

Creating College Success: Supports, Steps, and Strategies for Neurodivergent Students

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Why College?

- Students with developmental disabilities who have had some college experience are more likely to:
 - obtain competitive employment
 - work more hours and earn higher wages
 - have greater daily living and independent skills
 - have expanded social networks
 - report greater physical health



Autism

- Honesty
- Memory
- Attention to detail
- Analytic skills
- Efficiency
- Persistence
- Love of learning



ADHD

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Dynamic thinking
- Energetic
- Adventurous
- Courage



Intellectual Disability

- Dependable
- Hard-working
- Loyal
- Kindness
- Engaged
- Positive attitude

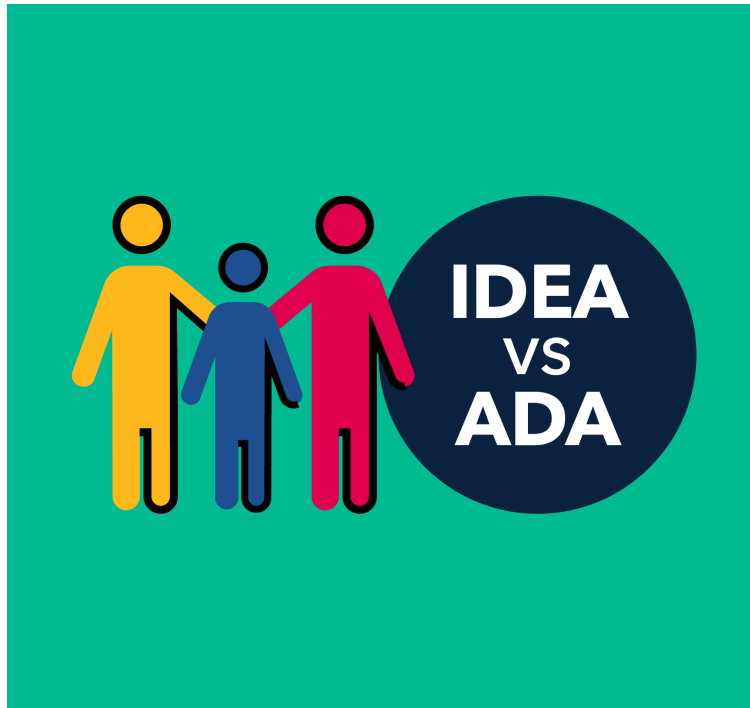
Transition to College



The Evolving Role of Students & Parents

IN HIGH SCHOOL:

- Parent and teachers serve as advocates
- School district can initiate IEP assessment and services
- School attendance is legally required, with parents liable



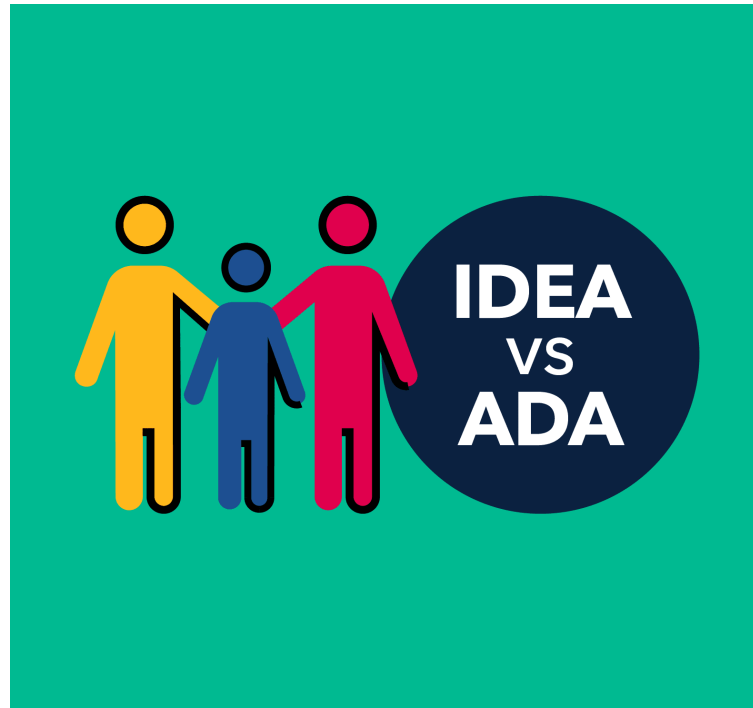
IN COLLEGE:

- Student is their own advocate
- Records not accessible to parents without signed release
- Student is responsible for their own progress and complying with code of conduct

Assessment & Accommodations

IN HIGH SCHOOL:

- Districts provide:
 - evaluation of disability
 - special education and curriculum modifications
 - educationally related services (e.g., one-on-one aide, speech and language therapy, transportation)



IN COLLEGE:

- Student must disclose disability and provide documentation
- Equal access and accommodations based on *educational limitations*.
- The college does not provide educationally related services

Option 1: Typical application process

- Office for Students with Disabilities
- Regional Center
- DOR
- External services



Option 2: Specialized college programs



Specialized College Programs in California

(not an exhaustive list!)

- UC system: UCLA Pathway, UC Davis Redwood SEED Scholars
- Cal State system: Northridge, San Marcos, Fresno, Long Beach, East Bay
- Community Colleges
 - DOR-funded College to Career programs
 - At 8 community colleges statewide
 - Taft College Transition to Independent Living Program
 - Harbor Regional Center College to Career at Long Beach City College
 - Foothill College Tools and Transition to Work
 - Sierra College Learning Independence for Future Employment
 - Golden West College – College Autism Program

Specialized College Programs

Dimensions to consider:

- Separate curriculum, auditing, modifications, or inclusive classes
- Options for degree or vocational certification completion
- Cohort or individual model
- Structured day or make your own schedule
- Educational coaching
- Career preparation
- Broader campus and social inclusion
- Residential living
- Practical pieces: costs, location, etc.



Educational Coaching

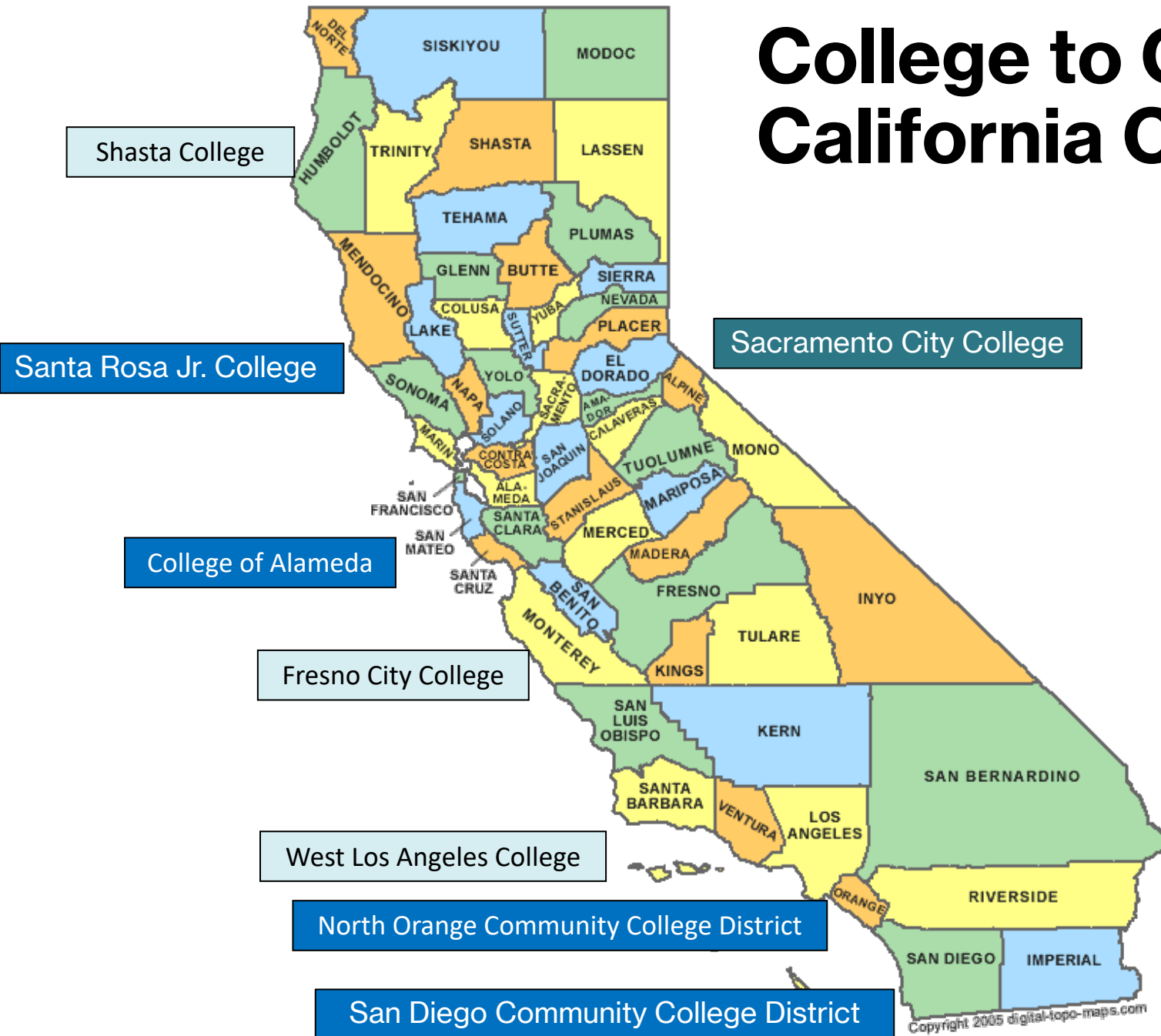
- Organization and Executive Functioning
- Navigating and Accessing Resources
- Self-Advocacy and Communication
- Academic and Study Skills



Career Preparation

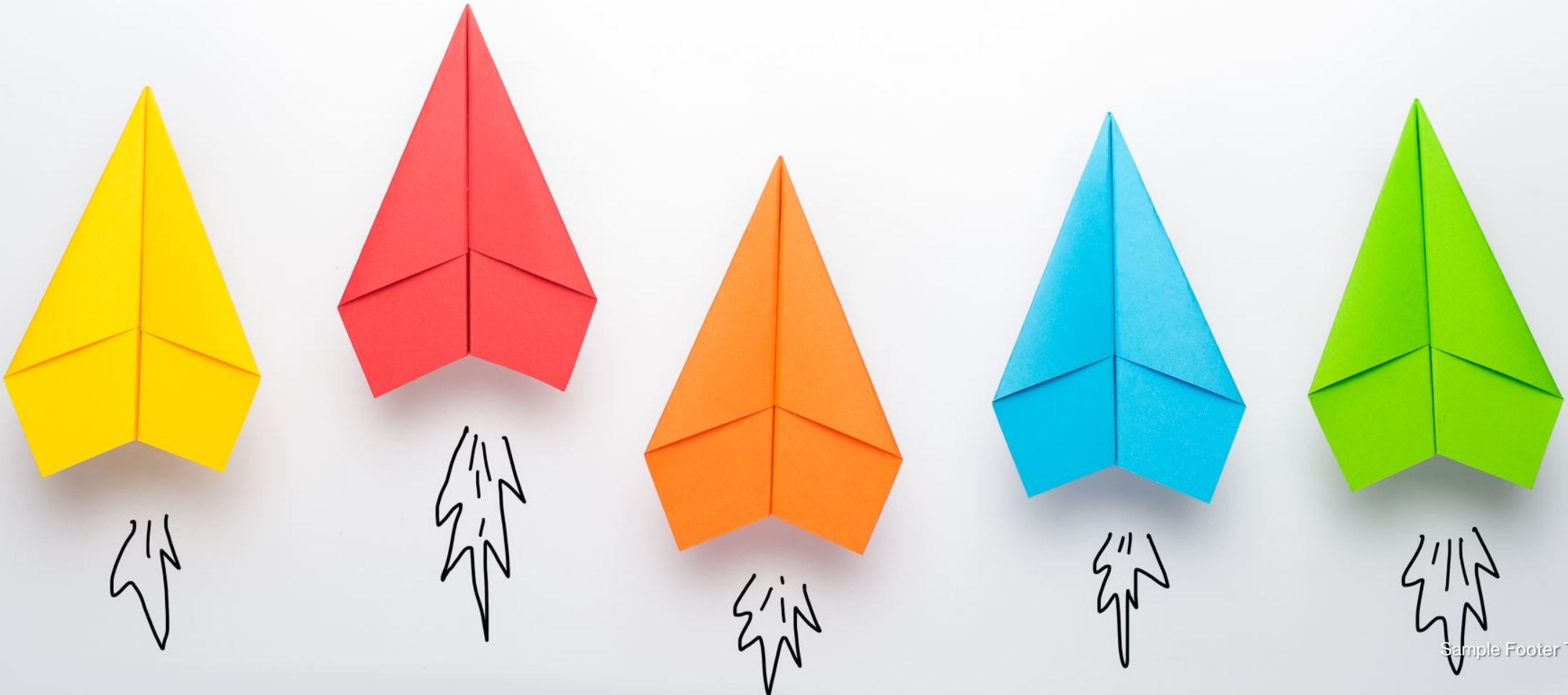
- Career Counseling and Exploration
- Employment Preparation
- Work Experiences
- Job Development

College to Career: California Community Colleges

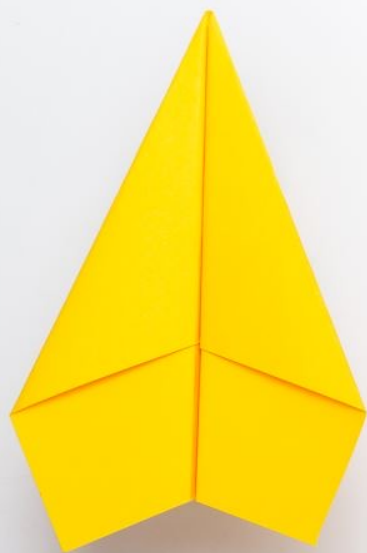


- 8 programs throughout CA
- Funding by Department of Rehabilitation
- Serve students with intellectual disability and/or autism
- 3-year program structure
- Focus on certificate completion and employment
- UCLA Tarjan Center provides ongoing training and support

C2C Outcomes in an Academic Year



89%
course
pass rate



326
students



68
vocational
certificates
or AA
degrees



184
students
getting
work
experience



60% exit
with a job



Creating Success

- Self-Determination
 - Student-led, person-centered
 - Can start in IEP planning
 - Increasing independence
 - Goals related to education, employment, and daily living



Creating Success

- Experiment to find what works for you as a learner
 - To-do lists and reminders
 - Planners/Calendars
 - Color coding
 - Scheduling/routines
 - Comfort
 - Focus
 - Listening / Reading



Creating Success

- Start exploring and planning early
 - Link to resources proactively
- Think holistically
 - Social connection
 - Mental health
 - Burnout
- Be gentle with yourself



Creating Success

- Invest in serving neurodivergent students
 - Program and service development
 - Professional development across campus
 - Intentional design: campus, courses, events
 - Seek out and amplify neurodivergent voices



Creating Success

- Universal design for learning
- Creation of flexible learning environments that accommodate the needs and abilities of diverse students
 - Multiple ways to teach, engage, and demonstrate learning



Resources

- [UCLA Tarjan Center](#)
 - [ACCESS Webinars](#)
 - [ACCESS Newsletters](#)
- [Think College](#)
 - [Inclusive College Search](#)
- [College Autism Network](#)
 - [Autism Support Program Search](#)
- [Autism Goes to College](#)
- [California Department of Rehabilitation](#)
- [California Regional Centers](#)
- [UCLA PEERS® Clinic](#)
- [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition](#)
- [California Transition Alliance](#)
- [UDL on Campus](#)
- [WebAIM Accessibility Resources](#)
- [Autistic Self Advocacy Network: Navigating College Handbook](#)
- [AI and Web Resources for College Instructors](#)
- [Transition, A Conversation with Parents](#)
- [AUCD Plain Language Guide](#)
- [Hemingway Editor](#)

Thank You!

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Creating College Success: My Experience

Amanda Marroquin

UCLA Tarjan Center Forum

10/25/24

About Me

I am a UCLA Pathway Alumni

I graduated with my Early Childhood Education Associate Teacher certificate from UCLA Extension

Before Pathway, I took classes at East LA College

I am currently working two part-time jobs at local high schools

- Campus Aid
- Assistant Softball Coach
- Security
- Proctoring



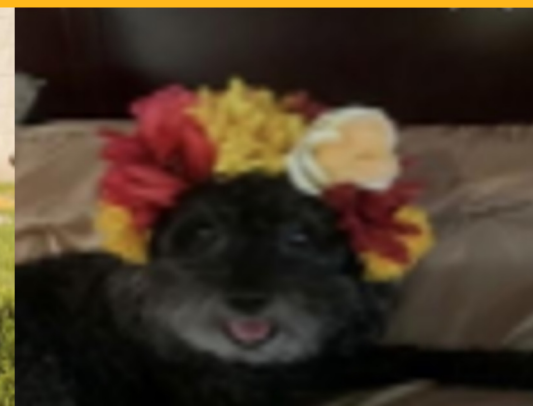
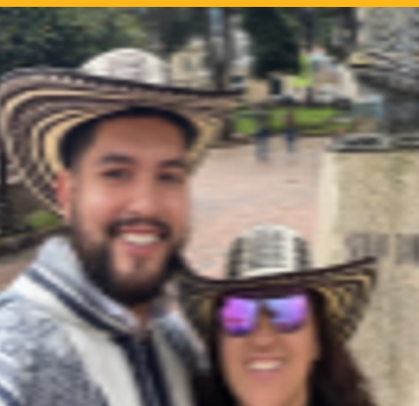
On a Personal Note

Heritage: Colombian & Salvadorean

I am close to my family, including my pets

I love travel & sports/fitness

While at UCLA, I was part of the Latinx Student group



My College Experience



Living



- I lived with roommates in Pathway, which was new for me
- I was nervous and scared at first
- It was a learning experience
 - Being respectful to roommates
 - Handling disagreements
 - Independence skills, like cooking for myself
 - Helpful to have supports – at Pathway, overnight staff

Classes

Things that helped me in my classes:

- Being organized
 - Using an agenda
 - Figuring out what to work on first
- Tutoring and educational coaching from Pathway
 - Helped me understand my assignments
- Figuring out how I study best
 - Listening to music, on my own
 - Don't get distracted by other people



Classes



Things that were hard in my classes:

- Using the MyUCLA online portal to find assignments or information
- I was told I couldn't get accommodations, even though I had an IEP in high school and accommodations at community college, and felt I needed them
- Professors being rude when I needed time to think or had trouble explaining myself

Work Experience in College

Internship at UCLA Athletics

- I was inspired by UCLA coaches and working in a team
- I was always interested in coaching, but felt more sure after my internship
- I became more responsible through working
- I liked how the internship:
 - Had a routine
 - Gave me a clear steps on how to do things on my own
 - Prepared me for my job now



Social

- College helped me to interact with new people in all different settings, like roommates, classes, internship
- I made friends
 - Weekly lunches together
 - Connected with coworkers over sports and Bruin spirit
 - Got phone numbers and social media



Advice



Advice for Students

Try out different jobs or different opportunities

Make friends with other students

Communication is key

Try to do things on your own

Be willing to ask for help and know who to go to for help



Advice for Colleges



Help students get the accommodations they need

Educational coaching for all students

Train professors

- To be more patient with their students
- To help students understand the assignments

Thank You