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# UNH's Institute on Disability Aims to Increase Quality Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Quality higher education is important for all students, including students with disabilities. And that is exactly why the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire has worked for the past four years to positively impact access to and the quality of higher education for students with disabilities.

Equity and Excellence in Higher Education is a new U.S. Department of Education project, which will receive \$900,000 in total funding over three years. It is designed to address the interrelated problems of poor educational outcomes for college students with disabilities, while improving college faculty's knowledge about effective curriculum and instruction for diverse learners.

"Many students with disabilities are discouraged from applying to and attending college. And for those who do attend college, many underachieve or even drop out because of the lack of support and knowledge," according to Jan Nisbet, director of the institute.

A study of recent research and demonstration projects related to post-secondary education for students with disabilities reveals an emphasis on the accommodations and supports students with disabilities require in order to be successful in college, but there is little focus on how the methods of curriculum and instruction in college classes impact academic success.

Equity and Excellence will develop new products and provide training opportunities using an evidence-based

model of professional development in both New Hampshire and Massachusetts, partnering with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts in Boston to offer training to college faculty and administrators.

The project will establish an advisory board consisting of college students and graduates who experience disabilities, faculty from a variety of academic and technical areas, disability support coordinators and other support personnel, and key administrators. Members will help direct effective curriculum design, research-to-practice technical assistance, and student-specific technical assistance for students with learning challenges.

The Institute on Disability's mission is to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities into their communities. For more information, visit the institute's Web site at [www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu).

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