

Transitioning from High School to College: Faculty Partnerships in Supporting Neurodivergent Student Success

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Abstract:

Purpose/Objectives: The transition from high school to college can present hidden barriers for neurodivergent students, including challenges related to executive functioning, communication, sensory differences, self-advocacy, and academic expectations. These difficulties may also impact faculty understanding of how to effectively support students in the classroom. This presentation examines how collaboration between a university neurodivergent support program and faculty can improve student adjustment, academic success, and classroom inclusion.

Materials/Methods: With student consent, faculty are notified each semester that the student is enrolled in the Bridges to Adelphi program, creating communication between faculty and support staff. Faculty receive individualized guidance on learning styles, communication differences, and supportive classroom strategies. The program also provides two annual workshops: one on neuro-inclusive classrooms and another featuring a student panel discussing educational experiences.

Results: Faculty reported a better understanding of neurodivergent students and greater appreciation for learning differences. Students increased direct communication and self-advocacy with faculty and demonstrated greater willingness to outreach to professors who participated in workshops. Students enrolled in the program demonstrated a cumulative GPA of 3.29 and an 89% retention rate.

Conclusions: Collaborative faculty partnerships and neurodiversity-affirming practices may strengthen academic success, retention, and college adjustment for neurodivergent students.