



JFK Partners

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

University of Colorado School of Medicine
JFK Partners / Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry
Promoting Families, Health and Development

13121 E. 17th Ave., C234
Aurora, CO 80045
Phone: 303-724-5266
Fax: 303-724-7664
www.JFKPartners.org

SB 16-196 Colorado Inclusive Higher Education Pilot Program

Interim Report through 2020

Cordelia Robinson Rosenberg, Ph.D., RN
JFK Partners
Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry
University of Colorado School of Medicine
cordelia.rosenberg@cuanschutz.edu

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SB 16-196 Inclusive Higher Education Pilot Program Annual Report

Background

Senate Bill 16-196 created a program to establish inclusive higher education Pilot programs at the University of Northern Colorado, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Arapahoe Community College, for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

SB 16-196 came about through the collaborative efforts of parents of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and other committed stakeholders who formed a nonprofit, IN! Colorado Initiative for Inclusive Higher Education. The leadership of IN! was inspired by a movement across the country to create opportunities in institutions of higher education (IHE), both two and four-year programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience and gain from inclusive higher education programs.

The creation of such higher education opportunities nationally was stimulated by the Federal 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act. Under this Act, Congress appropriated \$10.6 million toward creating model programs for states to use to foster the development of such efforts. Under this funding, the Transition Post-Secondary Education Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID), 27 IHE received funding for “creating, expanding or enhancing high quality inclusive higher education experiences to support positive outcomes for individuals with I/DD.”¹ Grants were awarded again in 2015 to 25 IHE to implement the TPSID program: (<https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/TC%20reports%20data%20summary%20web%20F.pdf>).

Under the TPSID program Congress also appropriated funding for a National Coordinating Center to support the TPSID projects. This center, Think College, became a resource for the IN! families as they began their pursuit of inclusive postsecondary opportunities in Colorado. The Think College materials, and reports and parent visits to IHE around the country helped IN! develop a vision of post-secondary education opportunities including college living experiences for Colorado.

The IN! group, with active participation from the state Arc chapter and JFK Partners, CU School of Medicine, Colorado’s University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service and with the encouragement of Sen. Bill Cadman, Senate President at the time, began to pursue state of Colorado funding to initiate “pilot programs” at three Colorado IHE. As one of the first steps in planning for the legislation several people from the IN! board met with Kachina Weaver from the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) to determine whether the CDHE could be the home agency if a bill was passed. This location was agreed to and legislation was pursued. Carl Einhaus was charged with serving as the liaison person between CDHE and the IN! consortium which includes the three Pilots, the evaluator and IN!.

SB 16-196 was signed into law by Governor Hickenlooper on June 6, 2016.
http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2016a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont/B364570ACA74A58087257F770055BF34?Open&file=196_enr.pdf

¹ Colorado State University received one of these grants, but the program has not met the needs of the families who started IN! as the students admitted under the program at CSU need to meet the standard admission requirements. SB196 Pilot students do not need to meet requirements of standardized tests for admission.

The Act included the following provisions:

- State funds were provided to three “Pilot” IHE, Arapahoe Community College, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and University of Northern Colorado, for each school to initiate and develop an inclusive higher education program for students with Intellectual Disabilities.
- Funding for the program from the legislation was intended to continue for five years ending with the 2020-2021 academic year.
- JFK partners was expected to provide a written evaluation report to CDHE yearly.
- The goal was to grow to a total of 40 students served in this program at each institution over four years.
- Annual funding of \$75,000 goes to each of the IHE for the “Pilot” program and \$25,000 goes to the University of Colorado School of Medicine, JFK Partners to evaluate the Program and produce an annual report.

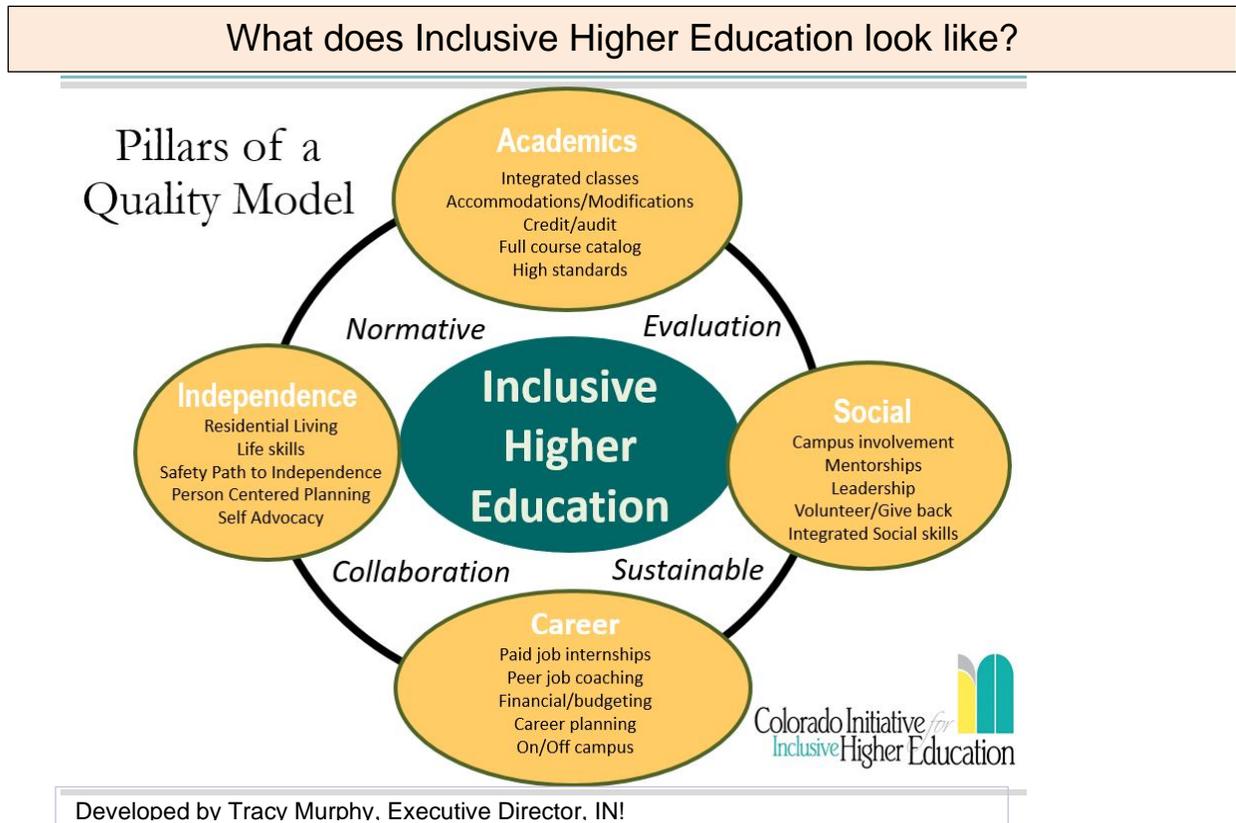
SB 16-196 specified requirements for the Pilots which included:

- (a) An institutional assessment to determine training needs, technical assistance, and other capacity needed to provide a higher education program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- (b) Identification of state and institution regulations, policies, and practices that foster or impede inclusive higher education;
- (c) Offer programming and necessary supports for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that allow a student to take for credit, or, to, audit a minimum of two on-campus undergraduate courses each semester in his or her chosen area of interest, and to take a course each semester that is designed to meet the needs of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, resulting upon completion in the award of a certificate from the institution;
- (d) To the greatest extent possible, integrate students socially and academically into the normative offerings of the institution and give the students all of the rights and responsibilities of typically matriculating students;
- (e) Include peer mentoring;
- (f) Coordinate with available vocational rehabilitation supports through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- (g) Prepare students for gainful competitive employment;
- (h) Admissions standards that do not require a student to participate in a curriculum-based, achievement college entrance exam that is administered nationwide;
- (i) Determine whether the program is sustainable and if so, to become a certified transition program, as defined in the "Higher Education Opportunity Act", pub. L. 110-315, https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/registrar/docs/higher_education_opportunity_act_of_2008.pdf giving students in the program access to federal financial aid opportunities; and
- (j) Require the institutions of higher education to develop a five-year plan for sustainability, including enrollment projections for the inclusive higher education program.

Evaluation Approach

The Evaluation of SB 16-196 involves the active participation of multiple stakeholders at the three pilot schools and IN! as a private nonprofit group of committed stakeholders. The Evaluation Plan includes four strategies that the three Pilots and IN! have adopted in collaboration with JFK Partners. This interim report covers the third year of operation of the program, academic year 19-20. It also includes information regarding the students admitted for AY 20-21.

Figure 1 depicts the elements or pillars of a quality model of Inclusive Higher Education: academics, social skills, career experiences and independence in the skills of daily living.



Evaluation Strategy 1. Review of Program Standards.

The intent of the legislation was that the Pilots were to use the Inclusive Higher Education, Think College program standards as SB 16-196 Pilot program standards as applicable. Each of the Pilot schools reviewed the Think College (best practice standards) and assessed their status with respect to the standards and benchmarks and set goals where they wanted to improve their standing. Standards were formally reviewed in previous years and updated in the fall of 2020.

The Consortium plans to review these revised standards in the Spring of 2021 and benchmark their program against the standards. Each school will then develop a report documenting their performance against the standards and develop plans for program improvement in areas not in compliance with the revised standards.

Evaluation Strategy 2. Documentation of Stakeholder Satisfaction with Pilots.

The format for collecting stakeholder information was revised for the AY 18-19. Rather than paper and emails forms, the questions for each stakeholder group; students, parents, faculty and peer mentors were sent electronically through Survey Monkey. These surveys were made available to each school and the school then sent the requests to each individual in each stakeholder group. Also, while the questions remained consistent a quantitative rating request with a rating from 1 to 10 was added. The response rate with Survey Monkey was somewhat improved but there is still room for improvement. The schools and the evaluator have found the combination of qualitative and quantitative responses helpful. Each IHE receives the results from their stakeholders. If there is identifying information, it is deleted. The response rate for spring 2020 was greatly reduced presumably due to the impacts of COVID. We are currently receiving feedback for fall 2020. Again, COVID is having an impact on response rate. We will be summarizing this data over the next couple of months to incorporate into the comprehensive report projected for June 2021.

Table 1 Stakeholders Questions

| Questions to Students |
|--|
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the help you received in selecting classes to take |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the help you received in understanding class assignments |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the help you received in keeping your schedule; getting to class on time |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the help you received with your homework |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with how professors treat you in class |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with how other students accept you in class |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the help you have received in identifying career goals? What kind of work you want to do? |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with where you are living if on campus |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the progress you have made in daily living skills (laundry, self-care, cleaning your room, managing your money, self-advocacy, making good decisions) |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the amount of contact you have with other students at your school? |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the progress you have made in speaking up for yourself? |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you in general with your experiences this past semester? |
| Questions to Parents |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the orientation you and your student received |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the Academic Advising your student has received |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the social opportunities your student have had |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with your student's campus living arrangements (if applicable) |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with the career opportunities your student have had (all types) |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with your student's growth in independence |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with your student's growth in self-advocacy skills |
| 1 to 10 How satisfied are you with your student's overall experience |
| Questions Posed to Faculty |
| What is the name of the class where you have had a Pilot student? |
| How many Pilot students do you have in class? |
| What has been your previous experience if any with students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities? |
| How, if at all, have you adjusted your class to accommodate the Pilot student(s)? |

| |
|--|
| Have the modifications or adaptations made for the student by the Pilot staff seemed appropriate? |
| Are there things that need to be done to help you as a professor to support the Pilot students? |
| Do you feel other students in the class are accepting of the Pilot students in your class? |
| Do you have any reservations about having Pilot students in future classes? If so, what are they? |
| What might be done to address them? |
| Has your perception of students with Developmental Disabilities changed after having a Pilot student in your class? How so? |
| What recommendations do you have for the Pilot going forward? |
| Any additional considerations regarding the Pilot? |
| On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with the level of communication from the Pilot? |
| On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with this experience as a whole, with 10 being the most satisfied. |
| Questions Posed to Peer Mentors |
| Please tell me a little about yourself. How many years have you attended college? What is your major? How did you learn about the program? |
| What role are you playing, i.e. peer mentor, tutor, other? |
| What preparation has the inclusive program at your school provided for you for this role? |
| What preparation did you receive for your role? Do you feel the preparation is adequate? Is there more preparation you would like? |
| Have you had previous experience in this kind of role? If so where and when? |
| Are you receiving course credit or payment for your role? How important is credit or payment for you to do this work? |
| What has been a benefit for you for doing this work? Will you continue to do so next year? |
| Why are you serving in this role? |
| Have there been any surprises for you in your work with the Pilot students? |
| Are there any recommendations you have to improve your experience? The Pilot itself? |
| On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with the preparation you received for this experience, with 10 being the most satisfied. |
| On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with this experience as a whole, with 10 being the most satisfied. |

Evaluation Strategy 3: Establish a Cross Pilot database.

Common data regarding characteristics of the students participating in the Pilot is collected. The Think College National Coordinating Center (NCC) Annual Report (<http://www.thinkcollege.net>) was used to identify key variables to be documented about the students. NCC reports were used to guide the design of a cross site database. Two data forms are used. One is the Enrollment form, which is collected when the student first enrolls, the second form is used each semester and it includes information about the courses taken, job opportunities and participation in social events. The Pilots are encouraged to complete the forms with the student. In addition to information about the students, data was collected regarding the activities in which they participate, and supports they receive. In order to maintain confidentiality of the data set, each IHE assigns a unique ID to each student and maintains that ID in their records so that they can track their students longitudinally. As of the fall of 2020 there are 76 students enrolled across three schools. For the fall of 2019 semester the information collected on the enrollment forms was expanded to include more information about supports students and families receive. Table 5 summarizes some of the characteristics of students collected on the Enrollment form.

Table 2. Student Characteristics from the Five Cohorts of Students

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 40 |
| Female | 36 |
| Race | |
| White | 60 |
| Black | 5 |
| Asian | 8 |
| Hispanic | 8 |
| Age Range | 18 yrs – 35 yrs |
| Disability | |
| Autism Spectrum Disorder | 22 |
| Down Syndrome | 11 |
| Intellectual Disability | 33 |
| Speech/Language Impairment | 9 |
| Living Situation | |
| With Family | 40 |
| Inclusive Housing on campus | 27 |
| Other | 8 |
| Enrollment with DVR | |
| Currently Applying | 12 |
| Yes | 38 |
| No | 25 |
| Not Eligible | 1 |
| No Response | 0 |
| IEP Status in High School | |
| Yes | 73 |
| High School Status | |
| Graduated with Diploma | 71 |
| Received a Certificate | 5 |
| Obtained a GED | 1 |
| Attended a Transition Program | 41 |
| Financial Supports | |
| CCB | 22 |
| SSI | 42 |
| Waiver | 25 |
| ABLE Account | 7 |
| Scholarship | 10 |
| Federal Financial Aid | 10 |
| Pell Grant | 9 |
| Colorado College Opportunity Fund (COF) | 26 |
| Money Earned | 14 |
| Other | 13 |

Enrollment Expectations.

Originally the Pilots were expected to admit 10 new students a year and to have 40 students enrolled at each Pilot by the fifth year, the 20-21 AY. As of fall 2020 the total enrollment across

the three pilots is 76 students, just a little over 50% of the target enrollment specified in the original planning. However, the current enrollment number may be appropriate given the current staffing and stage of development of the programs.

Evaluation Strategy 4: Consortium Meetings.

The primary focus for the Consortium during the 19-20 AY has been a negotiation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for codes unique to Inclusive Higher Education Program in Colorado to support a payment for Inclusive Higher Education Skills Training. This code has been approved and the schools are working to understand how each will make it available to their students. This work with DVR was prompted by the experience with students and families in the first three years. Based upon the varied experiences of different students regarding eligibility we reached out to DVR and began meetings to discuss what might be possible for more of our students.

Progress on Legislative Requirements

Obtain Comprehensive Transition and Post-Secondary Program Status. One of the expectations for the Pilots is that their institution receives Comprehensive Transition and Post-Secondary program status. While the Pilots can initiate this application, it requires approval from the administration of the IHE in order to submit the request to the US Department of Education. This status is beneficial as it may make some students eligible for federal aid for tuition. As of as of fall 2020 all three schools have been approved on CTP status.

Development of a Uniform Credential

Initially the Pilots thought that they collectively could develop a credential that would be available across the three Pilots and then could be applied to other IHE as they began to support Inclusive programs. However, during year 2 it became apparent that what was feasible for the community college and the four-year schools differed. In this regard ACC went forward and developed a 36-hour three-year credential that has been approved by the Community College System and therefore is available should any of the other community colleges elect to provide staffing to support inclusive higher education students.

The two four-year schools elected to join forces on specifying a 4-year 56-credit hour credential. As specified in the legislation these 56 hours will include 2 general education courses each semester for 4 years plus the special course. UCCS and UNC Goal have specified the standards for credentials, and they have been accepted by the respective University.

Financial Sustainability

The original projected enrollment was as noted a total of 30 students per school for the 18-19 AY, and 40 per school for AY 19-20 for the two four-year schools. ACC having defined a three-year credential is expected to have turnover so that they will have 30 students enrolled in any given year. However, it is conceivable that some students may take more than 3 years to earn their credential. The assumption made in the financial plan was that each pilot would charge a fee in place of tuition, but about comparable to tuition in order to be able to sustain the Pilots without state money by year 6. The sustainability plans were based upon the expected enrollment of 10 new students per year for a cumulative total of 40 students at four-year schools and 30 students at ACC. The budgeted funds were \$75,000 per pilot per year of State of Colorado funds plus \$25,000 per year from IN! for the two 4-year Pilots. The annual amount of funding (\$100,000 for 4-year schools, \$75,000 for community college) is not adequate for appropriate staffing of these programs. The experience of the first eight semesters, with less

than half of the originally projected number of students has demonstrated that each Pilot requires at least two full-time staff members to support the students and faculty, and consequently provide the Person-Centered Planning necessary to each student's success. Consequently, a bare minimum staffing is an academic advisor and a vocational advisor. In order to support the students in gaining confidence and independence in social skills and skills of daily living it is best to have a third FTE at the 4-year schools. Such a position at the Community College would also be useful in supporting social skills and independence. Additional demands for time perhaps .25 to .50 FTE comes from the administrative work that needs to be done for each program. Each of the schools are at different levels with respect to these minimum recommendations. They will be meeting throughout the spring 2021 to develop plans for sustained funding.

The experiences of the first three years indicates that the original financial sustainability model is not workable for several reasons: 1) enrollment of the projected number of students is not feasible especially during initial program development; 2) the amount of funding (\$100,000 or \$75,000) is not adequate to support the required number of staff necessary to support the core pillars of the program; 3) the special fees at UCCS and UNC are currently at the maximum amount that families can manage. However, the development of the fee for IHE approval by Vocational Rehabilitation is a very promising development for sustainability.

IN! Role in Development and Sustainability of the Pilots Under SB 16-196

The passage of SB 16-196 and the ongoing development of the Pilots needs to be credited in large measure to the vision and dedication of a group of committed parents and interested stakeholders who founded IN!. IN! is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has developed and matured over the past five years. It now has two staff members who are funded with a combination of grants and donated funds. IN! has sponsored an annual summer fundraiser that has been an occasion to celebrate the accomplishments of the students, IHE faculty and Pilot program faculty and staff. It is the staff and volunteers within IN! that makes the consortium possible and productive. Some of these highlights may be viewed at <https://inclusivehighered.org/>. It is hoped that once it is safe again to gather in groups this event will continue.

Recommendations for Year 5 Priority Work.

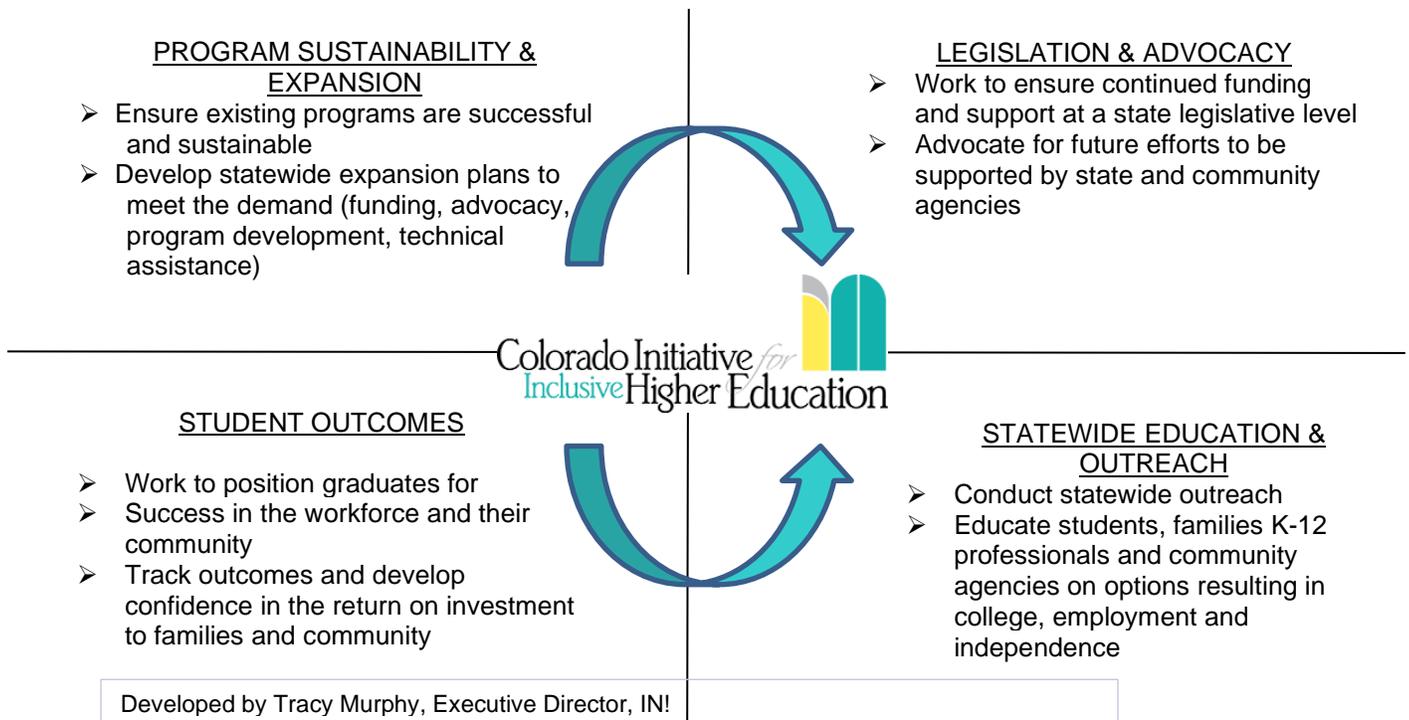
- Greater documentation of what worked, what didn't work.
- Have documentation, such as job descriptions to facilitate introduction of new personnel.
- Place priority on convening of advisory committees with particular attention to develop champions in the community.
- Develop a priority skills checklist for attending higher education successfully to assist families in preparing their students for college. Even students living at home need to become more independent in their skills of daily living.
- Offer advanced Pilot students' opportunities to mentor incoming students.
- Provide instructional support for Pilot peer to peer mentoring.
- Start a directory of classes and faculty where Pilot students have participated and with what success.
- Implement a systematic Individual Placement and Support model for development of job and career interests.
- Consider administration of a common tool across schools to systematically document personnel growth.

- Review and revise as necessary the fiscal sustainability model differentiating between community college and four-year institution models.

Figure 4 presents the roles that Colorado Initiative for Inclusive Higher Education (INI!) plays in the implementation of SB 16-196.

What is INI's role in Inclusive Higher Education in Colorado?

Mission: Work to create fully inclusive college opportunities in Colorado for students with intellectual disabilities to foster academic growth, social development, and career



Summary.

The SB 16-196 Pilot programs have completed the nine semesters of enrollment and have admitted their fifth cohort of students. Based upon that experience the programs have learned a number of things about how to develop and implement these programs. One of the major learnings has been how much effort is required to both develop program procedures and implement them at the same time. After taking on an ambitious number of new students in year 2, the Pilots scaled back new admissions in years 3 and 4. In year 5 COVID resulted in substantially reduced enrollments with some already enrolled students not returning for the AY 20-21 and with newly admitted students electing to defer enrollment. Also the schools are concerned about the level of enrollment for fall 2021, as students and families are expressing uncertainty about going forward. All three schools are planning on admissions for fall 2021.

The three Pilots have varied in how much they have successfully documented aspects of their policies and procedures with ACC having the most extensive documentation to date. All three Pilots need to place an emphasis on program documentation including documentation of the rationale for decisions going forward if the Pilots are to be replicable.

Stakeholders, including parents, students, faculty of academic courses and peer mentors with a few exceptions continue to be positive about their experience with the Pilots. However, it is not clear how well the survey approach serves to elicit productive feedback from stakeholder groups. Plans going forward will be to seek out more informative ways of soliciting feedback helpful to program improvement.

Collectively the Pilots have admitted a total of 76 students from throughout Colorado. A total of six students have completed their respective program as of August 2020. Three students from UCCS completed their respective certificates as of May 2020 and were recognized by the Chancellor in the on-line graduation ceremony. Three students completed program at ACC. One in the Spring earned her Nurse Aide Certificate and the Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate. Two other students completed program in the summer of 2020. One of the students completed the Certificate and the other an Associate of Science degree in communications. This student transferred to CSU with plans to complete a Bachelor's degree in Communications. <https://inclusivehighered.org/first-graduates/graduating-students.html>