

**Report to the State of Minnesota Legislature
Program for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MORRIS

January 15, 2018

As required by
2017 MN Law CHAPTER 89--S.F.No. 943, Article 1, Sec. 4, Subd. 2.e.

And further detailed in
2017 MN Law Chapter 137, Section 137.45

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In **2017 MN Law CHAPTER 89--S.F.No. 943**, Article 1. Higher Education Appropriations, Sec. 4. Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, Subdivision 2. Operations and Maintenance, the Minnesota State Legislature appropriated funding (Section e) for a plan addressing the potential for a two year inclusive residential program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the University of Minnesota Morris campus.

A two-year academic, residential program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including a vocational and life-skills component, does not fit easily or naturally within the current mission of the University of Minnesota Morris as a rigorous public liberal arts college. For that reason, much of the human, curricular, and financial infrastructure needed to ensure a successful program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities is not currently available on campus. An intensive residential program serving students with intellectual and developmental disabilities would need to be constructed carefully from the ground up to ensure its long-term viability and its value for students with disabilities, and to make certain that it complements Morris' current student population, co-curricular experience, and academic programs.

Given the lack of an existing infrastructure, the implementation timeline and initial sizes for the student cohorts specified in the legislation are not feasible. Since certificate or other formal two-year programs are not part of Morris' approved degree level offerings, approval would need to be sought from the institution's accreditor prior to the implementation of a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This report proposes a two-year certificate program in Liberal Arts and Life Learning (LALL) for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The report outlines anticipated program needs that cannot be filled using existing campus or system resources including but not be limited to:

- Resources and funding
- Program support structures and resources
- Inclusive living environments
- Curriculum
- Job experiences and training
- Staffing needs and training
- Costs and financial sustainability
- Admissions
- Safety
- Transportation
- Program learning outcomes

UMM does not have the personnel in-house to create or staff an IDD program. Because of the lack of experience and expertise among existing UMM staff, the program should begin by hiring a program director for at least a full year before admitting students (Year 0 – Ramp-Up Year). During that same year, the program director would work with the UMM Curriculum Committee to articulate in full detail the program certificate and move it through campus and University governance, as well as work with other campus constituents to obtain approval from the UMM regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission.

To reach the requested full enrollment of 30 students (which might ultimately exceed the capacity of the Morris campus to house and serve the program well) UMM anticipates a five year development period. Best practice and models from other similar programs suggest that the initial cohort (Pilot-Year 1) be limited to four students, the second cohort (Year 2) would add an additional 10 students; Year 3 would serve a total of 25 students and Year 4 and forward would serve a total of 30 students in the program.

Locating a space for the IDD program office is a significant challenge. The campus lacks sufficient office space for current programs. A future renovation of the Education building could provide suitable space for programmatic needs. The Education building would, however, need a complete renovation to meet codes and to be made accessible. The IDD program would, in addition to program management spaces, require at least two dedicated classrooms for the life-skills courses, and would need access to facilities (laundry, kitchen) for some learning activities. The estimated cost to renovate and make the Education Building accessible and provide appropriate program space would be between \$3.5 - \$4 million.

Given anticipated enrollments, staffing costs, additional costs for training and professional development, supplies, equipment and transportation, and estimated tuition income at in-state rates, UMM anticipates the following operational deficits at current salary and fringe benefit levels:

Ramp-up Year: (\$353,045)

Year 1 (Pilot): (\$610,299)

Year 2: (\$870,133)

Year 3: (\$909,285)

Year 4 and forward: (\$1,008,247)

Institutional resources are fully allocated to meet the current Morris mission and campus fiscal constraints limit internal reallocations to support new program development. UMM currently provides institutional support to partially offset uncollected tuition tied to the institution's statutory obligation, rooted in the institution's history, to provide a full tuition benefit to qualified American Indian students. At present, the tuition waivers are valued at \$3.5 million dollars. While the University receives partial state funding to offset the costs of the waiver, Morris self-funds approximately \$1.5 million of the cost annually. In addition, to continue its record of recognized efficiency and effectiveness, UMM is undergoing budget realignment with operating fund reductions planned for the next several fiscal years. UMM has no financial capacity to launch or sustain a program for students with IDD without dedicated additional state funding.

INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota State Legislature, in its 2017 session, requested that the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota provide a two-year residential academic program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) at the University of Minnesota Morris effective with the 2018-2019 academic year.

In 2017 MN Law CHAPTER 89--S.F.No. 943, Article 1. Higher Education Appropriations, Sec. 4. Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, Subdivision 2. Operations and Maintenance, Section e., the Minnesota Legislature appropriates:

(e) \$50,000 in fiscal year 2018 is to develop and implement a plan to offer the academic program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities required in article 2, section 18. The Board of Regents must submit a report on the plan to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy no later than January 15, 2018. The report must describe program plans, including strategies for recruitment of applicants, and strategies to address anticipated program needs that cannot be filled using existing campus or system resources. This is a onetime appropriation.

The legislation, in 2017 MN Law Chapter 137, Section 137.45, Subd.2 and Subd. 3, outlined the requirements that the legislature envisioned for the program:

Subd. 2. Enrollment and admission.

The program must establish an enrollment goal of at least 15 incoming students per academic year. The board is requested to establish an application process for the program. A student who successfully completes the program must be awarded a certificate, diploma, or other appropriate academic credential.

Subd. 3. Curriculum and activities.

(a) The program must provide an inclusive, full-time, two-year residential college experience for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The curriculum must include:

- (1) core courses that develop life skills, financial literacy, and the ability to live independently;
- (2) rigorous academic work in a student's chosen field of study; and
- (3) an internship, apprenticeship, or other skills-based experience to prepare for meaningful employment upon completion of the program.

(b) In addition to academic requirements, the program must allow participating students the opportunity to engage fully in campus life. Program activities must include, but are not limited to:

- (1) The establishment of on-campus mentoring and peer support communities; and
- (2) Opportunities for personal growth through leadership development and other community engagement activities.

(c) The program may tailor its curriculum and activities to highlight academic programs, student and community life experiences, and employment opportunities unique to the campus or the region where the campus is located.

This report is written in response to the legislative request, providing a preliminary outline of the program as it would be designed and implemented on the Morris campus. It also contains an estimate of the new, external resources that would be required in order to implement and sustain such a program.

A two-year academic, residential program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including a vocational and life-skills component, does not fit easily or naturally within the current mission of the University of Minnesota Morris as a rigorous public liberal arts college. For that reason, much of the human, curricular, and financial infrastructure needed to ensure a successful program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities is not currently available on campus. An intensive residential program serving students with IDD would need to be constructed carefully from the ground up to ensure its long-term viability and its value for students with disabilities, and to make certain that it complements Morris' current student population, co-curricular experience, and academic programs. Given the lack of an existing infrastructure, the implementation timeline and initial sizes for the student cohorts specified in the legislation are not feasible. Finally, since certificate or other formal two-year programs are not part of Morris' approved degree level offerings, approval would need to be sought from the institution's accreditor prior to the implementation of a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

Intellectual Disability. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, an intellectual disability (formerly termed mental retardation) is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior that affect many everyday social and practical skills. An individual is generally diagnosed as having an intellectual disability when:

- (1) the person's intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75;
- (2) the person has significant limitations in adaptive skill areas as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical skills; and
- (3) the disability originated before the age of 18.

Adaptive Skill Areas. Adaptive skill areas refer to basic skills needed for everyday life. They include communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics (reading, writing, basic math), and work. Individuals with severe intellectual disabilities are more likely to have additional limitations than persons with milder intellectual disabilities.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

The University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) is a liberal arts college with a reputation as one of the nation's best public liberal arts colleges and a historical commitment to diversity. In its rural, student-centered educational environment, Morris provides an engaging, challenging undergraduate experience that prepares graduates for careers, advanced degrees, flexibility in the work world of the future, lifelong learning, and global citizenship. A program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) while not a comfortable fit with the Morris mission, could with careful planning, significant financial investment, and extensive efforts to ensure sufficient support, structure, and safety accommodations are addressed, the program could be integrated into UMM's campus.

The liberal arts curriculum, which is not directly tied to specific vocational or career tracks, is central to the mission and identity of UMM. Consequently, to develop a program that would provide the curriculum specified by the legislative request would require an entire new, additional overlay to Morris' current programs and staffing. Such a program would not be possible without a full academic year (or more) for development followed by a gradual ramping up of admissions over two to three additional years with substantial additional financial support.

This program outline and report are based on a substantial review of the successful program models and feasibility studies completed at Bethel University, Central Lakes College, Minnesota Life College, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Institute on Community Integration and, most extensively, the important work done by the Minnesota State (previously MNSCU) team in their 2017 report to the Minnesota legislature on programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The report also draws on consultation with THINK COLLEGE, "a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability," based at the University of Massachusetts Boston. This report addresses the specific possibilities and constraints at UMM for an IDD program in conformity with the Minnesota Legislature's charge in Sec 18 [137.45].

The Minnesota Legislature requested that the University of Minnesota Board of Regents offer a program at the University of Minnesota Morris to meet the needs of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The basic framework requirements elaborated in the legislative charge require that:

The plan developed must assume a program that provides an inclusive, two-year full-time residential college experience for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The required curriculum must include core courses that develop life skills, financial literacy, and the ability to live independently; rigorous academic work in a student's chosen field of study; and an internship, apprenticeship, or other skills-based experience to prepare for meaningful employment upon completion of the program.

This report outlines such a program, how it might be added to the current offerings at the University of Minnesota, Morris, the preparation time needed to successfully launch a program, and the estimated costs required to bring the program into being and continue it. This report will focus in particular on the identification of anticipated program needs that cannot be filled using existing campus or system resources and will include, but not be limited to, the following specific items:

- Resources and funding;
- Program support structures and resources;
- Inclusive living environments;
- Curriculum;
- Job experiences and training;
- Staffing needs and training;
- Costs and financial sustainability;
- Admissions;
- Safety;
- Transportation;
- Program learning outcomes

Resources and Funding

The University of Minnesota, Morris has some of the needed resources for creating a program for students with IDD, in particular a lively, student-centered campus community dedicated to inclusivity and intellectual engagement. The campus also has housing and academic buildings that are physically quite close together, although many lack full accessibility.

UMM has a strong reputation for training primary and secondary school teachers, but does not offer a Special Education licensure program nor employ faculty with the expertise to direct a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. One UMM faculty member currently holds a Special Education license, although that is not his area of academic expertise and he has minimal experience in Special Education. By way of contrast, the Bethel University offers an M.A. in Special Education and is developing a B.A. in Special Education as well.

UMM tuition and funding would not provide the needed resources to run a program effectively, given the program model of high one-on-one support. Details of expected program costs are outlined below. Substantial startup funding, including capital funds for facility adaptation or expansion, and ongoing program operations support would be required. Per-student fees and program allocations at levels comparable to those at Bethel's BUILD program or Minnesota Life College could make it possible to sustain a comparable program at the University of Minnesota Morris.

In the most recent Midwest Higher Education Consortium analysis, Morris was recognized as the most effective and also the most efficient public university in Minnesota and in the top 25 most efficient public universities in the nation. Institutional resources are fully allocated to meet the current Morris mission and campus fiscal constraints limit internal reallocations to support program development. UMM currently provides institutional support to partially offset uncollected tuition tied to the institution's statutory obligation, rooted in the institution's history, to provide a full tuition benefit to qualified American Indian students. At present, the tuition waivers are valued at \$3.5 million dollars. While the University receives partial state funding to offset the costs of the waiver, Morris self-funds approximately \$1.5 million of the cost annually. In addition, to continue its efficiency and effectiveness, UMM is undergoing budget realignment with operating fund reductions planned for the next several fiscal years. UMM has no financial capacity to launch or sustain a program for students with IDD without dedicated additional state funding.

Comparative Costs of Minnesota Programs

Student cost of attendance at the University of Minnesota Morris in comparison to campuses offering programs for students with IDD follows (2017-2018 data). The most comprehensive programs in Minnesota are found at Bethel University and Minnesota Life College which also generate the greatest financial resources with a high per student cost of attendance.

- **University of Minnesota Morris.** Current tuition costs. Cost of Attendance includes tuition, student fees, housing, and a meal plan.
 - Tuition: Minnesota residents: \$12,136 (Out of state: \$14,176)
 - Cost of Attendance: Minnesota residents: \$24,352 (Out of state: \$26,392)

- **Ridgewater College.** Annual tuition and fees - 16 credits per semester. Not including books and other related expenses, housing, a meal plan, and out of pocket expenses.
 - Tuition and fees: \$5,784

- **Central Lakes College.** Cost of Attendance includes tuition and fees, estimated books and supplies, room and board, transportation and personal expenses.
 - Cost of attendance: \$19,000

- **Bethel University** – Bethel University Inclusive Learning and Development (BUILD) program. Total includes all core courses, support books, instructional materials, room, meal plans, and activity fees.
 - Program Costs/Cost of Attendance: \$46,665

- **Minnesota Life College.** Total includes a furnished apartment and utilities, groceries, transportation, participation in classes, activities and electives, staff support. Total does not include the \$100 enrollment fee, the \$1,000 acceptance fee, neuropsychological evaluation costs, travel, weekly spending money, medical or specialized counseling services or medications.
 - Program Costs/Cost of Attendance: \$46,350

Program Support Structures and Resources

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a wide variety of skills and academic potential. Some students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, for instance, might participate in typical UMM classes and pursue a traditional bachelor's degree with appropriate support in academics and student life. Students with greater needs would require the creation of an almost entirely new curriculum (see Curriculum).

UMM's Office of Academic Success (OAS) programs and services are designed to help students reach their academic goals. As a unit within the Office for Academic Success, Academic Assistance provides peer tutoring, Peer Assisted Learning Study Sessions, Academic Counseling/Coaching, and academic Skills Courses and Workshops. OAS works collaboratively with faculty and other support units on campus to promote active, self-regulated learning. The Office of Academic Success currently has five staff members who serve the entire campus. The office currently has more need from the students than it can fully meet at present levels of staffing. Without at least one additional full-time staff member, this office would not be able to assist with the IDD program. If the program enrolled 30 students, two additional staff would likely be required.

UMM also has, as part of OAS, a Disability Resource Center, with one staff member who works to ensure access to University employment, courses, programs, facilities, services, and activities by providing or arranging reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, training, consultation, and technical assistance. The number of students utilizing the DRC has steadily risen in recent years, and substantial additional staffing would be necessary were the center to be involved in supporting students within an IDD program.

Existing campus infrastructure offers possibilities for meaningful vocational work for students in areas such as dining services, housekeeping, plant management and grounds crew.

Locating a space for the IDD program office would be a significant challenge. The campus lacks sufficient office space for current programs; existing faculty already share offices in several instances. A future renovation of the Education building (plans are to move the Division of Education to Blakely Hall, a building that is currently shared residence hall and office space) could provide program staff with office space in the future. The Education building would, however, need a complete renovation to meet codes and to be made accessible. The IDD program would, in addition to program management spaces, require at least two dedicated classrooms for the life-skills courses, and would need access to facilities (laundry, kitchen) for some learning activities, all of which could be part of a renovated Education building with space dedicated to the IDD program. The estimated cost to renovate and make the Education Building accessible and provide appropriate program space would be between \$3.5 - \$4 million.

The program director, a new hire, would be responsible for developing and then overseeing each piece of the program, for recruiting, training, and supervising student mentors (although this last

responsibility might be shared with the program's instructional staff), for efficiently managing resources and teaching staff, for assessing the program's learning outcomes, for conferring with counseling and medical personnel and with parents as necessary.

Inclusive Living Environments

Existing residence halls and campus apartments at Morris could accommodate a small number of students participating in this program. In fall 2017, Morris housing occupancy was at 95% of recommended capacity of 896 beds. UMM residence halls and campus apartments are located near the academic buildings, dining hall, student center, health and wellness facilities, and performance spaces, as well as being accessible to local transportation. Only one residence hall is fully ADA compliant.

UMM would house program participants alongside other Morris students in existing residence halls across the campus, following the Bethel BUILD model. Program participants would share a double residence hall room or suite and be paired with a student housing mentor living across the hall or next door. In addition to housing mentors, the Community Adviser structure currently in place for UMM Residential Life would offer additional support and community building for program participants in connecting with residents of their living community.

Following the Bethel BUILD model, a full-time Residential Supervisor would train and supervise the housing mentors, provide student life support for program participants, facilitate conflict resolution and life skill development, and lead campus response and follow-up for any health, wellbeing, or student conduct concerns arising after business / office hours or within the residential and student life community.

Curriculum

UMM could offer a two-year certificate program in Liberal Arts and Life Learning (LALL) for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with approval from its accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. Life skills courses and vocational instruction would be entirely new academic offerings for UMM and would need to be implemented by a new and knowledgeable staff. Along with these courses, students in the IDD program could participate in select existing classes, accompanied by a student academic mentor and in circumstances where UMM faculty were able to gain Universal Design for Learning skills and adapt classes (such training would require additional funding and would be voluntary for current faculty). Realistically, few current UMM classes would be readily adaptable, and additional funding to provide such supports as closed captioning might be necessary. The existing classes that might most easily be made accessible include MUS 1041, Introduction to Music; ARTH 1101, Interpreting the Visual World: An Introduction to Art History,

GEOL 1001, Environmental Geology: Geology in Daily Life; GWSS 1101, Introduction to Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies; and several of the first-year seminar courses (18xx courses). Other options undoubtedly exist, but would depend upon the instructor as well as the student.

Possible Curriculum Plan for 2-year Morris Liberal Arts and Life Learning (LALL) certificate

Year One (minimum of 8 credits)

Academic coursework: 1-2 academic courses of 2-4 credits each (classroom time for a 4-credit class is typically 3 and a quarter hours per week), depending on student interests, needs, and abilities as well as on faculty willingness and training. Students could take the course pass-fail or audit it. UMM would set up a separate course prefix system for these students, making clearer to students and advisers the identification of course options; the courses would be co-scheduled with sections for students not in the IDD program.

Life Skills: 15 hours per week divided among five different 1-credit-bearing independent living skills classes with individualized learning goals. Each student would take *all five* of these courses each year; additional instructional staff would be required (e.g., reading, math, but also learning to cook, banking—each student establishes own goals in collaboration with academic coach, program director, or other mentor). These courses would be taught by a trained staff person but would not require a peer mentor if the class sizes remain small. Additional instructional staff would be required with an increased number of students enrolled.

Campus Work Experience: 3 hours per week (depending upon the student) in a 1-credit-bearing on-campus work experience (1 credit per 3 hours).

Social Experience: 3 hours per week in required social experience, guided by student social mentor (we might require students to belong to a campus club, for example); no credit, but still required.

Year Two (minimum of 10 credits)

Academic coursework: 1-2 academic courses of 2-4 credits each (classroom time for a 4-credit class is typically 3 and a quarter hours per week), depending on student interests, needs, and abilities as well as on faculty willingness and training. Students could take the course pass-fail or audit it. UMM would set up a separate course prefix system for these students, making clearer to students and advisers the identification of course options; the courses would be co-scheduled with sections for students not in the IDD program.

Life Skills: 15 hours per week divided among five different 1-credit-bearing independent living skills classes with individualized learning goals. Each student would take *all five* of these courses each year; additional instructional staff would be required (e.g., reading, math, but also learning to cook, banking—each student establishes own goals in collaboration with academic coach, program director, or other mentor). These courses would be taught by a trained staff person but would not require a peer

mentor if the class sizes remain small. Additional instructional staff would be required with an increased number of students enrolled.

On or Off Campus Work Experience: 6 hours per week (depending upon the student) in a 2-credit-bearing on- or off-campus work experience.

Social Experience: 3 hours per week in required social experience, guided by student social mentor (we might require students to belong to a campus club, for example); no credit, but still required.

For most student program participants, we would identify a select number of academic courses and faculty willing to be trained to adapt course material. Students would attend the courses with a peer mentor who would assist them with note-taking, class participation, homework, and study sessions. Grading would be S-N (satisfactory – unsatisfactory), with accommodations made by the instructor.

The Minnesota State report to the legislature suggests more detail regarding a possible model for the life skills portion of the curriculum and appropriate academic offerings, although UMM does not offer an AA degree. Morris would offer only one completion option – a certificate in Liberal Arts and Life Learning.

With respect to the life-skills curriculum, the model offered by Minnesota State seems a reasonable one for UMM to adapt for use at Morris. The following curriculum is excerpted from the **Minnesota State** report; particularly relevant sentences underlined for emphasis:

Required curriculum must include core courses that include life skills, financial literacy skills, independent living skills, and practical application of internships/work based & skills-based learning; including rigorous academic work in the students chosen field of study.

Life skills core curriculum components should include as a minimum:

- Differences between high school and college
- Student life involvement
- Time management
- Prioritizing (school, work, relationships, social activities, family)
- Organization
- Goal setting
- Problem solving
- Know your learning style and how to use your strengths in work and school
- Know your interests
- Exploring careers that fit interest, aptitude, and learning style

Values and choices
Learning how to learn
Preparing for class
Study strategies
Test taking skills
Teamwork
Critical thinking
Communications (verbal, written, body language, social media)
Diversity awareness (gender, age, culture, race)
Self-advocacy skills
Asking for help in an appropriate way
Getting along with roommates
Managing stress

Financial literacy skills core curriculum components should include as a minimum:

Money management: Long term and short term budgeting; how to reduce expenses
Credit cards
Food: fast food vs. cooking

Independent living skills core curriculum components should include as a minimum:

Finding and accessing community resources
Eating a balanced diet
Using the library
Service learning
Job Shadowing
Career Exploration
Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs
Understanding, identifying, and reporting sexual harassment
Understanding, identifying, and seeking help for emotional pain and depression

Program sequencing is dependent upon the combination of life skills, financial literacy skills, and independent literacy skill components in addition to professional skills building experiences provided both on and off campus. Establishing partnerships to provide experiential education should be done in accordance with best practices and guidance from

relevant labor laws. In order for credit-based internships to be offered without pay, substantial learning must be provided to the student.

An additional variable to consider regarding sequences of curriculum includes credit course offerings in the student's chosen field of study. A student's opportunity to engage in rigorous academic work within a chosen field of study is dependent upon standardized tests used in admission processes. The most sustainable credentials are those that align and are recognized by a specific industry (e.g.: Nursing Assistant Registered-CNA/NAR; Food Safety for Culinary; etc.). A Diploma or Associate's degree for a 2-year course of study at full-time, residential status is viable from a major where Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is implemented and instructional strategies do not lower quality or standards of instruction. Students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities should pursue a major that best suits their interests, motivation, and aptitude. In addition, core courses are required as defined in legislature and described in this document. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations may not fundamentally alter the nature of the course; ensuring program participants meet the same objectives as other students in the course.

Due to this potential challenge, the work group found value to providing a sequence involving a higher number of for-credit program specific offerings and a more limited number of for-credit academic specific offerings. Presenting two options for curriculum sequencing provides flexibility in matching students with an appropriate program option meeting their individual needs. An option involving reduced credit producing coursework and a second option involving a higher number of credit producing courses is outlined below. Either option includes strong academic programming; however, the level of rigor is varied based upon student needs.

Program option involving a more limited number of for-credit course offerings:

Year 1:

- o Semester 1 - Students engage in professional skill-building experiential learning on- and/or off-campus with topics such as:
 - Workplace etiquette and employee behavior, education on occupation exploration tied to major, resume preparation, facts on the interview process, appropriate social media use in workplace and outside (HIPAA confidentiality for CNA), and more
- o Semester 2 - Students engage in work-based experiential learning with on- and/or off-campus employers such as:
 - Employers and/or employees offer coaching on cold calling, resume reviews, mock interviews, workplace safety, and more

- Employers host students for site visits and tours, recruitment education related to onboarding for internships/employment, and more

Year 2:

- o Semester 1 - Students engage in work-based experiential/service learning with on- and/or off-campus employers or Students engage in Academic Program for-credit optional or required experiences
 - Employers and community organizations offer students volunteer experiences and/or job shadow and/or go on-site with a job coach
 - An option for program faculty/staff to assist students to obtain on- campus Work-Based employment with work-study eligibility under financial aid and/or departmental funding positions as student workers
 - Another option as according to individual major planning, there may be 1 or more credentials obtained with requisite workplace learning/internship
- o Semester 2 – Students engage in academic program for-credit option or required experiences or students engage in employment option
 - According to individual major planning, there may be 1 or more credentials obtained with requisite workplace learning to obtain
 - Other students may seek a part-time employment experience in field of study or related occupation

Program option involving higher number of for-credit course offerings:

Year 1:

- o Semester 1 - Students engage in professional skill-building experiential learning on- and/or off-campus with topics such as:
 - Workplace etiquette and employee behavior, education on occupation exploration tied to major, resume preparation, facts on the interview process, appropriate social media use in workplace and outside (e.g. HIPAA confidentiality for CNA), and more
 - Employers and/or employees offer coaching on cold calling, resume reviews, mock interviews, workplace safety, and more
 - Employers host students for site visits and tours, recruitment education related to onboarding for internships/employment, and more
- o Semester 2 - Students engage in work-based experiential learning with on- and/or off-campus employers such as:

- Employer's and community organizations offer students volunteer experiences and/or job shadow and/or go on-site with a job coach
- An option for program faculty/staff to assist students to obtain on- campus Work-Based experience with work-study eligibility under financial aid and/or departmental funding positions as student workers

Year 2:

- o Semester 1 – Students engage in academic program for-credit optional or required experiences
- o Semester 2 – Students engage in academic program for-credit optional or required experiences or Students engage in Employment Option
 - According to individual major planning, there may be 1 or more credentials obtained with requisite workplace learning/internship to obtain
 - Other students may seek a part-time employment experience in field of study or related occupation

From the very onset of working with a student, a focus on student academic, behavioral, social, program-completion, and post-program employment and independent living outcomes is necessary to meet the goal that students participate in current course offerings, with support, and attain an exit credential (industry skills certificate, AA degree). Continuous evaluation and feedback is central to the implementation and sustainability of a successful model. Feedback from faculty/instructors, student support services staff, outside agency personnel, families, and students themselves is essential in ensuring that issues and challenges, as they arise, are fully addressed. Two major evaluation strategies include implementation evaluation and outcome evaluation. Continuous implementation evaluation provides the continuous feedback to college staff, and the outcome evaluation focuses on student success in relation to college participation and eventual employment in the community.

(End of **Minnesota State** excerpt)

The UMM program would, as Minnesota State notes, require in-process evaluation as well as outcome evaluation. The program staff would need to meet with faculty and on- or off-campus work supervisors to assess the learning environment, to help address any challenges, and to ensure that the student is making successful progress.

Job Experiences and Training

A small, rural community with 5,000 residents, the city of Morris does not have a large number or variety of employment and internship opportunities like those afforded to students participating in more urban based programs. The community has a small number of restaurants, three motels, and a few other businesses (one grocery, a Shopko) that might offer employment or internship possibilities. On-campus employment options include dining services, duplicating, post office/mail distribution, custodial and grounds keeping, recreational fitness center, performing arts, and clerical support.

Staffing Needs and Training

A University of Minnesota, Morris IDD program could be added to existing programs with new faculty and staff and the recruitment of student employees who would need significant training. To estimate the need for new faculty and staff, the Bethel University BUILD program provided a useful model for how an IDD program could be part of a small campus. Bethel BUILD is a two-year program in which students split time between life-skills and academic classes and on- and off-campus work experiences.

The suggested staffing model overall is as follows. Estimated salaries are shown at current levels; increases would need to be built into any funding model over time. A summary table follows the articulation of the positions and associated costs (see Table 1, page 21).

Professional and Administrative Staff

1. Program Director: One senior staff member would be in charge of the entire program. Duties include overall supervision, hiring, outreach, program administration, and program evaluation. This person would need to be at a master's degree level minimum. (estimated salary with fringe \$107,600/year).
2. Residential Supervisor: This staff position will supervise and train housing mentors, support participants' development of life skills in their living environment and within student life, and support after-hours response and follow-up for health or safety emergencies, student conduct concerns, and related areas of growth and development for participants. (estimated salary with fringe \$60,525/year).
3. Course Instructors: Five classes would be offered for each cohort in each year. Four would be focused on life skills, the fifth on physical education. Instructors would hold, as at Bethel, a Master's degree (estimated salary with fringe \$242,100/year for three instructors).

4. Office Support Staff: In addition to office management, this person would assist with job placement for students in the program (estimated salary with fringe \$48,420/year).
5. Advisor/Success Coach: The UMN Institute on Community Integration stresses the value of a “Check and Connect” model of advising, especially relevant for students with disabilities (see <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>) (estimated salary with fringe \$67,250/year).
6. Disability Accommodation Support: A position to assist students and to provide a bridge and coordinate accommodations with faculty (estimated salary with fringe \$67,250/year).

For enrollment above fourteen students in the program, additional staffing in UMM’s existing offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Academic Support, and Disability Resources would be necessary, as would an additional life skills course instructor to maintain the quality of offerings:

7. Second Disability Accommodation Support (estimated salary with fringe \$67,250).
8. Fourth Instructor (estimated salary with fringe \$80,700).
9. Admissions and Financial Aid: A split position between two offices to support the unique requirements of admission and financial assistance for students in the program (estimated salary with fringe \$67,250).

Student Staff

Student employees to mentor students in the program. As at Bethel, the UMM program would utilize four different categories of student assistance: housing, academic, job, and social mentors:

1. Housing Mentors: One mentor for every two of the students with disabilities, living in residence hall rooms near these students. Housing mentors would be provided with a housing and board stipend (following the existing Community Advisor model). Training required.
2. Academic Mentors: One mentor for each student with disabilities. The mentor would assist the student with note-taking and participation in class and homework and studying outside of class. Training required. Ten hours weekly per student mentor.
3. Job Mentors: One mentor for each student with disabilities, to assist with transportation to and from the place of employment and with on-site job training, and to facilitate resolution of any employment issues. Training required. Five hours weekly per student mentor.
4. Social Mentors: One mentor for every two of the students with disabilities. The mentor would facilitate student engagement in the campus community. Training required. Five hours weekly per student mentor.

Table 1. Summary of Projected Personnel Costs

		Program Ramp-up		Year One		Year Two		Year Three		Year Four and Forward	
		0 students		4 students		14 students		25 students		30 students	
Professional Staff	Salary w/ Fringe	Staff Count	Cost	Staff Count	Cost	Staff Count	Cost	Staff Count	Cost	Staff Count	Cost
Program Director	\$107,600	1	\$107,600	1	\$107,600	1	\$107,600	1	\$107,600	1	\$107,600
Residential Supervisor	\$60,525	1	\$60,525	1	\$60,525	1	\$60,525	1	\$60,525	1	\$60,525
Course Instructors	\$80,700	1	\$80,700	2	\$161,400	3	\$242,100	3	\$242,100	3	\$242,100
Office Support Staff	\$48,420	1	\$48,420	1	\$48,420	1	\$48,420	1	\$48,420	1	\$48,420
Adviser/Success Coach	\$67,250			1	\$67,250	1	\$67,250	1	\$67,250	1	\$67,250
Disability Accomadation Support	\$67,250			1	\$67,250	2	\$134,500	2	\$134,500	2	\$134,500
4th Course Instructor	\$80,700									1	\$80,700
Financial Aid/Admissions	\$67,250					1	\$67,250	1	\$67,250	1	\$67,250
Professional Staff Totals			\$297,245	7	\$512,445	10	\$727,645	10	\$727,645	11	\$808,345
Student Staff											
Housing & Board Stipend for Housing Mentors	\$9,000			2	\$18,000	7	\$63,000	13	\$117,000	15	\$135,000
Academic Mentors	\$5,149			4	\$20,594	14	\$72,080	25	\$126,500	30	\$154,457
Job Mentor	\$3,134			4	\$12,536	14	\$43,875	25	\$77,000	30	\$94,017
Social Mentor	\$3,134			2	\$6,268	7	\$21,937	13	\$40,040	15	\$47,009
Student Staff Totals				12	\$57,398	42	\$200,892	76	\$360,540	90	\$430,482
Staffing Total Costs			\$297,245		\$569,843		\$928,537		\$1,088,185		\$1,238,827

Note: Figures reflect current dollars at current costs.

Costs and Financial Sustainability

UMM could offer a two-year certificate program in Liberal Arts and Life Learning (LALL) for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

UMM does not have the personnel in-house to create an IDD program, nor would standard UMM tuition provide sufficient funding to implement or sustain this program. Because of the lack of experience and expertise among existing UMM staff, the program should begin by hiring a program director for at least a full year before admitting students (Bethel University spent five years on program development and was able to take advantage of the assistance of their M.B.A. program to develop their business model). That development year would allow the director to identify work spaces and living spaces, to develop the program in connection to existing UMM curriculum and University policies, to hire support and instructional staff, to train that staff and current UMM faculty, to recruit student mentors for site-designed training, and to recruit students to participate in the certificate program itself. During that same year, the program director would work with the UMM Curriculum Committee to articulate in full detail the program certificate and move it through campus and University governance, as well as work with other campus constituents to obtain approval from the UMM regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission.

After the development year, student mentor training would be an annually recurring cost, estimated at two weeks each August, before orientation begins (comparable to current Community Adviser training), and led by program staff. Student mentors would have to be recruited the academic year prior to their work in the program; recruitment, hiring, and training would be the responsibility of the program director and training staff.

Additional Annual Costs

Payments to faculty to develop and/or teach classes in the LALL program on an alternate year basis to allow courses repeat runs and to maintain a number of offerings that could be closely supervised.

For the program to be financially feasible, the existing UMM tuition rate would have to be supplemented by substantial program fees and/or UMM would need additionally allocated funding from a legislative appropriation. Table 2 summarizes anticipated enrollments, staffing costs, additional costs for training and professional development, supplies, equipment and transportation, and estimated tuition income at in-state rates, as well as the resulting operational deficits, which would require external funding for the program to be viable:

Table 2. Summary of Anticipated Program Costs

	Enrollment	Staffing Costs	Additional training and development for students and faculty	Supplies, Equipment, Transportation Expenses	Total Expenses	Tuition Revenue (estimated, in-state)	Operational Deficits
Program Ramp-up	0	\$297,245	\$10,800	\$45,000	\$353,045	\$0	(\$353,045)
Year One (pilot)	4	\$568,843	\$25,000	\$65,000	\$659,843	\$48,544	(\$610,299)
Year Two	14	\$925,037	\$35,000	\$80,000	\$1,043,537	\$169,904	(\$870,133)
Year Three	25	\$1,081,685	\$36,000	\$95,000	\$1,219,185	\$303,400	(\$909,285)
Year Four	30	\$1,231,327	\$36,000	\$105,000	\$1,379,827	\$364,080	(\$1,008,247)

Notes:

(a) these figures reflect current dollars at current costs

(b) Morris has the additional financial challenge of the American Indian student tuition waiver, which would extend to this program and would add to the funding deficit if American Indian students participate in the program.

Admissions

Assuming sufficient financial support for initiating and maintaining an IDD program, UMM's Admissions office would be expanded to incorporate admissions processes for an IDD program. The program would require its own admissions structure distinct from although related to the existing UMM admissions process; for the first two years of the program, admissions could be overseen by the program director. As at Bethel, UMM would require an interview with each prospective student for the IDD program. Initially, the interviews could be handled by the program director. As student numbers grow, however, an additional at least half-time staff person in Admissions would be required.

THINK COLLEGE recommends that UMM admit just four students into the program the first year of implementation, thereby allowing the program and the students a manageable trial year as additional adjustments and program enhancements are identified and made. If the first year goes well, a second class would admit ten new students. The campus's capacity for future IDD enrollment would then have to be evaluated.

In addition, UMM's admission process would align with that outlined in the Minnesota State report as follows:

Confidential information will need to be gathered in order to determine eligibility for the program. This information should be collected and stored in a manner that is consistent with current institutional policy and procedures for students with disabilities. Additionally, reasonable accommodations may need to be made in academic, housing and co-curricular areas. These reasonable accommodations may not alter the core components of a course, or program.

Admission requirements for the program would include:

- Applicant should be at least 18 years old at the start of the program and not older than 25
- Have completed high school with a diploma or equivalent
- Complete application process
- Have practical reading and writing skills
- Have a desire to gain skills for employment and independent living
- Have the ability to independently navigate campus during class transitions, mealtimes, and other extracurricular activities.
- Have a documented intellectual and/or developmental disability
- Have completed Accuplacer, ACT or SAT

Financial aid would follow existing institutional processes but may be more complex and therefore require extended staff time (and, in turn, staffing; see above). Programs are funded in a variety of ways including federal financial aid, state grants, Medicaid waiver funds, Vocational Rehabilitation funds and private pay. It is important to appropriately classify any potential program in order to be eligible for state and federal funds.

Safety

Morris, Minnesota is a safe community with a low crime rate and relatively little traffic. The community is prosperous and friendly and has become familiar with a diverse cross-section of people. At the same time, the campus does not have key-card access to all buildings yet, nor are all buildings (residence halls and classrooms) fully accessible for people with physical disabilities. Most of the access between campus buildings is exterior, which in winter can be problematic for those with mobility challenges.

Transportation

Morris possesses a call-up bus service (patrons call and the bus will pick caller up) that is effective and accessible. The campus itself is compact enough for pedestrian navigation in almost all situations.

Program Learning Outcomes for the UMM Liberal Arts and Life Learning Certificate

These learning outcomes combine some of UMM's existing learning outcomes with IDD-specific life skills outcomes.

An understanding of the role of the individual in society, including one or more of the following:

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Environmental stewardship
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for sustained learning throughout their lives

Increased skills for independent living, including:

- Personal care
- Meal planning and preparation (for self)
- Care of living space (cleaning, maintaining)
- Basic financial management including tracking expenses and budgeting
- Collaborative living
- Employability at half-time or more in an area that is meaningful to the student

APPENDIX A: The Specific Legislative Charge from the 2017 Session

Sec. 18.

[137.45] PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

Subdivision 1.

Program required.

The Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota is requested to offer an academic program consistent with the requirements of this section for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the University of Minnesota-Morris.

Subd. 2.

Enrollment and admission.

The program must establish an enrollment goal of at least 15 incoming students per academic year. The board is requested to establish an application process for the program. A student who successfully completes the program must be awarded a certificate, diploma, or other appropriate academic credential.

Subd. 3.

Curriculum and activities.

(a) The program must provide an inclusive, full-time, two-year residential college experience for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The curriculum must include:

- (1) core courses that develop life skills, financial literacy, and the ability to live independently;
- (2) rigorous academic work in a student's chosen field of study; and
- (3) an internship, apprenticeship, or other skills-based experience to prepare for meaningful employment upon completion of the program.

(b) In addition to academic requirements, the program must allow participating students the opportunity to engage fully in campus life. Program activities must include, but are not limited to:

- (1) the establishment of on-campus mentoring and peer support communities; and
- (2) opportunities for personal growth through leadership development and other community engagement activities.

(c) The program may tailor its curriculum and activities to highlight academic programs, student and community life experiences, and employment opportunities unique to the campus or the region where the campus is located.

Subd. 4.**Reporting.**

By January 15 of each year, the board must submit a report on the program to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees in the house of representatives and the senate with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy. The report must include, but need not be limited to, information regarding:

- (1) the number of students participating in the program;
- (2) program goals and outcomes; and
- (3) the success rate of participants.

EFFECTIVE DATE.

This section is effective beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Appendix B: Minnesota Olmstead Plan

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=opc_home

In addition to these existing post-secondary educational programs, in December of 2011, the Department of Human Services (the Department) and the Plaintiffs in the Jensen et al v. Minnesota Department of Human Services, et al. Court File No. 09-cv-1775 entered into a settlement agreement that requires the development of a Minnesota Olmstead Plan. In 2012, Minnesota's Olmstead Planning Committee was formed and included individuals with disabilities, family members, providers, advocates and senior decision-makers from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and they made recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

On October 23, 2012, Minnesota's Olmstead Planning Committee presented a report to DHS Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. The report included recommendations to ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities have choices about where they live and are served in community settings more suitable to their needs and desires. One of the Committee's recommendations asked "that the Governor establish an Olmstead Sub-Cabinet to ensure the most efficient and effective inter-agency coordination, planning and implementation of an Olmstead Plan."

In January 2013, Governor Mark Dayton issued an Executive Order establishing a Sub-Cabinet to develop and implement a comprehensive plan supporting freedom of choice and opportunity for people with disabilities. The original Olmstead Plan Sub-Cabinet, was chaired by Lieutenant Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon, and included the Commissioners or Commissioner's designee from the following State agencies: Department of Human Services; Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; Department of Employment and Economic Development; Department of Transportation; Department of Corrections; Department of Health; Department of Human Rights; and Department of Education. Representatives from the Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities are ex officio members of the Sub-Cabinet.

In January 2015, Governor Mark Dayton issued an Executive Order which further defined the role and nature of the Olmstead Subcabinet. To make the promise of Olmstead a reality in Minnesota, the subcabinet adopted a vision statement to guide the implementation of the Plan.

The Olmstead Subcabinet embraces the Olmstead decision as a key component of achieving a Better Minnesota for all Minnesotans, and strives to ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities will have the opportunity, both now and in the future, to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment and to participate in community life in the most integrated setting, including:

- The opportunity and freedom for meaningful choice, self-determination, and increased quality of life, through: opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and employment options; choices of living location and situation, and having supports needed to allow for these choices;
- Systemic change supports self-determination, through revised policies and practices across state government and the ongoing identification and development of opportunities beyond the choices available today; and
- Readily available information about rights, options, and risks and benefits of these options, and the ability to revisit choices over time.

APPENDIX C: Higher Education Programs in Minnesota for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (summaries from program websites)

Bethel University BUILD, <https://www.bethel.edu/academics/build/>

Bethel University launched their BUILD program in 2015. Bethel University showcases a belief that “diversity is about more than differences. It's about honoring the worth and dignity of all people”:

The Bethel University Inclusive Learning and Development (BUILD) program is noted for providing a supportive and comprehensive educational experience for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Students experience dynamic and encouraging instruction, career-oriented curriculum, specialized mentorship, and on-campus living—all within a supportive Christian environment.

The 2-year postsecondary, residential program focuses on academic, vocational, residential, and social learning experiences. We provide [students] with the skills and education necessary to live as independently as possible, maintain meaningful employment, and value lifelong learning. In return, students in our BUILD program bring diverse experiences, attribute unique skills to campus, and provide opportunities for service to our community.

After successfully completing the program’s requirements, [students] earn an Applied Studies Certificate with a concentration in health or human services, business or Information Technology, education, ministry or arts.

At the core of the BUILD program is the belief that all students can learn. BUILD students are provided individualized support through appropriate accommodations. Faculty teaching in the program use a set of principles for curriculum development that provides all individuals with equal opportunities to learn, integrating faith into their instruction.

Minnesota Life College, <https://www.minnesotalifecollege.org/>

Founded in 1996, the Minnesota Life College (MLC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit vocational and life skills training program for young adults with learning differences and autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Since its founding, MLC has remained dedicated to helping students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning differences, and ASD to make successful transitions towards independent living and financial self-sufficiency. Using Real Skills for Real Life™ curriculum, MLC students learn in their own apartments, at the grocery store, in the

workplace, at restaurants, and on public transportation—any practical environment where real life skills are needed. MLC believes students can live independent, self-sufficient, whole lives. Having learned the skills to open doors previously closed to them, the future of students is limitless. They promote that they “are not simply a three-year experience; we are a lifelong partner to an individual who learns differently” with their Community Living Program (CLP), Undergraduate Program (UG), and Summer Internship Program (SIP) which attracts an internationally diverse student body and helping them to achieve independence.

Minnesota Life College serves adults with autism spectrum disorders and other learning differences on our campus in Richfield, MN. Our students come from across the country and many of them choose to stay and make the Richfield area their permanent home as they live independently with the skills they learned at MLC. MLC’s three primary programs are:

- The Undergraduate Program (UG).** Established in 1996, teaches the core skills that we believe are essential to live independently within a community. We provide residential-based instruction and support on independent living skills, employment skills and social skills, using a holistic, strength-based model of education. The Undergraduate Program currently has 37 students, including our largest freshman class to date of 18 individuals.

- Community Living Program (CLP).** After completing UG, students can opt to join the Community Living Program (CLP). Graduates who are living independently in their own apartment, using public transportation and are often employed in competitive community employment, use the CLP for access to a community of supportive relationships, positive choices and healthy activities within the Twin Cities. Since its inception in 2005, this program has had a dramatic increase in participants enrolled. The CLP program is currently serving 62 adults and we anticipate continued growth into the future.

- Summer Internship Program (SIP):** The Summer Internship Program (SIP) offers a residential 3-week summer session to high school and transition age individuals with learning differences and autism spectrum disorders. SIP students work on skills similar to UG, but in a limited timeframe. We provide an apartment living experience that includes skill building in the areas of cooking, cleaning, budgeting and transportation. We also provide training internships to our participants via our corporate partnerships in the community.

Minnesota Life College is growing, yet are only able to accept a limited number of freshmen each year. MLC offers the opportunity for early enrollment, with perks available to families who make the prompt commitment to MLC. Freshman and their parents/guardians are required to participate in a mandatory new student and family orientation prior to enrollment. According to MLC, a successful candidate must...

- Be excited to be a part of Minnesota Life College and have program buy-in;
- Be able to make independent, safe decisions and not require 24-hour supervision. MLC is not a therapeutic or psychiatric program; and will not be a good fit for students with significant emotional and behavioral challenges;
- Be developmentally ready to participate in a comprehensive apartment-living and community-based program, while responding well to a structured and supported environment;
- Have evidence of their ability to navigate day-to-day activities (school, volunteering, work, etc.) without 1:1 support;
- Demonstrate emotional and behavioral stability sufficient to live independently, function socially, and participate fully in programming at MLC; and
- Have an involved and supportive family with realistic goals and expectations, as well as recognition of the importance of home/school communication and cooperation. Applicant must have parents/guardians who support the goals and philosophy of the program, and are aware of and committed to both the program duration and financial obligations.

MLC Requirements include:

- A diagnosed learning disability, executive dysfunction, autism spectrum disorder, or other neurological conditions. Typical applicants will have a range of cognitive and processing abilities;
- A comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation within the past 24 months. This is required before a student can be interviewed. (No exceptions);
- Between the ages of 18-26 years old at the start of the program;
- A Full Scale IQ of 70 or above; and
- Documented completion of K-12 education—either after senior year or post-transition program.

Central Lakes College Occupational Skills Diploma, <http://www.clcmn.edu/occupational-skills-diploma-2/>

The Occupational Skills Program (OSP) is a nine month, technical college diploma program designed for individuals with mild to moderate disabilities, focusing on competitive entry-level employment. The program is geared toward individuals who can possess the ability to work competitive entry-level employment with training and support, but may find it difficult to meet the rigor of a traditional college program.

Work experiences as well as coursework to support independence in the workplace and in the community are the main components of the program. Students also participate in a

number of exciting and educational off-campus experiences designed to promote community access, social skills, recreation and healthy living.

Ridgewater College, <http://www.ridgewater.edu/programs-and-majors/technical-programs/Occupational-Skills/Pages/default.aspx>

The Occupational Skills program is a post-secondary vocational program for students with disabilities that provide training for entry-level, competitive employment. Occupational Skills combines community-based vocational training with personal management classes on campus.

The program is two semesters (9 months) starting in the fall. A diploma can be earned with a minimum of 32 credits.

The Occupational Skills program offers:

- Vocational training in a community-based training site
- Life skills courses
- Job seeking/job keeping courses
- Applied job search