



# North Carolina Postsecondary Education Alliance

*Spring 2019 Quarterly Meeting Notes*

## NC Inclusive Postsecondary Education Alliance (IPSEA) Special Spring Seminar – Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 12pm-4pm

### Support for IPSE Grads: Successful Transition to Independence

*This is the first IPSEA seminar of this kind to focus on transitioning to independence after completing an IPSE.*

#### Updates and Developments Across NC

- **Deborah Zuver**, CIDD Education Consultant/NC PSEA Facilitator, and **McCafferty Kermon**, Advocacy Faculty, provided an update on the HEELS UP program at UNC. Program development is currently pending further discussion with university administrators. The HEELS 2 Transition program has been developed to address the needs and interests of transition-age individuals, and the HEELS Summer Intensive program focuses on activities of daily living, job research, and helping students to set and reach goals. This one-week program is held on the UNCCH campus and is designed for individuals ages 18-26. Ten students have been enrolled for this summer's program. For more information, visit [www.heels2transition.cidd.unc.edu/summer\\_intensive.aspx](http://www.heels2transition.cidd.unc.edu/summer_intensive.aspx).
- **Lisa Pluff**, Director of Operations, Beyond Academics at UNCG, reported they will have their largest graduating class this year with 17 students completing the program. They are hoping to recruit a similarly-sized class to begin the program next semester, and report a growing relationship with the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- **Anna Ward**, Director of the Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program at Appalachian State University, reported that two local students will join their program for a total of seven new students in 2019-2020.
- **LaToya Chancey**, of the NC DHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, announced that **Angelia Lightfoot**, has joined their team with a focus on PSE and assistive technology.
- In general, our meeting group discussed the importance of PSE program growth, data collection, and consideration of successful program models that exist in NC and other states. Discussion highlighted the importance of increasing systemic and legislative support through education and advocacy efforts, and raised the question of, *How do we grow PSE in the UNC system in general?*
- As a reminder, the **2019 Southeast Postsecondary Education Alliance (SEPSEA) Conference** will be held **May 16-17 at the College of Charleston**. Beyond Academics representatives will present. Ten Southern states are represented at this annual event.



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## **Where Are They Now?**

*IPSE graduates and their mentors shared stories and experiences related to transitions into adulthood after college.*



- **Nicole Vetter, UNCG Grad, and Lisa Pluff, Director of Operations, Beyond Academics, UNCG:**  
Nicole graduated from the Beyond Academics program at UNC Greensboro in May 2018. Since graduating, she has learned to be more independent with planning and stepwise problem solving. She shared that the most important skills she developed included self-advocacy and communicating with others. Nicole currently lives in Greensboro with a roommate who is another UNCG graduate. She works as a public safety officer at Guilford College, where she responds to calls, writes incident reports, and communicates with other responding officers. Prior to this position and while in school, she worked in a security position at the university sports and entertainment complex. Nicole enjoys hanging out with her friends and playing the drums, which she taught herself. Her natural supports include her family, friends, and roommate. In terms of words of advice, Nicole shared, *“If you have a disability, don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do something.”*
- **Kyle Douglas, WCU Grad, and Kelly Kelley, Director of University Participant Program (UP), WCU:**  
Kyle graduated from UP at Western Carolina University a year ago. He now works two jobs at a restaurant and a home improvement store and moved into an apartment with a roommate. For one of his current jobs, he was able to transition to this position after receiving some initial job coaching while in school. Kyle expressed that it was important to him to discuss his decision-making and to plan with his family. He has received support through monthly person-centered planning meetings and through the NC Waiver program. In terms of transition planning and implementation post-college, Kyle has worked to increase his hours of employment, coordinate transportation and job scheduling, follow a budget and use saving accounts, stay engaged in community activities with friends, and apply independent living skills.



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- **Emily and Mariah, ASU Grads, and Anna Ward of ASU:** Mariah (class of 2016) and Emily (class of 2017) are both graduates of the Scholars with Diverse Abilities program at Appalachian State University. They have known each other since high school and are currently roommates. Since college, they have returned to school to audit courses of interest to them. Emily enjoys theater and dance classes, and both she and Mariah have served in volunteer roles by dressing up as *Frozen* characters and performing for children at local events. They each hope to seek performance-related job opportunities, possibly through a local children's playhouse. Recently, Mariah started working at a restaurant. Emily works at a bakery and a veterinarian's office. They shared that they are able to navigate in their community through the local bus system. They also discussed the importance of work-life balance and managing stress.



- **Sally Sloop, parent advocate:** Sally spoke about her son's experience and how it was critical for her as a parent to support him by learning to let go. Her son, **Peter Sloop**, graduated from Bunker Hill Community College in Boston with Honors in General Studies in May 2018. He has lived outside of Boston for the past 17 years and has found success in a big city that is diverse and offers local public transportation. While in high school, he advocated for himself to earn a diploma and go to college. After struggling with a job coach, Peter ended up finding his own job where he worked for 8 years after initially being hired in a contracted position. He has been at his current job for 5 years and completed his AA degree with the support of tuition incentives offered by his job, and has found it helpful to have tutoring assistance for school and budgeting. Peter is described as a hard worker who has gone the extra mile to seek out opportunities. He has lived with a roommate in the past and has since transitioned to living on his own. Currently, he travels throughout the country on his own, participates in bowling, sings in his church choir, goes to concerts with friends, and enjoys being an uncle.



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## **Informal Supports: New Options and Tools**

*Barbara Leach and Scott Secor reviewed tools and opportunities for partnering with IPSE staff for transitioning to a full life in the community.*



**Barbara Leach, the UNC School of Social Work**, spoke about *Tools for Charting the Life Course* and emphasized that it is never too early to help an individual plan for a good life now and in the future. She highlighted a series of tools for Charting the Life course developed by Michelle Reynolds at the University of Missouri, Kansas City to help families consider important life domains and to think through the question of *What is my family member needing now?* Tools have been developed to help families think through adaptive skills, social networks, and alternatives to guardianship among other topics. For more information on these tools, visit [www.lifecoursetools.com/](http://www.lifecoursetools.com/). A national conference on applying these tools, *Charting the Life Course Showcase*, is now held annually.

- **Scott Secor, First in Families**, directs *Lifetime Connections and Creating a Good Life*. First in Families provides family support dollars to many families across the state annually. The Lifetime Connections program provides education and resources focusing on future planning and the development of a natural support network with the goal of creating a good



life. Natural/free supports differ from formal/paid supports and include such critical components as supportive relationships, creation of a home, opportunities for giving back and contributing, opportunities for choice (including choices in daily life and broader choices related to guardianship), and financial stability. For more information <http://fifnc.org/programs/connections.html>.



Link to YouTube video, "Lifetime Connections Personal Networks:"  
<https://youtu.be/qEZBBKxJ2qY>



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## The Role of Parents: How They Support Continued Independence for Their Youth

- **Grace Francis, Assistant Professor of Special Education**, researches transition strategies and postsecondary education in her role at George Mason University. She joined remotely to share findings from recent study results. Important themes emerged from stakeholders in terms of common strategies for successful transition, which included: providing opportunities for supported decision-making, increasing self-advocacy, ensuring communication among key supporters, and lowering “safety nets” to increase learning opportunities for individuals. She also stressed the importance of role transitions for young adults who make the shift from dependents to advocates, and for parents/family members who make the shift from caregivers to advisors.

### **Grace shared the apps that can be helpful for transition-aged youth and adults:**

- GREENLIGHT: Budgeting and payment app that helps individuals stick to budgets ([www.greenlightcard.com](http://www.greenlightcard.com))
- BRIGHTNEST: Assists with independent living tasks and tips (<https://brightnest.com/mobile>)
- GLYMPSE: Limited phone tracking app with boundaries for tracking ([www.glympse.com](http://www.glympse.com))
- HABITICA: Promotes personal and shared goal setting in a game-like format (<https://habitica.com/static/front>)
- CIRCLEOF6: Allows you to select trusted people to whom you can reach out to through your phone or device as needed in a discrete way ([www.circleof6app.com](http://www.circleof6app.com))
- Alexa Dot (and similar devices): Provide convenience through voice activation that reduce dexterity demands and can be programmed to meet personal needs

## Using Data to Learn from Successes and Promote Sustainability

*Presenters discussed tracking the segue from IPSE to an independent life and existing options for doing so.*

- **Cate Weir, Director of the ThinkCollege National Coordinating Center**, presented on *How and Why to Collect Data on Your Graduates*. She discussed a specific tool for searching for college programs among the growing options that exist, which was created with feedback from past PSEA meeting attendees. She also highlighted the importance of collecting student outcome data to advocate for, evaluate, and publicize IPSE programs. Helpful data might focus on graduates’ employment, further education, independent living, and quality of life, with key time points for collecting data including





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program exit, the year following exit, and annually thereafter. Tips for collecting outcome data include providing pre-notification to graduates, creating familiarity, showing interest, providing incentives, staying in touch via social media and alumni activities, and plans for making contact. It is also important to emphasize the important role graduates play by completing surveys. Important audiences with whom to share data include students, families, college administration, legislators and policy makers, those involved in IPSE, and researchers. The TPSID is one brief follow-up survey that is administered annually to program graduates ([www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3495702/Annual](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3495702/Annual)).



- **LaToya Chancey**, of the NC DHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, presented on *I/DD Performance Outcomes*. She discussed the National Core Indicators, which is a standard set of nationally validated performance measures that 46 states use including NC. It assesses outcomes across areas such as employment, rights, service planning, community inclusion, choice, and health and safety, and highlights particular needs and barriers that exist. One specific tool discussed includes the Day and Employment Survey from the Institute for Community Inclusion, which collects data from state IDD agencies, VR, and community organizations related to day and employment services for individuals with DD, which also features data from the Social Security Administration, US Census, and US Department of Labor. The importance of sharing information, engaging in supported decision-making, and working toward community inclusion was highlighted.
- **Duncan Munn**, Legislative advisory; IPSE Board member, spoke on the topic of *Legislative Report Recommendations: Identifying Key Questions to Follow PSE Grads*. He discussed policy barriers to PSE programming, and stressed the importance of moving forward with advocacy for PSE, presenting outcome data for programs, and sharing databases between institutions. The meeting group discussed strategic planning and the potential to collect information among existing NC IPSE programs to compare what data is being gathered at each institution.

## **Next Meeting**

Please save the date for our Summer Quarterly PSEA meeting  
**Tuesday, July 30, 12 noon - 3 pm**

**Diana Cejas**, Assistant Professor of Neurology at the UNCCH and Neurologist at the CIDD will present on ***Healthcare Transitions and Implications for IPSE***

*The meeting will be held at the CIDD and a light lunch will be provided*

