapleton and Bonnie and Annette, also the Department of Policy Analysis and Management on the Cornell campus. I mentioned Andy as our partner and also Mathematica Policy Research and -- Bob is one of our researchers and he's speaking about some of the research funded by this project and this is exactly what we had in mind is to bring the knowledge we are gaining from that research to the policy discussion arena.

So with that I will just last mention that we do have upcoming policy forums. The two we have scheduled thus far are September 7 and November 9. This is also on your program. The Social Security Demonstration Reports on New Approaches will be our next one in September. And then Disability Changes in the UK in Return to Work will be the one that we will have in November. For those of you who might want alternative formats -- if you haven't noticed that we do have large print up front. I also have with me some CD's and braille versions of our materials if you would like them. Please let me know and I am happy to make those available for you.

### Audience Member:

Read out the dates for people who can't see it.

### Susanne Bruyère:

September 7, and November 9 here in the Hall of States is our next one. In September we will have the next cohort of five programs ready to let you know about those when and where we will be scheduling those over the next year after the first of the year. With that I am going to turn it over to our facilitator today,

Andy Imparato.

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you. Let me just test the sound again. Jennifer Simpson can you hear me in the back? Great. We are excited to continue a tradition that we started last year at this time. Last year a number of the folks that are here were able to attend the presentation we did last year where we had five college students with disabilities who were participating in AAPD's two different internship programs. One is the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and the other is the information -- we had five of our interns present. I think we had four present their ideas for improving long-term employment outcomes for people with disabilities from the perspective of current college students with disabilities. This year we thought we would bring in three experts on higher education policy and disability policies and how those two worlds intersect, have them present some of their ideas about what needs to change in public policy that would lead to both better higher education outcomes and long term employment outcomes and then have two of our current Congressional interns react, not on behalf of their offices but as individuals.

So we are excited to have that interplay and we always try to save a lot of time for Q and A with the audience. We are certainly going to try to do that. I apologize we got off to a late start. I don't think Susanne said her name when she kicked it off, so the person you heard from at the beginning was Susanne Bruyère who is head of the training and research on disability along with Dave Stapleton and Rich -- who is not here. So in some ways he is here because his research is going to be reported on. Let me introduce. Everybody is a doctor, so start with that assumption.

**Panelist:**

Don't ask for a prescription.

**Andy Imparato:**

Let me introduce Dr. Jane West who joined the American Association for Colleges for Teacher Education, otherwise known as AACT, in February of 2006. Dr. West directs the Department of Government and External Relations, including communications and public federal education policy, membership development and AACT's relations with it's states chapters. Dr. West brings over 30 years of education and public policy experience to the organization as a former teacher, education administrator, PTA officer, researcher and university faculty member. I am not going to read her whole bio. I am going to say that Jane was the staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Disability and in that role she really was on the cutting edge of disability rights legislation and disability public policy and really laid the foundation for what came under the leadership of, you know, Senator Harkin and Senator Kennedy and others. Loal is still around and he's very out spoken and still passionate. I think some of us forget to tap him because his message needs to be heard.

## Panel

### Jane West:

Thank you Andy. I can't tell you how pleased I am to be here. This is a topic that is really close to my heart and it is a frontier that has not yet been fully explored and I think that this is so timely that you are doing this because I have always felt like higher education -- you can't hear me?

### Susanne Bruyère:

Let me just say that if the people in the room cannot hear Jane the only understanding is if you to come over here because the wireless microphones interfere with the other technology. I apologize for that.

### Jane West:

Anyway. What I was saying is that I was really delighted to be here because I think this notion of access to higher education is really the next frontier in disability policy. It's an area where we have not pushed the envelope the way we have as a disability community in so many other areas. I think the promise of full access to higher education is really remarkable. I think we are going to hear that from some of the data that's going to be offered today. I am really looking forward to hearing from our students about what we need to be doing to increase access to higher education. Go ahead to the first one.

I am going to go very briefly and start with the good news. College education is the great equalizer for employment. The National Center for Education Statistics has reported that employment rates and annual salaries for college graduates do not differ significantly between people with disabilities and people without disabilities. Now, this is one source of data -- I am sure there are others. That probably is a statement that could be challenged but I'm picking that one because I believe it. I think that in conjunction with our strong antidiscrimination legislation and with our support for employers, ensuring that everyone who wants to get a higher education is a just a ticket to a destination that we haven't really used. So I am really eager to talk about how we can do that.

I am an activist, so I like to always think about, you know, the 'so what' part of things. Secondly, the number of students with disabilities attending college has steady increased -- more good news. The percentage of full time college freshman rose from 2.6% in 1978 to 9.2% in 1998. You will find a lot of different statistics again on this question of how many students with disabilities participate in anything post secondary education and that's one. Another piece of really good news and I'm really glad Donna Martinez is here because she has put together a tremendous resource for programs and colleges and universities that serve students with intellectual disabilities. This is truly the new frontier. There are over a hundred programs I believe. 110. I know George's organizations have been very involved in this and it's something that is getting increasing momentum. The sort of challenge

there is that every year we have about 30,000 students with intellectual disabilities leaving high school. Of those 30,000 we figure about 2,500 are involved in some sort of post secondary education. It's not for everyone. Certainly there's room for growth between 2,500 and 30,000.

The other good news is that the Senate has just passed their Higher Education Reauthorization bill which includes some fabulous new provisions that I'm going to talk about. The vote on this bill was 95 to zero. You don't get many votes like that in the Congress these days. I think that's pretty remarkable and a lot of kudos go to Senators Kennedy and Enzi for setting that tone. The provisions in the Senate Higher Education Act that I want to mention are these - the only real foothold that the disability community has had in the Higher Education Act started in 1998 with a little program called Demonstration Projects to Improve Access to Higher Education for People with Disabilities. It was authorized at ten million dollars. It's been appropriated at about 7 million dollars. Every year the administration zeroes it out and it's a struggle to keep it alive and the thinking was that it was a place to start to provide technical assistance to faculty at institutions of higher education. What do you do if you are teaching physics and a student who's deaf walks into your class and you have no clue how to manage this? So the idea was really to try to begin to change the culture of higher education with providing those sorts of services to faculty. It's a small program.

There have been some great projects. It certainly doesn't have the kind of robustness that it needs. In the Reauthorization Bill there were new provisions added to target retention of students with disabilities and higher education, transition and distance learning. There's also a new authority in this higher education bill for model services and programs for students with intellectual disabilities. This is completely new authority and it would allow probably about ten different higher education institutions to create or expand the programs that they have now to serve students with intellectual disabilities. This last one is truly, ground breaking. These provisions in there allow students with intellectual disabilities to have access to federal financial aid, especially to Pell Grants, which are scholarships to low income students, and our government spends about 13 billion dollars a year on those scholarships. These are funds that universities match with the federal funds to supplement the Pell Grant funds. And through work study programs -- universities use that to develop and hire students to do jobs on campus. This is truly ground breaking that access to federal financial assistance for these students will be available if this becomes law.

Now let's go into the not so good news. The participation and retention rate of students with disabilities in post secondary education continues to lag significantly behind that of their non disabled peers. I don't think that we have a real good in depth understanding of why. I could certainly guess. I am very eager to hear from our students what thought they might have. I can only imagine having taught at a university myself, I had many disabled students in my class because it was a

leadership class for students with disabilities. The simple things like preparing your materials in advance so they can be brailled -- faculty do it the night before. It's a very simple thing but it's very significant when it comes to access. So I think there are many things like that that effect the retention rate, you know the physical access, the programmatic access, and the support on campus et cetera. We can talk more about that later. There's been a high profile debate on access and affordability on campus.

Secretary I -- said she wanted to take the principles of No Child Left Behind and put them in higher education -- great more access for students with disabilities. That was never part of the discussion, never part of the discussion. I think in the same way that the disability issues and presence in No Child Left Behind in our major K-12 public investment are significant. In fact some people -- yesterday Congressman Miller said that students with disabilities and English language learners are the number one issue in No Child Left Behind. We don't have that presence in the Higher Education Act. There really is a very minor presence of, you know, the higher education communication thinking. What is the disability community thinking about this or what is that presence there? Think tanks report on every student except students with disabilities. Literally I had Hispanic access to college for minorities, access to college for first generation college goers, access to college for the working poor. I mean all of these groups are really targeted with analysis and study and how do we improve access? I know of one report from the Institution on Higher Education Policy and also the National Council on Disability did one a few years ago. As far as getting in the mainstream higher education conversation as a group that should be considered for access, we are not there yet. I think higher education has not embraced education students with disabilities as a mission. I think there is an embrace for providing access to low income students or minority students. I think it would be hard pressed. We are not there with students with disabilities.

The House and Senate have been -- actually in the last three years -- the higher education has been reauthorized for four years now and the House passed two bills twice. It's something that has a lot of visibility and a lot of conversation. Just in the last month three bills were passed in higher education, two reconciliation bills and the Higher Ed Act. Service providers and special education teachers were in the conversation, but they were really on the floor. There was no mention of access to higher ed for students with disabilities. So it's not there yet. A minor advocacy presence.

I just wanted to mention this is not to pick on NCCL. I happen to go on advocacy visits. -- National Council for Independent Living. These are independent living centers and individuals belong to this terrific grassroots activist organization. They have a wonderful legislative agenda. I think there are 19 priorities in there and number 18 is education so I flipped to the back and it's all about No Child Left Behind. There is no mention of higher education in there. I don't say that to be

critical. I think it's a reflection of sort of where we are. We haven't figured out, you know, how to advocate on this front.

The path forward. Number one support students with disabilities and organize a strong advocacy voice because it is the student who is going to lead the way there. It's not people like me. We are going to your allies and to follow your lead, but there are many active student associations on Capitol Hill. I don't know if one way to do this might be a Student and Disability Caucus with some of the American Association of College Students with some of those groups. AAPD -- you have a great beginning with the interns but you know putting together some presence of students and then all of us working to articulate an agenda and how to move that forward.

The second is a high visibility national study. This is the kind of thing that can often really kick things off. I worked in the last few years to try to get a study -- actually Andy and I worked on this a little bit in the Higher Education Act. Authorized a high level study to actually look at all the issues related to access and retention of students with disabilities. Starting with expectations in college, how are students with disabilities counseled? The application process itself, is that accessible? Access to financial aid? What if you have a person who's going to take ten years to go to college and they can only take one course at a time. Right now you would not be eligible for financial aid. There are lots of barriers that haven't been clearly thought through. I am sure our panelists will enlighten us on some of that. I think a high visibility national study, preferably something authorized in the law where it's going to get some attention when it comes out.

One of the key things, my last here, is to develop a campaign and materials to make the case. I think that the data we are going to hear today about the students from NTID, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, is so powerful. When we go up to the Hill with charts and graphs, the favorite chart is the distribution of fourth grade math scores. You have the bell shaped curve and super imposed on that we have students in special education. Guess what -- it's almost the same bell curve. All the students with disabilities are not clustered down at the low end. Holding that up and talking about the impact of No Child Left Behind is the equivalent of talking about employment rates of people who finish college. That kind of powerful impact data needs to be part of materials we put together. A campaign, you know, to really raise the consciousness and the opportunity here. I don't think there's anything malicious about all of this. We haven't gotten there yet.

I will end with one of my favorite quotes. "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." Thank you.

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you Jane, that was a great kick off to this panel. Thank you for your leadership on this topic which is long standing. I know you were the staff director

for Senator -- you are a prodigy.

The next person I want to introduce is Dr. George. He has over 30 years of experience in the disability field and various capacities, including school psychologist, project manager, course faculty and director of state and federally funded programs for children with special needs and their families. He has worked at educational agencies, Head Start and in university settings and currently he's the Executive Director of University Centers on Disabilities which represents national networks of university centers that conduct research and professional development. Like Jane, George has Hill experience. He was a Kennedy Fellow and worked for Senator Harkin at the same time. Please join me in welcoming Dr. George Jesien.

**George Jesien:**

Thanks Andy for the introduction and it's a pleasure to be here to talk about this critically important topic. I also want to thank Andy because when I came in on my fellowship he introduced me to the disability culture. We watched literally hundreds of people walking in and out seeing all the lobby and legislation work that was done. It was a great way to begin my Washington experience. I would like to reserve some time for students to talk so I am going to move fairly quickly through the points that I want to make. To the interpreter -- if I go too quickly please let me know, I will try to slow down.

I would like to make four briefs. As Jane said, post secondary education is really the next frontier that we must address if we are to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. Second, we have under invested over the years. The available models to really do quality programs in 24 areas are rapidly increasing as well as interests -- and we have the last -- that we have in this country that we can now move onto build to scale rather than talk about individual cases or experiences. A bit of data that provides a context for us. There's a clear gap in employment between people who have disabilities and those who do not. We all know that. There are various estimates of it. One that I would pull out here is about 37% as an average across the country. What's clear is the role that post secondary education plays in the ability to earn and get jobs and positions that are meaningful. You know what's so interesting is the fact that it is so obvious to any of us that have kids that are in home school or have gone through that process of transition. You realize how much of your families energy is directed at the choosing, the selection and the looking at the alternatives, and are transitioning from pre to post secondary education. In terms of setting our kids up for their future development and their life careers, and yet the amount of attention that we have paid to this area for people with disabilities is nowhere near the kind of attention that we paid in other areas. I will show you some -- hopefully some aspects of that to further make the point.

Lastly, graduates of post secondary education can expect to earn at least 250,000 to

600,000 dollars additional over their lifetime than those who do not. Clearly if we move that bar with how many folks with disabilities that get through college, the return on investment is absolutely incredible not only to those individuals but to our society and country.

To summarize, we have a gap that we really do need to address if we were to move the quality of life standard for people with disabilities. The increase in income and the decrease in unemployment as you move across the education attainment scale from some high school to high school graduation to a doctorate degree -- it's clear unequivocal data that there's a direct correlation between education and income and employment. We started off in 1975 working on access to really cement post secondary education. We have spent the last 32 years building an infrastructure to address the needs of those children and to provide access for them. In the mid 80's we realized we've got to start before school in order to prepare children to go to school and for early intervention. Part c and the idea of 1619 were developed. We focused in on the early needs of children and to prepare them for school. In the early 90's we couldn't stop at secondary and high school now that we had a transition to prepare children and adolescents and youth for employment and post secondary.

It really wasn't until 1999 that we as a country federally invested in post secondary education with a small program for demonstration grants. That's 8 years ago. Let's take a look at the comparison of what we have done in terms of elementary, early intervention and secondary education. We had CIGS and SPIGS which were state improvement grants that provided dollars to the states to improve quality and conduct five year planning efforts and provide continuing education to administrators, principals and faculty. We had state funds going to every single school district in this country. We had demonstration projects, close to over five hundred over that period, testing out methodologies, materials and strategies for how to provide adequate services and education. Then those demo projects went into outreach where they provided dollars and resources to disseminate those results across the country. Personal preparation of around 70 million dollars a year to prepare sexual educators and general educators to deal with children with disabilities. Field initiated research using multiple institutes to gather information around critical areas and around education and technical assistance to administration and providers, et cetera. That's on one side of the ledger. If we look at post secondary education we have provisions in the Vocational Rehab Act 59, the demonstration act that started in 1999. So clearly an under investment in this area.

Barriers to post secondary education, I think Jane mentioned, I think one of the biggest and hardest to overcome is low expectations and inadequate preparation. If you talk to parents, until recently college was not necessarily in the scope of their expectations for children with disabilities. Lack of availability, support and services in higher ed. The record here can best be said to be spotty. If you talk to participants who look at colleges you will see a tremendous amount of variation

from one campus to another in terms of what they provide. Recently there was a story of a campus with their schools and their buildings and their labs inaccessible. One of the administrators said we don't have many folks with disabilities so we don't need to have accessibility. Talk about the chicken and the egg.

Academic freedom and each professor feeling they can do what they want to do in the class without supervision is clearly an attitudinal challenge that we are going to have to overcome. Actually, the academic culture of academic entry and the post secondary is not seen as a right, but as a choice. There's this culture of applying and being turned down by many, schools because you don't measure up. So there's a long way to go in terms of adapting that academic culture to make it more friendly toward a wide range of learning style and diversity. Now knowledge and experience of a higher education faculty -- teacher assistance to diversifying and accommodating the learning experience to students is just nowhere near any sense of awareness that we will need to have in order to make our campuses friendly to people with disabilities.

Lastly, access to financial support. The data clearly show that students with disabilities probably go later in life and take longer to go through that process just because of all of the financial needs and some of the challenges they have to face in putting a system of supports together. I just want to touch base on a very interesting piece of work that's being done at the University of Iowa, who engaged a marketing firm to talk to parents of children with disabilities. They asked them a series of questions as they are looking at their teenagers going to college -- what are some of the aspects they are thinking about? I just wanted to bring up a couple of things. First of all, overwhelming enthusiasm about having the availability of programs at the university that would accommodate their children with special needs. The thought of possibly having a program that would address some of the needs. Proximity to home maybe a much more important factor for families with members of children with disabilities -- 20% of them had actually enrolled their children. So there's interest but there's also a real hesitancy. The sample for this is about 200 families of children with developmental disabilities and learning disabilities, which I thought was very interesting that it didn't just zone in on one population but looked across disability perspectives. The other thing I think is important is the more inclusive educational program, the higher the level of interest for families. The more closely it approximates the college experience for everyone the more interested parents are.

Let me move on and just touch base on a couple of things about the network of university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities. There are 67 of them. One in every -- at least one in every single state. If you go to the next slide their mandated core functions are pre-service training, continuing education, technical assistance and dissemination of information. They are funded by the administration on developmental disabilities for core funding and apply for grants to basically do the rest of their work. I potentially see those centers as a basic

infrastructure upon which we could build.

And why the university centers? First of all they are placed within a university environment. They are part of the culture and information structure. They know how to deal with deans and they deal with tenured faculty all the time. They hire and trained teaching assistants across a broad area of disciplines and therefore are part of the actual system. They have extensive experience in disabilities across the lifespan. They have close ties with families and community partners and could serve as a network not only to work at the state level, but hopefully to bring together some of the experiences to a national level. I just want to touch on some of the examples of work within the network. The network in and of itself is really not from our office but as a call from the field to our office that wanted to start a special interest group and work group in the area of post secondary education. Approximately 40 of the 67 centers are now participating in just learning what each other are doing in this area. Let me just mention a couple of examples. California center has developed a higher ed consortium made up of the universities, colleges, community colleges, in the state, at least in the southern portion of California. You always have to sort of qualify California because it sees itself as it's own country.

Along with state and disability groups to look at what could be done across campuses to make them more accommodating and friendly to people with disabilities, University of Iowa completed this marketing study as part of the reach project which will eventually entail a certificate program for people with learning and intellectual disabilities -- which is noteworthy about this one. This one has support not only at the chancellor level at the University of Iowa, but also engaged some of the corporate sponsors that have head quarters in Iowa to work with them.

I want today talk about a couple of efforts in South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and actually other states that have formed collaborative groups. Some of them actually fund the DD counsels in their state to address the issue of post secondary education. Hawaii is working on cultural and linguistic populations and looking at the adaptations that are necessary. Maine is working on four other universities to develop universal design courses. Assistive technology -- in Mississippi and Pennsylvania. In Ohio -- developing faculty and administrative modules. The last one I want to mention is -- directed by Debra -- at the Massachusetts Center for Community and Integration. I think this is the template for us going to scale. It's not individual little project by individual project, although change happens at the person level. I think it is in the statewide collaborates where you have multiple campuses working school districts using state dollars. This program uses some of the idea funds to help provide college experiences for students who would be going through high school through the age of 21. It's these kinds of partnerships -- this one in Massachusetts with 19 public schools, 10 institutes of higher education and 112 students currently enrolled. That has to go double, triple and quadruple

for us to actually make an impact in the states.

Let me finish up with the bottom line, and I'd like us to think about how higher education plays a critical roll in improving the outcomes for students with disabilities. Keeping college in the mix of the possibilities that families and students with severe disabilities explore and making sure that we see that as an option from early on and even middle and high school is clearly important. Being part of campus life, taking classes and learning how to navigate the higher ed world leads to the development of needed skills for success in life. And gaining knowledge and working skills to pursue meaningful and competitive work that relates to today's individual career goals.

Some of the recommendations from a policy perspective that I think need to be considered -- demonstration policy records were somewhat successful in bringing change in early intervention after preschool. -- New models and new technologies and strategies can be developed, which is important. Financial support options are absolutely basic to increasing the number of people with students with disabilities and post secondary education. Training and technical assistance to university faculty -- I would underline graduate assistance and administration. Research to find out what are the most effective strategies for us to use. The full exploitation of internet and assistive technologies. Engaging higher education leadership, deans, and presidents in the discussion of saying this is an issue that if you don't address voluntarily you will have to address because of the legal access actions that may in fact take place very near in the future. I think it was the Joseph P Kennedy Foundation that just met with the one of the very large higher educations to start talk. It's those kinds of discussions that puts this on the radar of university leadership that will help move that whole sector of paying attention to this area.

Lastly, building on existing disability infrastructure rather than creating entire new systems. Use what we have and enhance and expand so things go to scale much more quickly. To harken back to what Jane just mentioned, the vehicles that we see as potential avenues for expanding attention on this area, clearly the Higher Education Act. We need not only this community but the rest of the disability community to help us move this through. The Workforce Investment Act, in terms of it's possible provisions for vocational rehabilitation and funding, I suggest that we look at the DD as a possible vehicle for putting emphasis and focus and attention on this area. By a simple sentence we could make this a priority of DD's counsel and the university centers, and they would in a sense almost be mandated to move their focus onto this area. I hope I am not speaking out of turn here. If the DD counsel sought this as one of their priorities since they have -- it would free up additional dollars for campuses to work through in terms of making their universities or colleges or community colleges more acceptable.

Let me finish with a couple of examples and just leave these as I say the change in this area is going to be done individually and family by family. It is only by working

together that we can go to scale and have the kind of impact that we need to make our colleges and universities welcoming the people with disabilities. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

**Andy Imparato:**

Just to let folks know who weren't able to see the last slide, we had a picture of three student with disabilities. One just graduated high school and the other two looked like community college and I think one was the four year college. He also had a donkey and elephant on his slide to show that we needed to do this in a bipartisan way. I wanted people to see that who couldn't see it.

I wanted to introduce the last speaker of the presenters and then we are going to have our two reactors. The last presentation is going to be from Bob Weathers who is a senior researcher at Mathematica Policy Research. Over the past ten years he has worked on -- designed to improve the economic well being of persons with disabilities. He's currently working on two projects for the Cornell Employment and Disability Institute and the -- Research and Training Center. RRTC. The first project develops and uses a longitudinal database to -- how investments. I think that's an important word. How investments in post secondary education with youth with profound hearing loss effect their long term employment outcomes and time spent in disability transfer programs. The second project uses a national database on how the Americans with Disabilities Act changes the prevalence and type offered to persons with disabilities. Please join me in welcoming Bob Weathers.

**Susanne Bruyère:**

May I make a quick comment Bob?

I am sending around the sign in sheets. Several people have asked for the power points. If you would like a set of the power points I am happy to send them to you. On the sign in sheet that's going around, if you want to note that you want to power point presentation as well.

**Bob Weathers:**

Two colleagues from the Social Security Administration, John and Jeff, and one colleague from Cornell, Rich -- the focus of the research today is a study we have been doing on the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and looking at how their applicants fair over their lifetime and employment and earnings participation.

Next slide. Just to give you a quick overview of what I'm going to talk about today. First briefly talk about the importance of measuring outcomes. Secondly, I am going to talk about two studies we have been doing with the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and the Social Security Administration. One focuses on NTID applicants. The other focuses on NTID who are SSI children. They participated

in the SSI program before age 18. I am going to wrap up by talking about some implications of our research.

So the importance of measuring outcomes. First of all there's been a greater emphasis from the Department of Education and others in examining long term outcomes in post secondary education students. This isn't just for people with disabilities, it's for all post secondary education. We view this study as leading the way for all post education studies to really look at long term outcomes and second looking at long term outcomes can demonstrate really the potential the post secondary education has for people with disabilities. We hope that might stimulate some investments and the programs to post secondary education. And third there's competing demands for federal budget and -- really helps when it comes to making federal budget decisions on the Hill.

So measuring outcomes. Most post secondary education studies focus on just short term outcomes. One example of this which is very informative is a national longitudinal study. It's very important but it provides a partial picture of the benefits of post secondary education. Our study is beginning to show a more complete picture by looking over a longer period of time. The problem is that there's very little information on long term outcomes. It's very difficult to get long term outcome data. But post secondary education has lifetime benefits so it's really critical that when we are looking at the outcome of post secondary education we don't limit it to a few years after graduation. We look at outcomes over a lifetime. That's what this study is going to do.

So the National Technical Institute of the Deaf and SSA got together to do a Cornell study. NTID is -- that serves the population that are deaf or hard of hearing. The other is Gallaudet here in Washington. One of the things about NTID is it's located on the campus of Rochester Institute of Technology. They go through a similar curriculum as hearing students at RIT. What you are seeing is a federally funded institution that serves the deaf population but on the a hearing campus. It's a neat feature of NTID. It recently initiated a study to look at long term outcomes of all their applicants that ever applied from their school from 1978 when they opened their doors, to the present. They are doing this under a contract with the Social Security Administration where they provide secure data on all their applicants since 1968 to the Social Security Administration. And they link earnings data over a lifetime up to 2004 as well as program participation data in the Social Security Disability Insurance program and the supplemental security program over their entire lifetime. What we are able to do with this data set is track over a person's lifetime or NTID applicants life, things such as their employment, earnings and participation and disability insurance programs and the participation in the Social Security Administration program. It is housed under tight security protection laws. I am not allowed to look at the data. We have our programmers that handle all of this data. It's very private and secure and no risk of disclosures. The study question for the NTID applicant study is really simple. How is graduation from

the National Technical Institute for the Deaf related to employment outcomes, earnings Social Security participation and SSDI participation?

What you are going to see in this series of graphs I am going to show are how four different groups of NTID applicants fair in terms of these outcomes by age 20 to age 50. And the fourth group that you are going to see are NTID applicants who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree and NTID applicants who graduated with an Association of Science degree and NTID applicants who were admitted but withdrew before completing, and NTID who were not accepted. Those last two are our reference groups. We are getting a matched group who went through the same curriculum so we can compare how Bachelor of Science degree students fared between the hearing and non-hearing.

Next slide. So this first slide shows that NTID graduates do better in terms of employment rates. I hope you can see improvement. What you see are two things. First there are four lines. The blue line is for the Bachelor of Science degree graduates. The line which is next to it, which is the maroon, is the Associated and there are two lines that track on each other which are much further below and those are the withdraws and those who were not admitted. I think there are two important things to get from this graph. Early in the lifetime they look similar. Employment rates are similar through the 20's and this is in part because at NTID they are not working and going to school, but then there's this transition period where they graduate and are searching for jobs and later in life you see a much higher employment rate on the order of 10 to 15% from those who graduated from NTID and those who do not. The next slide shows the mean earnings of these four groups. Again, we have the Bachelor of Science degree in blue showing that a tremendous growth in mean earnings over their lifetime.

Again for all four groups in their early 20's, while they are at NTID and while they are making a transition from graduation to employment, what you see are the lines tracking each other very closely. In the short term you don't see tremendous differences across these four groups. However, when you go into the 30's and 40's you see the differences grow at a very rapid rate and by the 30's, Bachelor of Science degree students are earning about 45,000 dollars a year while those who don't graduate are earning somewhere on average about 20,000 dollars. There's a tremendous difference in earnings for those who graduate from NTID and those who don't. This emphasizes the -- on -- this is an outcome that most post secondary education studies don't focus on. We do because all the students at NTID have hearing -- it might not meet the means test but they meet the disability criteria. All four groups are participating in the SSI program at about the same rate and it's between 50 and 60% while they are in the early 20's while they are at NTID. Over time what you see is that those who graduate are participating in SSI programs at a much lower rate than those who withdrew from NTID and those who weren't admitted -- showing that there's a benefit to being independent from the SSI program from graduation.

And the fourth slide I am going to show shows that NTID graduates also spend a lot less time on the Social Security Disability program. Again, you see the similar trend here that they look very similar through their early 20's. Differences start later in the lifetime with the graduates having much lower participation rates than those who don't graduate. So the next slide. So to summarize, the NTID graduates show the potential for post secondary education to increase employment and reduce participation in disability programs over their lifetime. But this research also shows that the short term outcome measurements don't capture the full picture. What you see in all four of those graphs are that the differences arise later in life and they persist through out the rest of the persons lifetime so that there are lifetime benefits from NTID that really show the potential.

Next slide. Now I am going to briefly talk about our study that focuses on SSI children. And just to start out, the SSI program is meant for children with disabilities. The SSI program for children is meant for children who live in families who is have low income and low resources. There's been a rapid growth in the number of SSI children over the last 15 years. The numbers have tripled and by 2006 there were over a million children who were participating in the SSI program. Children who are participants in the SSI program tend to stay on the program for a large portion of their lifetime. This has raised some concerns among policy makers and that it costs a lot of money and it's not the best benefit program for people with disabilities.

Next question or next slide. We have three questions that I'm going to focus on today. The first is do SSI children make up a large portion of NTID applicants and NTID graduates? The second is do SSI's children graduate at the same rate as NTID applicants with the same type of hearing impairments but who didn't participate in the SSI program as children? And the third question is do SSI children who graduate from NTID experience better outcomes than those who don't graduate?

So the answers to those questions are first SSI children are a large portion and growing portion of NTID applicants and approximately 10% of applicant -- in 1999 we had 42% of our applicants as SSI children. In terms of graduated in 1983 about 8% of graduates were SSI children and by 1999 it grew to 28%. Next slide. The bad news is that SSI children have lower graduation rates than those who weren't SSI children. Of about 31% of SSI children who attended NTID, about 30% I'm sorry actually graduate from NTID. When we look at students that went on the SSI program, it's 47%. There's a 17% difference between SSI children and those who weren't SSI children. What we did in our study is try to make adjustments for differences and characteristics across the two groups. While that reduces the difference in graduation rates somewhat, there's still a 13% difference after we control for other characteristics. This is a problem that NTID is working on addressing and approving the graduation rates for NTID children. The last slide shows that SSI children who graduate have better outcomes in terms of earnings

and program participation than those who don't graduate. We did a similar type of analysis much more structured than the previous slides they showed. What we show is that they have greater lifetime earnings. What we actually did was follow these students overtime and compare them to several groups who didn't graduate. The closest group to them was those who withdrew from NTID. By age 30 the earnings were 68% higher among NTID graduates than those who didn't graduate and withdrew from NTID.

In addition we looked at how much time these students spend on the SSI program, and what we find is they leave SSI programs about a year and a half sooner and they are much less likely to come back into the SSI program during their lifetime than student who don't graduate from NTID.

Next slide. So to wrap up with the conclusions. What our research really emphasizes is that education really can improve outcomes for people with disabilities as well as SSI children with disabilities. We also -- our research examines the importance of long term outcome measures. What we conclude from our research is there is really a need to improve investment in post secondary. One is to improve information that students have about how they can access post secondary education. Most beneficiaries and people with disabilities aren't aware of all of the programs out there that are available to them to obtain post secondary education and improving the amount of information that is out there I think will have an impact to some extent on participation in post secondary education. And in addition we think that more investments and projects, new projects some of which George was talking about earlier, will be really be interesting to look at to see what kind of impact they have on improving outcomes for people with disabilities and investments in those sort of projects, as well as projects that the Social Security Administration is conducting that we will talk about in a future seminar here. It really has a strong potential for improving employment outcomes and reducing dependence on disability programs. The final slide. Here are a couple of references, one to the study has a lot more information than what I provided today that will be coming out shortly in the Social Security Bulletin. Another reference is a paper by -- that describes participation in the SSI program. Those are two great programs to learn more about what I talked about today. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

## Reactions

### Andy Imparato:

Thank you Bob. I just want to have a round of (Applause) for all of our presenters. I think all of you did a great job. So now we get to have two reactors who are current college students with disabilities, then we are going to open up for questions from the audience or comments from the audience. The first reactor is a rising junior at the University of California at Davis where she is a double

major in international relations and East Asian studies. Arisa is a recent beginner in co-- which is a Japanese martial art. She was born in the United States and her parents sent her to Japan in early childhood to learn and become familiar with the Japanese language and culture. Her experience has helped her to appreciate the value of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She hopes to pursue graduate studies and eventually work in the international arena helping other countries to develop disability rights legislation. Arisa will spend her junior year studying abroad in Japan. As I mentioned she is one of our Mitsubishi Electric Foundation Congressional interns. Please join me in welcoming --

### **Arisa Nakamori:**

I really appreciate the opportunity of being chosen to participate in this panel to offer a few comments about higher education and employment. As I listened to the first two of the speakers, I will be giving a little bit of feedback about what they had to say and about SSI. My personal experience with SSI was that my father passed away three years ago and we received some of his death benefits when I was 17 and 18. I was not dependent on SSI because my parents, especially my mother, was Japanese American and while I did depend on it because my mother was a single parent with very low income and we had to depend on that for life, I began to depend on it a great deal for funding my college education and it was a strong support for my tuition and life assistance while I was in college. I am also dependent on vocational rehabilitation. And they had set the standard for providing resources for students in the college. One of the problems was that they did not provide assistance for housing and only for tuition -- my VR counselor did not provide assistance that other counselors did provide. I had hoped that vocational rehabilitation counselors would provide standardized benefits for students in secondary education.

In particular, SSI is not always dependable as a source of income. A point that was also made that -- a point that Dr. -- made was that he had already mentioned that VR does provide support for students. And I think that VR actually needs to provide greater support for students. And I like the idea about on campus research for providing data and providing support for university students and post secondary students. One of the things that -- one of the problems was that my parents, even though they were Americans -- being immigrants to the United States, did not have a very good concept of college education for students with disabilities. They in fact did not know what to do. I experienced a great deal of frustration when I asked my teachers for help. I had to be very aggressive in getting that assistance. I needed assistance from a disability counselor to get information about the resources available for students. I couldn't just go to the internet and get assistance as others might have been able to. I needed assistance to find out what disability rights I had because my parents didn't know what I could get in the college and university setting. They didn't know much about those resources and how VR could support students. Financial assistance would be -- could be a very great assistance to me as I made my decision to go to college

-- could have been of assistance. I depended a great deal on the Vocational Rehabilitation bill that was only willing to provide tuition for public schools. They did not for private universities. I had to make the decision to attend a public university. I wish I had the choice between the two different kinds of universities. I had a number of different experiences to be able to make the comparison between private and public universities. Private universities tend to be more focused on students and have better resources available to their students and smaller classroom sizes as well. At a public university where I go there are classrooms as large as 300 students and I was unable to meet with the teachers. When I, as a deaf person, needed help with classroom needs, faculty were not willing to accommodate me and adjust their office hours for me to meet with them and often times during their office hours they would have lines of students out the door and I had to be unusually aggressive in meeting with the students. I had to be very assertive in getting a tutor for myself. This was especially problematic for me as a nonnative speaker of English so those were very important opportunities for me. I needed to have tutors in order to keep up with other students in the classroom at the University of Davis where those services weren't provided. I had to talk regularly with my coordinator even for the privilege of interpreting services.

About Dr. West's comments. I like the idea of getting grants for universities to provide greater opportunities for students with disabilities to attend post secondary. I can talk more later about that. I have forgotten a great deal of what she said. I can talk more later on that. I'm just a little nervous.

(Applause).

**Andy Imparato:**

So I am going to introduce the next reactor and then we will open it up to questions. Thank you very much for your comments and you know, we selected Arisa and Stacey to react in part because they are two of our current interns who are both very mature and very directed -- a lot more mature and directed than I was at their age. I recognize they may not be a representative sampling of college students with disabilities. We knew they would have something to say. Stacey is a student in North Carolina majoring in political science with a minor in legal studies. She is very active with the National Lead -- currently serving as vice president and founder of the North Carolina Youth Leadership Network. She's also a member of the North Carolina Statewide Independent Living Counsel which appoints a bid to the governor of North Carolina. She's passionate about disability rights and hopes to follow in the footsteps of activists before her. She is interning with Tom Harkin of Iowa. Please join me in welcoming Stacey.

**Stacey Millbern:**

I guess I can't hide behind the wall anymore. Thank you for having us. Can you hear me? I have to be careful because if not I will be breathing into the mic. Thank you for having us. I was telling Arisa earlier that often times professionals are seen

as experts and the youth voice isn't included and often times we are the ones with experience, so we need to be at the table.

(Applause).

First of all I wanted my first comment to be about what do we view youth with disabilities to be because I think we kind of often tend to think of young people just as these people that are very mainstream and have parents willing to invest everything. The truth is children with disabilities are in group homes or often times homeless. It's often that we decide to go on a rant but I think a will the of times -- we have conferences geared toward youth or forums and this feels odd because you end up shrinking the ones with the most experience. The youth never get the experience because they are never able to get their foot in the door. I think that kind of really plays a hand in higher education as well because it's those extracurricular activities that prepare you for life and a job.

They mentioned culture a lot and I thought that was very interesting because I know as a person with a disability how difficult it is to kind of always put on a face or feel like you are not really welcome. I think it's more than accommodations but sort of a competency about disabilities. When you are welcomed it's the levels of retention that are going to be a lot higher. I think that really plays the part with young people understanding their history. You like how I turn everything into the disability history. I think a lot of young people grow up with this kind of -- we are taught not to associate with other young people with disabilities because we want, we need to overcome our disability and be that one individual and go for the goal. The best people -- are older people with disabilities are the best people to learn from because they have the experiences that we are going to have. That was another part.

I also think a big issue for the community whether we are talking about policy or activism or whatever, we tend to look at things one dimensionally. Like we say this is going to solve employment. You mentioned earlier but not really discussing education as well as they could have. I think that happens in all of the factions. If we hear talking about education we need to be talking about transportation, personal assistant services or whatever because it's not just like a one path sort of thing to employ them. I think we can finish off that faction and really work together or things aren't really going to change. I want to be a positive person and they are. I really like that you mentioned high expectations because that is so huge. We need to expect more from our young people because that's the only way they will succeed. Happy belated ADA day. Thank you for having us.

## Question and Answer

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you Stacey. So I think what I'm going to do is -- I'm not sure can we get that

light turned off -- Is that doable? This overhead light. If we can't it's okay, I can deal with it. I don't want to block the cart.

So we are going to open it up for questions now from the audience. We have about 15 minutes for Q and A. What I am going to do is ask you to speak your question as loud as you can and I will repeat it into the microphone. That's the most efficient way. I am trying to get the projector off if we can. If you raise your hand we are happy to call on you. Does anybody have a question?

**Audience Member:**  
(Inaudible)

**Andy Imparato:**  
Since I'm going to be repeating your comment I am going to interrupt and try to echo it. This is more of a comment than a question. The questioner is saying he's been around forever that he was saying something about what George and Jane said in particular.

Okay. So the comment is that there was a reference to the fact that the federal focus on higher ed for students with disabilities began with a provision in the Higher Ed Act in 1999 and the commenter is mentioning that there were 1984 provisions in the special education law that talked about higher education for students. So the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education did fund about 20 model higher education demonstration programs for about ten years following those 1984 provisions.

The commenter is mentioning that the funding dried up in 1995 because of a decision -- an administration decision and not a legislative session. As a result, some of the progress that had been made over the ten years wasn't allowed to continue. The commenter wants the recommendations from the presenters focused on the Workforce Act and the Higher Ed Act and the commenter is saying don't forget the ADA act for things that are impacting higher ed.

Jane wants to respond and I see another hand in the audience.

**Jane West:**  
Thank you for that contribution. You are of course correct. I think that the thing that I have become aware of as I have been increasingly been involved in this new position in with the mainstream higher education world is that disability is not on the radar screen. It is on the radar screen. If you go over to the Office of Post Secondary Education you know it's not there. If you talk to the Higher Education Association, of which there were many in this town, you know it's sort of like oh yeah they can sue me under the ADA. You know there's not the sort of consciousness about it that there is for low income students and for other groups of students who don't have access. So I really think that is important to

have specialized support programs. But just like the impact of having No Child Left Behind include students with disabilities, I want to see the same impact in the higher education community of including students with disabilities. And I think it's evolutionary, but I kind of think that's where we are. You know we still need ideas obviously. But No Child Left Behind has addressed that issue of expectations I think in a really significant way. The leaders of principals of high schools and elementary schools and middle schools are more concerned about the learning of people with disabilities than they were before because they are accountable for it. That's the analogy I am thinking about. Thank you for that clarification you are correct.

**Andy Imparato:**

I want to encourage the questioners and commenters to try to be as brief as you can because we have very limited time and I want to move it around. Sally Roads in the back.

**Sally Roads:**

Sally Roads, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. My comment is on the first comment. We all need to think about and use what we have and enlarge and expand and go to scale. What we tend to do is we use discretionary money to demonstrate projects for two to five years once we get going we move onto the next wave of something new to do. I represent -- do you want to repeat that.

**Andy Imparato:**

The commenter is Sally Roads. -- It's Transition

**Audience Member:**

What's the name again.

**Andy Imparato:**

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. She's kind of amplifying one of the comments that George made around the fact that we do need to build on what we have and what we know. She's pointing out a problem that's kind of endemic on public policy. We fund demonstrations for three to five years and then we dump them. We don't fund things long enough to get the kind of outcomes that lead to the system change that we want. The program I work with now exposes high school youth with disabilities to high-tech careers and science technology in engineering and math and encourages them to go into post secondary education. The program in Colorado -- is they give you an example of the success of the high school high-tech student in Colorado 94 matriculate to post secondary education.

**Panelist:**

One example of Sally's point is in the high school high-tech program they are able to get pretty significant outcomes. That program is one of the few that's been

funded long enough.

**Panelist:**

Money has just been cut off.

**Panelist:**

She's also been saying that it's been successful in states like Colorado where they have a 94% success rate of moving onto post secondary. Good programs are being cut off without any clear reason or agenda coming from the government. Is that your point?

**Andy Imparato:**

I am trying to keep it brief. Before that question I saw this hand up.

**Brenda Williams:**

My name is Brenda I'm a doctoral student at George Washington. My dissertation is on college students with disabilities and employment after graduation.

**Andy Imparato:**

This is from Brenda Williams who is a graduate student who is writing a dissertation on college students with disabilities and employment after graduation. You should be on the panel.

**Brenda Williams:**

I want to be next time.

**Andy Imparato:**

Keep it brief because you have to go write a dissertation.

**Brenda Williams:**

My point is as scholars we need to get out of our comfort levels with our own practitioner conferences and we need to attend the other mainstream higher ed conferences -- for example, AIR, 185 Page Program. Of 4,000 people I was the only one presenting on disability and employment.

**Andy Imparato:**

So the comment is that the few people who kind of get this issue within higher ed need to move out of their comfort zones and get involved with other people and specialized audiences and go to the higher education conferences that this strong message is --

**Panelist:**

Association on Institutional Research.

**Andy Imparato:**

AIR is an example of lots of acronyms for conferences that are generic mainstream conferences for associations for institutional research. There was a comment here in the front...

**Abdul:**

My name is Abdul. I am deaf and I'm from Saudi Arabia. I want to thank the American Association, the United States for helping me succeed. Christine Will, who is from George Washington University, has been instrumental when I was a GW student studying English. She provided wonderful interpreters to allow me to succeed and graduate from GW in political science. I want to thank Arisa, who is a deaf person like myself, and wanted to ask her whether she considers herself deaf or disabled?

**Arisa Nakamori:**

I am deaf and I feel part of the deaf community and have that as an identity.

**Andy Imparato:**

So Arisa that may have been intentional on your part. Do you want to address the second part of his question do you consider yourself disabled or whether you are comfortable with that identity?

**Arisa Nakamori:**

It's true sometimes I feel disabled but particularly in the hearing community where I'm the only person in a hearing group. I feel disabled and limited. Where in the deaf community I'm able to socialize much easier and don't feel alone so that's when I don't feel disabled.

**Andy Imparato:**

And Stacey wanted to add some comment on that.

**Stacey Millbern:**

So when I heard that question because that's something my friends talk about every single day, I think that's something that really needs to change in our community where disabled is seen as an identity and not as a limitation so I'm glad that Arisa spoke.

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you Stacey. I saw some other hands up. -- Do you want to use the mic since you are close to the front?

**Audience Member:**

Thank you. My question is to our two interns. A little plug for Mitsubishi America Foundation that sponsors the program with AAPD. I would like to ask you very simply what have you learned here in Washington DC, the capitol of all these acronyms? What have you learned here that you can take back with you to your

universities and use for your own personal advancement? We want you to be advocates to promote greater awareness among your peers and at the universities and schools that you are in.

**Andy Imparato:**

Who wants to go first?

**Arisa Nakamori:**

I have learned a lot about the disabled community and the importance of education for people with disabilities. I didn't know much about that. I learned about the importance of speaking up and not depending on counselors after interpreters. That is my personal challenge to go directly to the faculty, and that way I have learned a great deal.

**Stacey Millbern:**

I think for myself I kind of learned more about career goals and that sort of thing. Working on the Hill was really interesting because I kind of realized that policy, a lot of times we look for policy to be this end all solution, but it's more that the problem is so complex or the issues are so complex. The issue of seeing what's trying to work and working together again and a continuous process. When you look at it like that it's the importance of working together and collaborating that is very important -- if that makes sense.

**Andy Imparato:**

I see Susanne is holding her hand up. I see two other hands. We are about out of time. What I'm going to do is call on Susanne and then if there's time I am going to get to as many as we can.

**Susanne Bruyère:**

My question is to these two young scholars. What advice did you get about the benefits of SSI or SSDI that you might be using? What advice did you get from folks about how that will be effected by employment after school?

**Andy Imparato:**

Who wants to answer?

**Stacey Millbern:**

I do. So the National Youth Leadership Network, which I'm a part of, used to be funded by the Social Security Administration. All of these other federal agencies -- So saying that and knowing that I didn't know anything about any kind of work incentives until I started working with Senator Harkin's office on these incentives is like a huge wow thing. If I didn't know anything about these incentives there's no way other people do so. I think a will the ones at the top need to bring it down to other people and working on future incentives. Thank you.

**Dave:**

My name is Dave -- Research for Independent Living. What we are hearing by age 38 is you will have changed jobs 11-14 times and in the future a lot of job changes. The other thing you hear if you get a person with a disability a job is you train them to do that job that works. General education in a global free market economy is tough and my question is, is the job change and, you know, the participation in this global free market a barrier for people with disabilities? And if they are, is there anything we can do about it?

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you for that question.

Just a quick comment on that. I think it's a challenge for everyone in our society. It's a challenge for people teaching kindergarten for the whole generation coming up. I think you add a set of challenges to that generic challenge for people with disabilities because of the access challenge about getting employment training and support and all the disability related services that they need. So yes it's a challenge. I think our whole school system is really reeling from this. It's really the business community that has raised this. The business leaders I was with at a meeting with the head of the Chamber of Commerce yesterday, the number one priority across the country is improving the education system. The people that come to them in the workforce are not prepared for the kind of work they need to do today. It's huge.

We had one other question. Do any of you want to say anything in the time we've got?

**Panelist:**

I do think that one of the results of the global economy is change and organization in terms of rapid growth and also rapid contraction when things change. I think that it is going to make it tougher on folks with disabilities. Data now shows that when layoffs have started they disproportionately -- I think we are going to have to address that.

**Panelist:**

I think your point emphasizes the importance of post secondary education. It's becoming more and more important to get that education and getting people with disabilities is going to be critical.

**Andy Imparato:**

We have one final comment. You can come up or you can come up. Is it a comment or a question?

**Diana Martinez:**

Hi. I'm Diana Martinez. I am the director of the Heath Resource Center at the

George Washington Center. My question to you, and I think it backs on a comment and the question regarding how did you learn about SSI. Frequently part of my job is to answer the phone and I speak directly to parents and I speak directly to students who are now at this point -- at this juncture and they have no clue. It's like, here I am now what do I do? Where is the money?

I also get a call or two from folks who are looking to graduate -- the folks that are complaining because the funds are running out. They are not able to live. They might be able to have a little tuition, but they don't have enough for the rest of their life. That's living after going out on dates and groceries and getting a bus from here to there. One of the things that we created was a counselors tool kit so the counselors would get the message. Did you get that message when you were in school? How can we start in the beginning to set up those higher expectations providing the family and the students. I was impressed with how you said you were aggressive as opposed to today as an advocate. I am seeing that there's a need for aggression to get your needs met. How can we bring that message to kids in high school and to the parents trying to support them and to the faculty in the higher education who are going to be receiving them? Where do we get that line of communication set up?

**Stacey Millbern:**

I think that's really where the whole mentorship key comes in. It sounds kind of abstract. People talking together is how information gets passed along. I think also just informing students at a younger age. Honestly until the end of my 11th grade year I had no idea what SSI was and I'm pretty much at the top of the VR waiting list or whatever you call it. It's just that kind of not having any idea from an earlier age is ridiculous. I don't think I really said anything. Arisa?

**Arisa Nakamori:**

To be honest with you I didn't know anything about SSI until my senior year in high school when friends told me that I had a single parent so I could get Social Security support. I think it's important for school counselors or any kind of counselors to be direct and talk to us about SSI for disabled people.

**Andy Imparato:**

I know that there are other questions and comments? Did you want to say something?

**Arisa Nakamori:**

I wanted to add something important about education. At the University of California at Davis, and I went to the University of California at Berkeley as an exchange student program participant, I wanted to take a Chinese course at UC Berkeley and I felt discriminated against because -- but they claim that I did not qualify under ADA accommodation requirements. I had traditionally taken foreign language courses with an oral interpreter. I asked the University of California

Berkeley to accommodate me by allowing me to take a written Chinese language course rather than a spoken Chinese course. I had previously taken Japanese and Korean courses in that fashion and had been provided accommodations. Because of the fact that I could not hear I benefit from a written course. Yet the University of Berkeley refused to provide me an interpreter for the Chinese course because they claim that there was no ability for the tonal subtleties to be submitted through an interpreter. I claimed under the section 504 that I should be accommodated at the University of California Berkeley yet they claimed that it was not a reasonable accommodation and I would like to have the accommodation to be able to participate in classes with other students.

**Andy Imparato:**

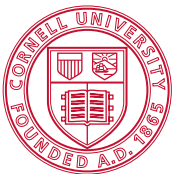
Thank you Dr. West advice on that advice to sue them.

**Arisa Nakamori:**

I can't sue under 504 because they say that the university has a right to provide reasonable accommodations and that this was not a reasonable accommodation.

**Andy Imparato:**

Thank you for clarifying that. I think her comment was somewhat of a joke, but there's also some seriousness to it. That's a long conversation we don't have time for. I want to thank everybody for being here and encourage you to come back. If you know any college students with disabilities please encourage them to apply to the AAPD internship program. You can get the information on our website at AAPD.com. Thank you.



Cornell University

For more information about the Rehabilitation  
Research and Training Center on Employment  
Policy for Persons with Disabilities contact:

Susanne M. Bruyére  
Employment and Disability Institute  
Cornell University  
201 ILR Extension Building  
Ithaca, New York 14853-3901

Tel	607.255.7727
Fax	607.255.2763
TTY	607.255.2891
Email	<a href="mailto:smb23@cornell.edu">smb23@cornell.edu</a>
Web	<a href="http://www.edi.cornell.edu">www.edi.cornell.edu</a>