

A White Paper on:

**The Career and Community Studies Program, an Inclusive
Post-Secondary Education Program for Oregon Students
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

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Career and Community Studies (CCS) Certificate Program

Executive Summary of the CCS and Program Impact

PSU received a five-year (2015-2020 + NCE 2021) grant of \$2.5 million from the USDE Office of Postsecondary Education to create an inclusive college and work certificate for students with intellectual disabilities. PSU is one of 44 universities funded to pioneer this model in the United States. PSU Faculty Senate approved the pre-baccalaureate Career & Community Studies Certificate (CCS) in 2016. We are a four-year *inclusive* college and employment program of study for students with intellectual disability. During the 2020-2021 academic year, CCS has been funded through a 1-year no cost extension.

Students enroll in 27 credits annually of PSU coursework using an individual learning plan to modify curricular, instructional and engagement that is co-developed by the instructor, the academic coordinator, and the student using the UDL framework. Students enroll in courses using a P/NP grading structure, thereby acquiring a minimum of 108 credits over 4 years. In the spring of 2020, the first CCS seniors graduated and participated in PSU and COE commencements. All five (100%) of CCS graduates are now employed in career-pathway fields, the ultimate goal of the USDOE TPSID programs. Currently, three cohorts of students (14) have graduated and our employment rate is 81%.

A percentage of costs associated with CCS are sustained through workload course release from the COE, SCH enrollment, and partnerships with community agencies providing employment services, executive functioning coaching and social engagement. These direct services are provided on the PSU campus for students through state disability funding including the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation and Oregon Developmental Disability Services. Other program components are sustained through student internships from: Social Work, Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, Secondary Dual Endorsement Program, and Inclusive Elementary Endorsement Program and the undergraduate Special Education Licensure program.

PSU Partnerships. CCS has established partnerships throughout PSU to sustain the inclusive program including: Disability Resource Center, PSU employers, University Residence Life, SHAC, SALP, PSU Library, Student Financial Services, Registrar's Office, Student Affairs and a multitude of university faculty and instructors from PSU departments offering undergraduate coursework. A key academic partner is University Studies (UNST) faculty and peer mentors given that CCS students actively engage in UNST FRINQ and SINQ courses.

External Partnerships include key state agencies and nonprofit organizations committed to supporting PSU in the provision of the CCS Certificate include state agencies (Department of Human Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Department of Education) as well as parent organizations (FACT Oregon) and a unique dual enrollment partnership with West Linn Wilsonville school district.

Impact of CCS on PSU Faculty, Instructors, Peer Mentors and PSU Student Body

From Fall 2016-Fall 2020, CCS students have enrolled in 893 SCHs of coursework including classes in:

- o University Studies (FRINQs and SINQs)
- o PSU undergraduate courses (e.g., writing, acting, environmental studies, sustainability, philosophy, health & nutrition, music, PE, history, international studies, film, English, public speaking, crime and justice, art)
- o COE/SPED coursework and seminars

We have examined the growth among Instructors, peer mentors and PSU classmates who have reported the benefits of including students with intellectual disabilities as instrumental in changing the culture of learning as well as enhancing instructional practices.

Instructors have reported ***increased use of Universal Design for Learning*** to transform instruction and practice for all students, ***positive impact on inclusive class culture*** and engagement among all PSU students. In addition, faculty and students have been ***engaged in scholarship*** associated with the CCS program.

As well, PSU faculty, staff and undergraduate and graduate students have ***engaged in learning internships impacting personal and professional career growth*** through the CCS program. Since 2017, we have partnered with the **School of Social Work, Rehabilitation Counseling and Curriculum & Instruction/Special Education** through a range of long-term Internships. Thus far we have trained:

- 6 BSW interns: 2880 hours over past 3 years
- 1 MSW Intern: 500 hours in past year
- 2 Rehabilitation Counseling Interns: 924 hours over past 2 years
- 28 Secondary Dual Endorsement: 8550 hours over past 5 years
- 8 Inclusive Elementary Education Program: 480 hours over past year

In addition, 38 PSU students have participated as peer navigators from diverse disciplines (pre-Education, Public Health, Speech and Hearing, Social Work, CLAS) by volunteering 1-2 hours per week to support social connections and build social networks with CCS students; thereby gaining valuable experiences engaging with diverse learners on campus.

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CCS Certificate Program is closely linked to the *mission* of PSU

(<https://www.pdx.edu/portland-state-university-mission>)

- CCS students compose a unique part of the PSU *diverse community of life-long learners*.
- CCS faculty and students participating in the CCS program contribute unique components of *creativity, knowledge and expertise* related to postsecondary teaching and learning.
- CCS Certificate Program provides unique opportunities for faculty and students, including *collaborative learning, innovative research, sustainability and community engagement*.
- Outcomes of the PSU CCS Certificate Program will *impact the growing national and global* movement toward increasing participation of students with diverse abilities in postsecondary education (www.thinkcollege.net).

Academic Accomplishments (2016-2021)

- Accreditation through Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Faculty Senate approval of the pre-baccalaureate Career & Community Studies Certificate (CCS)
- CCS approved as a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) allowing PSU Financial Aid to offer students Pell Grants and Student Economic Opportunity grants.
- First graduating class participated in COE Commencement Spring 2020

Course Enrollment (see [linked document for course snapshot](#))

- Enrollment in University Studies (UNST) Freshman Inquiry
 - All freshman CCS students are required to enroll in a Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) Course, with many continuing to take FRINQs during subsequent years
 - Many CCS students choose to continue to enroll in FRINQ courses during their sophomore/junior years.
 - **Between Fall 2016-Winter 2021, CCS students have enrolled 73 times in 17 unique FRINQs from 28 different FRINQ instructors.**
 - Several UNST instructors request student enrollment from CCS, and have now taught CCS students across multiple years.
 - **A wide array of PSU UNST peer mentors** have engaged twice-weekly with CCS students, learning to modify and individualize instruction, in addition to the full-class session with the faculty instructor.
- Enrollment in UNST Sophomore Inquiry
 - CCS students can enroll in Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) courses during sophomore-senior years
 - Since Fall 2016-Fall 2019, 13 CCS students completed 8 different SINQs from 12 different SINQ instructors.
 - CCS students attend the weekly SINQ peer mentor session (23 individual peer mentors).
- Faculty from PSU Undergraduate Departments
 - CCS students have chosen a wide array of undergraduate coursework aligned with their unique career interests.
 - Students have participated in courses across 16 departments: PE, Crime & Justice, ASL, Film, Theater Arts, Systems Sciences, Conflict Resolution, Philosophy, International Studies, Physics, Child & Family Studies, Special Education, Public Health Education, Music, History, and

Student Credit Hour Production

- 2016-2020: CCS students produced an average of 7.5 credit hours per term (range from 6-15 credit hours)
- Currently students have generated 1,455 SCH since 2016
- Beginning in Fall 2020 all students are **required to enroll in 9 credit hours per term (27 credit hours a year)** generating minimum of 108 credits over 4 years; thereby estimating 15 students will average 2916 credit hours over 4 years.

Faculty, Staff and Student Personal and Professional Growth

- **Workshops and Ongoing Coaching provided by CCS**
 - CCS staff have participated in workshops for UNST faculty and peer mentors focused on universal design for learning (UDL), strategies to promote equity and inclusion of students with diverse abilities, and designing and modifying academics to support unique learning needs.

- **Interdisciplinary PSU Fieldwork and Internship Sites at CCS**
 - School of Social Work Year-long Internships
 - 6 BSW interns (1 in 2017-18; 2 in 2018-19; 3 in 2019-2020)
 - 2 MSW Intern (2019-2020, 2020-2021)
 - Rehabilitation Counseling Year long Internship
 - 3 Rehabilitation Counseling Intern (2019-2021)
 - Curriculum & Instruction/Special Education 2-Year Field Experiences
 - 28 Secondary Dual Enrollment Program Graduate Students as Academic Coaches (2016-2020)
 - 8 Inclusive Elementary Enrollment Program (2019-2021)

- **PSU Students Serving as On- and Off-Campus Peer Navigators**
 - 38 PSU students have volunteered as peer navigators from diverse disciplines (pre-Education, Public Health, Speech and Hearing, Social Work, CLAS)
 - Peer navigators volunteer at least 1-2 hours per week supporting social connections and building social networks with CCS students
 - Peer navigators gain valuable experiences supporting and engaging with diverse learners on campus (see evaluation data below)
 - Some Peer Navigators have received course credit for participation

Impact and Outcomes of Academic Engagement

Throughout the last four years, the CCS faculty and staff have implemented both formative and summative evaluations of the program. This effort is two-fold, first, to ensure a strong and iterative design-based evaluation process during the development phases of the program. Second, and more recently, we have considered expanding an understanding of this unique approach by extending opportunities for research and scholarship. To date, some UNST faculty have undertaken collaborative scholarship associated with CCS. In addition, COE faculty are actively engaged in producing relevant and strategic research to promote and extend this inclusive model. Below, we share examples of how CCS has engaged the PSU community and promoted professional scholarship while continuing to support individual CCS student success. While the examples of student success are plentiful, we have limited this summary to how CCS is impacting research and scholarship among the broader PSU community.

UNST Faculty & Peer Mentors

Collaboration with CCS faculty, staff and CCS students changed instructional Practice

- “[I] was worried about iterative planning [involved in working with CCS student], but found that collaboration and the opportunities [the student] presented led to [my] best, most successful term.”

Including students with intellectual disabilities changed the culture of learning and enhanced learning for all

- “I find that I am most successful with holistic teaching and seeing holistic learning with my CCS Students.”
- “[CCS student] was so engaged, it was pretty easy and seamless (he participated in the top quartile of the class); his contributions were thoughtful and germane.”
- UNST instructor had concerns about the CCS student’s participation in the group projects that were planned. But, found out “it was kind of a non-issue. It worked out fine.” The student’s presence “didn’t make group work any worse as it is hard for many students at first”).
- Challenges among CCS students were similar to those encountered with any PSU student enrolled in FRINQs (e.g., participation in group projects, written assignments, etc.)

Experiences with CCS students valuable for faculty development.

- UNST instructors learned to ***accommodate and modify learning*** differences, e.g., adjusting reading levels, alternative writing projects - “[I] realized the student could dictate a response to the mentor.”
- Self-reflection in using ***clarifying prompts*** for the CCS student “[it] had an effect on [my] teaching and thinking about the use of prompts with *all* students and with other students with various needs.”

- **Embedding UDL into instruction** “in order to meet requirements of Universal Design for Learning, as an instructor, [I] continue to have to think about redesigning the class so it is accessible for everyone.”

Growth among Instructors, Peer Mentors and PSU classmates

- “I’ve been building skills and a toolkit and [using] Universal Design for Learning, but I think neurotypical students are as well--they’re not excluding CCS students... they are interacting, they’re learning by doing.... [it’s] **making disability rights and intersectionality real** and in-practice.”
- **Peer mentors** reported CCS students are “willing to speak up and relate their experiences and inspired others to speak up as well.”
 - CCS students did not require excessive time and attention from peer mentors, but could be challenging if more than one CCS students participated in the same mentor session small group.
 - Observed strengths of CCS students: participation, willing to speak up and relate their experiences to the class
 - Activities & support for CCS students that were successful were not substantially different: additional follow-through with tasks involving complicated technology; group activities; one-on-one support; captions on videos; self-driven projects with a goal.
 - Not much difference in non-CCS students’ experience
 - Concerns: one peer mentor had questions as to whether the CCS student was meeting the core objectives of the class, and if they fully understood the material or discussions, reflecting the need for further training/support for the mentors about the Individual Learning Plan (ILP); supplementary readings and videos more accessible to CCS
- **Effects on typical PSU students’ experiences and learning:**
 - Gained new perspectives on learning styles and abilities
 - Increased understanding of the diversity of human experiences and personal bias

Unique Support needs of CCS students present unique challenges and problem-solving that can lead to stronger instruction

- Required additional training and support for peer mentors
- Reinforced instructor dissatisfaction with student-interface associated with D2L course management system
- Grading was difficult at first
 - Instructors prefer the pass-no pass grading system now in place for all courses when student has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Impact and Outcomes of Interdisciplinary Engagement

Impact of CCS from our campus and community partners

[Link to responses from our partners about sustainability of CCS](#)

[Link to Presentation by NWDSA regarding importance of CC](#)

[Link to PSU News Story about CCS](#)

Impact on COE Graduate Students as Academic Coaches

- Academic coaching of CCS students is embedded in 2 COE graduate programs: ***Dual Secondary Educator Program (SDEP) and the Inclusive Elementary Educator Program (IEEP)***.
 - During 2018-19,
 - Program served as weekly academic coaches for CCS students. Graduates of SDEP identify their experiences coaching CCS students as a critical part of their teacher preparation to serve students with disabilities as secondary educators:
 - “I think that it was so unique as an emerging teacher to be able to experience how you can make rigorous challenging complex college level academics accessible for students... with pretty significant disabilities... There's no excuse for not trying to make your content accessible. If a kid with pretty significant autism, can participate and understand what's going on in a college level class, you can't tell me that you can't make art 101 in high school accessible for a kid.”
- “[Being] an academic coach really gave me that tool box of how to be creative, how to be a problem solver and how to make things as accessible as possible for such a wide range of learners. That I can bring that into my own teaching experience and I can use that to educate other teachers as well. Because that's general education teachers like, "Okay, well, we're being inclusive, but we don't have strategies. We don't have that tool box to be inclusive. What should we be doing?" And being an academic coach, really gave me the opportunity to build that tool box so that I can do it and help other people do it too. And so, if you're trying to produce inclusive teachers, academic coaching is like one of the biggest light bulbs that I think you can have.

Leadership Role of CCS Students Influencing PSU Community

- Wyatt was ASPSU Student Senator
- Lucy & Sawyer were Vice-President and Founding members of the PSU Unified Sports League
- Grace sits on the SALP Leadership Board (helped plan and execute Midnight Breakfast)
- Grace in University Choir and has performed in several concerts
- Massoud and Parker participate on the PSU Intramural Baseball team

Influence on the Broader Portland Community

- Will works as the Youth Coordinator, at the Northwest Disability Services Association, supporting the Youth Social Justice Group
- Rachel works as the Family Engagement Specialist at the Northwest Disability Services Association, supporting families of newly diagnosed families and children
- Lucy, Rachel, D have presented statewide: Oregon Transition Conference; Oregon Department of Education Special Education Advisory Board; Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Board
- Dom completed a leadership internship at Special Olympics Oregon, and continues to volunteer at the state headquarters
 - Wyatt was featured in movie Autism: The Musical (The Sequel) HBO documentary (April 2020 release date) sharing his experiences living in the PSU Dorms
 - Will and Roland's volunteer/community-based learning experience in elementary schools as part of a Special Education course requirement

Faculty, Staff and Student Scholarship

Publications

Balthazaar, L., Fisher, L., & Piper, G. (2018). *An invisible red thread: My Think College story*. In Think College Stories, Retrieved from https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/TCS_My_Invisible_Red_Thread.pdf.

Fisher, L., McFarland, M., Arthur, D.S., Estevez, M.L., & Kimberling, M. (2018). Radical Inclusion: Broadening University Communities. *The Journal of General Education* 67(1), 68-85. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/741685>.

Presentations

National Presentations

Morningstar, M.E., Lattin, D.L., & Papay, C. (2019, October 23). *Full postsecondary academic inclusion for students with intellectual disabilities*. 2019 Division of Career Development and Transition International Conference, Seattle, WA.

Papay, C., Grigal, M., Morningstar, M., Baxter, A., Myers, B. (2019, October 22). *Lessons Learned in Developing Inclusive Higher Education Programs for Students with*

Intellectual Disability. 2019 Division of Career Development and Transition International Conference, Seattle, WA.

Conroy, J., Licata, A.M., & Morningstar, M.E. (2018, November 29). *Advances in evaluation of inclusive postsecondary education*. 2018 TASH Conference, Portland, OR.

Lattin, D., & Morningstar, M.E. (2018, November 30). *Full academic inclusion for students with intellectual disabilities in a large university*. 2018 TASH Conference, Portland, OR

Local/State/Regional

Balthazar, L., Flesey-Assad, D., Young, J., & Morningstar, M. (2021). *Working, Studying, & Socializing In the PSU Career and Community Studies Program*. Presentation at the Virtual Oregon Statewide Transition Conference, Portland, Oregon

Bert, S., Balthazaar, L., Pollard, J. & Barrio, B. (2019). *College and career success for all*. Presentation at the Adult transition summit, Portland, Oregon

Bert, S. & Esteve, R. (2019). *Career and community studies: Building an inclusive college experience at Portland State University*. Presentation at the State Advisory Council for Special Education meeting, Salem, Oregon

Bert, S. & McFarland, M. (2018). *College for all: Building inclusive academics at Portland State University*. Presentation at the Oregon Statewide Transition Conference, Portland, Oregon

Bert, S., Markle, M. & Bender, N. (2017). *Think college at Portland State University: Building from the ground up*. Presentation at the Oregon Statewide Transition Conference, Portland, Oregon

Casey, A, Cornett, J, Bolton, R. Parness, R., Garcia, F, Craw, L., The Role of Academic Coaching in Career & Community Studies (2017). MS in Special Education Presentations, Spring, 2017.

Esteve, R., Esteve, H., and Falco, R. (2018). *The Career and Community Studies Certificate Program at Portland State University*. Interview broadcasted by KXL News, Portland, OR, October 10, 2018.

Falco, R. (2019). *Equity-based, inclusive and effective education*. Keynote presentation at the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators' Seaside Conference, Seaside, OR, June 19, 2019.

Hart, D., Balthazaar, L., Flesey-Assad, D., Kowitch, G., Bert, S., and Falco, R., (2019). *Building an inclusive college experience*. Presentation at the All Born In Cross-Disability Inclusion Conference, Portland, OR, April 6, 2019.

Hart, D., Esteve, R., Kowitch, G., Flessey-Assad, D., Bert, S. & Falco, R. (2018). *Think College at Portland State University: Our journey to build an inclusive college experience and things we've learned along the way*. Presentation at the All Born In conference, Portland, Oregon

Hart, D., Jarvis-Holland, D., Jarvis-Holland, A., Fullerton, A. & Bert, S. (2016). *Think college! Postsecondary education opportunities: What is happening in Oregon*. Presentation at the All Born In Conference, Portland, Oregon

Morningstar, M. (2019). *An inclusive college experience at Portland State University*. Presentation to the Friends of the College of Education, Portland State University, Portland, OR, March 14, 2019.

- Morningstar, M., Bert, S., Balthazaar, L., and Esteve, R. (2019). Preparing for inclusive post-secondary education: What can high schools do for success? Presentation at the Oregon State Transition Conference, Eugene, OR, March 7, 2019.
- Morningstar, M.E. (2019, April 25). *Introduction to the PSU career and community studies program*. Lake Oswego School District Transition Fair, Lake Oswego, OR.
- Morningstar, M.E. (2019, March 14). *Career and community studies: Impacting the PSU community*. Friends of the Dean Meeting, College of Education, Portland State University

Faculty and Student Research and Scholarship Opportunities

Faculty Research:

- o Molly Siuty, CI/COE faculty member, is conducting a study of outcomes after completion of their teaching licensure program for COE students who served as academic coaches for CCS students during their preservice preparation program. Results of the study will be submitted for publication.
 - o Ruth Falco, TCIO/CCS Internal Evaluator and COE faculty emeritus, has data collection and articles in progress that will lead to publications for Falco and other CCS faculty/staff.
- Doctoral Student Research:
 - o Megan McFarland, CCS Academic Coordinator and PSU COE doctoral student, is focusing her dissertation research on issues related to academic preparation and support of students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary education.
 - o Eva Blixseth, former CCS Employment Coordinator and PSU COE doctoral student, is focusing her dissertation research on issues related to employment for students with intellectual disabilities during and following postsecondary education.
- Masters Projects
 - Andy C. Clark, Rochelle L. Dowd, Bryttnie M. Holden, Taylor M. McConney, Yudi Wang & Melinda A. Wilmes (April 2021, in preparation). *Stakeholder Perspectives and Attitudes in a Postsecondary Inclusive Education Program*. Portland State University, College of Education.
 - Megan Coia, Christine Doria, Shawnie Emmons, and Cassandra Grigori (June, 2019). *Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Voice and Perspectives of College and Career Readiness*. Portland State University, College of Education.
 - Casey, A, Cornett, J, Bolton, R. Parness, R., Garcia, F, Craw, L., *The Role of Academic Coaching in Career & Community Studies* (2017). Portland State University, College of Education.