Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Students Who Are incarcerated: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study of Community Colleges' Disability Services in For-Credit Correctional Education Programs

Jenifer K. Montag
jkmontag@outlook.com

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ABSTRACT

FACILITATING EQUAL ACCESS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE INCARCERATED: AN EXPLORATORY MIXED METHODS STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES’ DISABILITY SERVICES IN FOR-CREDIT CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Jenifer K. Montag, Ed.D.
Department of Counseling and Higher Education
Northern Illinois University, 2022
Dr. Gudrun Nyunt, Director

Issues regarding the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities exist in both traditional college environments and nonstandard settings such as medical and legal education settings. While the situation is less than optimal for disabled students seeking degrees in the general population, who are unfettered in their academic pursuits, little is known about accommodations for disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in for-credit courses through community colleges that have partnerships with local prisons.

This mixed methods study is focused on exploring the current state of accommodation service provision by public community college disability service providers for disabled students who are incarcerated and taking for-credit courses with a community college. An exploratory explanatory sequential mixed method was employed. Descriptive quantitative data was collected first via survey. Survey results were then utilized as a means to guide and inform qualitative interviews. Disability service personnel \((n = 158)\) at public community colleges across the United States were invited to participate in the online survey. Thirty-three respondents completed the survey and 12 participants agreed to complete the additional 45-minute qualitative interview. Findings identified that few college DS staff provide accommodations, the types of accommodations provided are limited, and the DS staff encounter complex barriers trying to
provide accommodations. Three themes emerged as responses to barriers: 1) proactively navigating among multiple stakeholders, 2) making difficult choices about extent of DS engagement, and 3) raising awareness and engaging advocacy. The study led to the development of the Unlocking Abilities model, which can guide practice in an attempt to facilitate increased DS staff involvement with this additional population of college students. Practical strategies and other recommendations for improving accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) and enrolled in the college correctional education program for-credit classes are discussed. Also included are three researcher-developed tools to assist disability providers with assessing their capacity for providing accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated, namely: 1) The Correctional Setting Barrier Navigation Assessment Tool (CSBNA), 2) The Disability Accommodation Considerations for Community College Correctional Education Tool (DA4CE), and 3) Working in Correctional Facilities: Tips for DS Providers.
FACILITATING EQUAL ACCESS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE INCARCERATED: AN EXPLORATORY MIXED METHODS STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES’ DISABILITY SERVICES IN FOR-CREDIT CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

BY

JENIFER K. MONTAG
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Doctoral Director:
Gudrun Nyunt
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

People who are incarcerated are marginalized and excluded from society and especially from participation in higher education wherein positive opportunities often result from earning a degree. Fortunately, the times have been changing and this perspective is diminishing a bit, especially with the Second Chance Pell Grant opportunity for those who are incarcerated to have an opportunity to expand their learning with college classes while incarcerated.

People with disabilities have a similar history of being marginalized and excluded from higher education. Physical and instructional barriers abound and have required federal legislation such as the ADA to remediate these challenges. And so, for those who are incarcerated and who have a disability, the challenges are significant. This research is for them and the professionals in the field who are working to improve access to higher education. While I am precluded from sharing the names of the professionals working on this problem, I want to share with the field and other interested parties the challenges and opportunities that each of you face on the job as you work to change the trajectory of those who are incarcerated who also have disabilities and are taking for-credit college classes at a community college.

Thank you to the justice-impacted students, especially those with disabilities with whom I work. Your dedication to your education and future is the impetus for me to do more and do better. Rhea, Tonya, and Debbie, thank you for your support and collaboration in CCEP.

Likewise, I offer a very heart-felt thank you to all the previous, current, and future college students with disabilities with whom I have worked and will work in my role as a disability
director. It is your voices, your input, your lived experiences that have guided the work I do. The 20-plus years of students who have trusted me with their experiences to help reduce and remove built and systematic barriers to higher education have been the motivation for many of the solutions I have implemented. Thank you.

To my colleagues in disability services in higher education and our national and state professional organization, the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), thank you for sharing your knowledge and experiences. A special thank you to those who participated in either the survey or the interviews (or both) – many of you are a single-person office with multiple roles and tasks on your plate; thank you for taking the time to participate in this study and share your insights and experiences. I hope the study’s information and findings serve to help your colleges continue to reach every student. A special thank you to the AHEAD Board for selecting me as a scholarship recipient in 2020.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE: A DISSERTATION OF PRACTICE</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study and Research Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities at Colleges and Universities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability-Related Laws</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Current State of College Disability Service Provision</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access in Nontraditional Academic Environments</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Correctional Education Programs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of the ADA in Correctional Facilities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of Effective Communication, Meaningful Access, and Diligent Efforts</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Selection for the Study</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Sample Selection</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Sample Selection</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Instrument</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Data</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Research and Trustworthiness</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Background and Positionality</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. UNLOCKING ABILITIES: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ON ACCOMMODATING DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE INCARCERATED AND SEEKING FOR-CREDIT COURSEWORK THROUGH THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | 40 |
<p>| Literature Review | 42 |
| Services for Students with Disability | 42 |
| Nonstandard College Learning Environments | 44 |
| Correctional Education | 45 |
| Research Design | 46 |
| Participants | 47 |
| Data Collection Methods | 48 |
| Data Analysis | 50 |
| Quality of Research | 52 |
| Findings | 53 |
| Accommodations | 54 |
| Barriers to Providing Accommodations in Correctional Settings | 56 |
| Responses to Barriers | 63 |
| Discussion and Implications for Research and Practice | 69 |
| Limitations and Future Research | 71 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Practice: Unlocking Abilities</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FINAL THOUGHTS</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic Selection</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Challenges and Surprises</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons Learned as a Researcher</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Practice</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goals</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Thoughts on the Research</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Qualitative Interview Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thematic Concept Matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Joint Display Representing Survey Data Explained in Interviews (Partially Represented Here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Numbers of DSIs Receiving Accommodations and Survey Respondents Providing Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Number of Different Accommodations Provided to DSIs by Survey Respondents (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number of Specific Accommodations Provided to DSIs by Survey Respondents (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Type of CCEP Instruction and DS Engagement: Reported by Interviewees (n=7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unlocking Abilities Model: DSI/DS/CCEP Collaboration</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY ORIGINAL LONG VERSION</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: EXPERIENCED INSTITUTION</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS: LIMITED TO NO EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. CORRECTIONAL SETTING BARRIER NAVIGATION ASSESSMENT TOOL (CSBNA)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION TOOL (DA4CE)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. WORKING IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS: TIPS FOR DS PROVIDERS</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROFILES</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. ADA NATIONAL NETWORK DIVISION OF ADA REGIONS BY STATE</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. JOINT DISPLAY REPRESENTING SURVEY DATA EXPLAINED IN INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. COMPARISON OF THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATIONS IN NONSTANDARD ENVIRONMENTS: QUALITATIVE RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. STATUS ON PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS TO DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE INCARCERATED AND ENROLLED IN CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS - JANUARY 08, 2021</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL AMENDMENT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS – APRIL 22, 2021</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. CERTIFICATION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

O. INFORMED CONSENT – QUANTITATIVE SURVEY ........................................... 183
P. INFORMED CONSENT – QUALITATIVE SURVEY ........................................ 186
Q. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY – REVISED ABRIDGED ................................. 190
The dissertation of practice is a scholarly endeavor that explores a complex problem of practice embedded in the work of a professional practitioner (Perry, 2015). The purpose of the dissertation of practice is to prepare students to become scholar practitioners, who use practical research and applied theories to improve their practice while contributing to the knowledge base in the field of higher education and student affairs. The purpose of my specific dissertation of practice, an exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods study, was to identify challenges and opportunities for public community college disability services personnel who are managing nondiscrimination on the basis of disability for disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in for-credit college correctional education programs. As a disability services director at a public community college that provides college correctional education programs (CCEPs) in two state-level correctional facilities, I was very interested in finding out what accommodations other college disability services (DS) staff were providing in their CCEP and, more importantly, how they were navigating that provision within the highly controlled correctional setting. Just as I began my study, the approval of the Second Chance Pell Grant for all incarcerated individuals occurred. This dissertation of practice can be helpful to the DS community as more colleges may begin offering CCEPs, thus directly impacting the DS staffs’ work and efforts.

My dissertation of practice consists of three artifacts: (a) The dissertation of practice
research proposal (Chapter 1). The purpose of this chapter is to showcase the proposal that guided my research. I submitted this proposal to my dissertation committee prior to starting my research project, outlining what I intended to do, though things changed a bit as the research was undertaken. (b) A manuscript for a scholarly publication (Chapter 2). Based on my dissertation research, I developed a manuscript that I will submit to a scholarly journal in my field. As mixed methods research can produce ample findings, but journal articles have word limits, only the most important findings from the study are reflected in this chapter. (c) A scholarly reflection (Chapter 3). In the final chapter, I reflect on my dissertation process, including how the research process changed slightly from the proposal, and discuss applications of the projects and my newly gained skills for professional practice and future engagement in research.

The reader will note a change in use of identity language related to correctional terminology from Chapter 1 to Chapters 2 and 3. My understanding of the field of correctional education evolved during the process of completing this dissertation. The use of the term “inmate” is not considered person-first. When I started the research, I was not aware of this change in language, so the first chapter is written with the use of the term “inmate”. After I learned about concerns in using the term, I adapted my language to person-first, using the term “incarcerated”. Similarly, the use of the term “prison” has also evolved. It has become more appropriate to use the term “corrections”, or “correctional facility”. I did intentionally use the term “prison” occasionally when talking about the harsh conditions outside the classrooms as contrast to the correctional nature of the college education setting. More importantly, the terms used by the interviewees were left verbatim. If they said inmate or prison, that is left in their quotes or citations.

As language has been evolving within the disability community, I have also adjusted my
language to be reflective of these changes. While I do use the person-first language, “person with a disability,” as disability culture has increased embracing of identity-first language, I have incorporated this into my research. We have students who will identify person-first and have students who will want to have identity-first recognition. I have used both forms in this paper. This reflects the incorporation I have in my daily practice, dependent on with whom I am interacting. Following the AHEAD Statement on Language (2022), I have used identity-first language in the journal article, Chapter 2.

In addition to the three artifacts included in my dissertation, I also share three tools in the appendices that I developed as a result of this research. The Correctional Setting Barrier Navigation Assessment Tool (CSBNA) is provided to assist DS staff in assessing their college correctional education program (CCEP). General and specific questions are offered for the DS staff to discuss with their college administration and the CCEP staff. Elicited answers will help direct the DS staff to areas of the CCEP and the correctional setting that may create barriers, prevent disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) from inclusion in the college program, and offer opportunities for greater collaboration and DS involvement. The Disability Accommodation Considerations for Community College Correctional Education Tool (DA4CE) was developed to help DS staff look at commonly provided accommodations in the standard campus setting and identify ways they may need to adjust them in the nonstandard correctional setting. These are the considerations on an accommodation-by-accommodation basis that the DS staff will want to keep in mind when trying to provide services in the CCEPs. The last tool is the Working in Correctional Settings: Tips for DS Providers. This was developed to provide some basic information about what to expect within the CCEP and correctional setting in terms of the differences you might experience from the standard college setting. My hope is that these tools
will assist and guide you as you continue to work on inclusion of disabled students who are incarcerated in your college correctional education program.
CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Approximately 130 colleges and universities have chosen, through Second Chance Pell Grants, to provide access to postsecondary for-credit courses leading to the awarding of a college degree (United States Department of Education, 2020b). These colleges and universities likely chose to undertake this partnership with their local prison facility, as Esperian (2010) found, “because it pays valuable dividends” (p. 331) to the inmates, the prison, and the community within which these individuals live and work. The choice to implement for-credit classes leading to the awarding of a college degree or certificate is not surprising given the plethora of scholarly evidence showing that college in prison gives offenders a second chance at building the skills and knowledge to be successful in life (Esperian, 2010; Larson, 2015; Wade, 2007). Specific data indicates student inmates are less likely to reoffend, are more likely to become productive members of their community, and save taxpayers’ dollars (Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Esperian, 2010; Larson, 2015; Nally et al., 2012; Pelletier & Evans, 2019; Stern, 2014; Vacca, 2004; Wade, 2007); while also allowing the student inmates to earn improved meals, living conditions, pay, and work (Erisman & Contardo, 2005) and develop increased confidence, self-esteem, and leadership skills (Pelletier & Evans, 2019).

However, the provision of college courses does not mean all inmates will actually be able
to participate in such opportunities due to experiencing programmatic barriers. Challenges to compliance with accessibility laws have been uncovered in K-12 and adult basic literacy programs within prisons (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Rieke et al., 2013; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016b; United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2015). Issues with compliance with the ADA and Sect. 504 have been found in daily operational aspects of correctional facilities, including activities of daily living and other health and safety-related compliance (Ballinger & Nguyen, 2019; New York State Corrections and Community Supervision, 2019; Robbins, 1996). Lastly, there are issues with students with disabilities in the non-incarcerated general student population enrolled in postsecondary programs gaining access to their college courses and extracurricular activities (Argenyi v. Creighton University, 2012; Brown, 2014; Hill et al., 2020; Scott, 2019; Sligar, 2002; Tagayuna et al., 2005; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2013).

Disabled inmates, those who plan to enroll or those already enrolled who are struggling taking for-credit college courses, are eligible to receive full ADA coverage in order to facilitate their academic ambitions. Therefore, it is vital to determine what the current state of college compliance with the ADA and Sect. 504 is in the delivery of these courses.

Applicable nondiscrimination laws require that the college or university engage in interactive dialogue with a student about requested accommodations or services once the student has informed the institution of the need for accommodations. Each institution sets the specific requirements or guidelines for documentation of disability and how the interactive dialogue is processed. The Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Department of Justice, and the ADA Network have all issued suggested guidance and information related to providing accommodations for general-population college students. In addition, the Association on Higher
Education and Disability (2020) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2019) have both issued detailed standards and procedures for colleges and universities to use in making college instruction accessible. It is, however, unclear to what extent institutions offering for-credit courses to prison inmates are following these guidelines.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods study is to identify challenges and opportunities for public community college disability services personnel who are managing nondiscrimination on the basis of disability for disabled student inmates enrolled in for-credit college classes in correctional facilities. The central research question, therefore, seeks to understand how public community college disability service personnel are currently providing accommodations for disabled student inmates in for-credit college classes in correctional settings.

Specifically, this study will strive to answer the following research questions:

1) What accommodations are public community college disability service personnel currently providing for disabled student inmates in for-credit college classes in correctional settings?
   a. How many colleges that provide for-credit college classes are providing accommodations to disabled student inmates?
   b. What are the barriers college disability service personnel are facing in providing the accommodations?
   c. What types of accommodations are colleges providing?
2) How, if at all, are disability service personnel navigating the provision of accommodations within the prison setting for disabled student inmates in their college for-credit classes?
   
a. How have disability service personnel attempted to provide accommodations?

b. What barriers have disability service personnel encountered when trying to provide accommodations?

The findings of this study will be disseminated to disability services staff at public community colleges and to the broader disability in higher education field in an effort to communicate and build on emerging promising practices and strategies regarding providing accommodations to disabled student inmates taking for-credit courses while in prison.

Literature Review

Under federal laws regarding nondiscrimination of persons with disabilities, colleges and universities must ensure enrolled students with disabilities who request accommodations have equal and equitable access to all related academic programs, services, and activities. These federal laws apply not only to disabled college students enrolled at higher education institutions but also to disabled student inmates (DSI) enrolled in for-credit college courses in prisons. In this section, I first discuss statistics on college students with disabilities and how many individuals with disabilities are estimated to be in the prison system. I then share relevant background information about disability-related laws before discussing literature related to the current state of general disability service provision in colleges and universities. Next, I discuss access in nontraditional academic environments, followed by scholarship on college correctional education
programs. Finally, I discuss legal cases and their outcomes in correctional facilities and correctional educational programs before discussing legal expectations for effective communication, meaningful access, and diligent efforts.

Students with Disabilities at Colleges and Universities

United States Department of Education (ED) statistics regarding college students with disabilities have identified that approximately 19.4% of all enrolled college students have an identified disability (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). In an earlier study, Raue and Lewis (2011) found “institutions reported enrolling approximately 707,000 college students with disabilities in the 12-month 2008 -2009 academic year” (p. 3). Of this total number of college students with disabilities, 31% identified as having learning disabilities, 18% with ADHD, 15% with psychiatric conditions, 11% with chronic health conditions, 7% with mobility impacts, and less than 7% each for other disabilities such as hearing loss, vision loss, or speech (Raue & Lewis, 2011, p. 8). Even more relevant to this study, of the 1,040 public two-year institutions responding to Raue and Lewis’s (2011, p.7) survey, 94% reported providing services for students with learning disabilities, followed by students with hearing loss (90%), students with ADHD or mental illness/psychiatric condition (87%), vision loss (84%), health or chronic conditions (80%), traumatic brain injury (74%), cognitive impairments (71%), autism spectrum (70%), speech impairment (53%), and other conditions (26%).

Likewise, emerging research indicates the percentages of individuals with disabilities hold consistent within the correctional facility setting (Bronson et al., 2015). For example, “incarcerated persons are at least three times as likely to report having a disability as the
nonincarcerated population” (Vallas, 2016, p.1) and that conditions such as autism, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities are the most commonly identified disabilities (Vallas, 2016). Thus, it is likely that for-credit courses offered to inmates by community colleges enroll a similar percentage of students with disabilities.

**Disability-Related Laws**

There are two primary federal laws that provide nondiscrimination on the basis of disability for college students, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (2015) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008), previously known as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (2015) stipulates that any organization that receives a minimum of one dollar in federal funds, whether those funds are grants, loans, or direct payments, must ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in its programs, services, and activities provided by the organization. State and local prisons are, consequently, subject to Section 504 requirements due to federal pass-through grants (United States Department of Education, 2020a). Any organization that did not receive federal funds did not have to comply with Section 504 protections. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) expanded disability rights protections by requiring those who do not receive federal funds to be nondiscriminatory on the basis of disability as well.

In 2008, the ADA was amended by the U.S. Congress to remedy the numerous narrowed decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court that redefined, and thereby limited, who was a qualified person with a disability and in what environments the law was to be applied (ADA National Network, 2020; Gostin, 2003). These amendments to the ADA, subsequent court cases, and
complaint resolutions further expanded the application of the ADA to broader environments and contexts, such as the internet, emerging technologies, and online-course learning materials (Gostin, 2003; Kaplin & Lee, 2014; National Association of the Deaf et al., 2019; National Association of the Deaf et al., 2020; Southeast ADA Center, 2019; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Dudley v. Miami, 2016a).

There are five titles of the ADA: Title I-Employment, Title II-State and Local Government, Title III-Public Accommodations, Title IV-Telecommunication, and Title V-Miscellaneous (ADA National Network [ADANN], 2020). Two of these titles are specifically applicable when focusing on equal and equitable access to public community college for-credit classes in the prison setting: Title II-State and Local Government, which includes public colleges/universities and state correctional facilities, and Title III-Public Accommodations, which includes private correctional facilities. The ADA and Sect. 504 apply not only to contracts for programs and services but also to the incarceration itself (American Bar Association, 2010).

The Current State of College Disability Service Provision

Over the years, the number of students with disabilities has risen (Gilson, 1996; Lee 2016). One of the greatest barriers disabled students face today is the inaccessible nature of many new instructional technologies being implemented across campuses and within the classroom settings and the requisite assistive technology needed to provide access to the new technological formats being used by colleges (Cory, 2011; Dowrick et al., 2005; Lee, 2014; Stodden et al., 2006; United States General Accountability Office [GAO], 2009). Accommodating students often requires costly and technologically advanced solutions, such as real-time captioning, video...
closed captioning, qualified sign language interpreters, braille materials, and assistive technology (Cory, 2011; Harbour, 2009; Lee, 2014; Madaus, 2000; Tagayuna et al., 2005). Additionally, new course management systems and other academic program-specific hardware and software are being procured and installed with little to no consideration of accessibility for students with disabilities (Stodden et al., 2006). Furthermore, new curriculum media platforms, such as the implementation of e-readers that are out-of-the-box inaccessible, create new and additional barriers for students with disabilities and new issues for disability service personnel to resolve (Cory, 2011; Lee, 2014; United States General Accountability Office, 2009). This in turn places the college/university at substantial risk of a discrimination lawsuit under Sect. 504 and/or the ADA (Perez & Ali, 2010).

Disabled students have also indicated that the lack of instructional accessibility, including delays in delivery of efficient and effective accommodations and services, was the primary barrier they faced in college (Wilson et al., 2000). These concerns have led to lawsuits, including the recent 2020 MIT (National Association of the Deaf et al., 2020) and 2019 Harvard (National Association of the Deaf et al., 2019) complaint decisions that dealt with online course materials and the 2016 consent decree against Miami University (United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Dudley v. Miami, 2016a), which dealt with course management software, textbook access, and inaccessible technology complaints. These legal decisions found in favor of the student/plaintiff and that each institution was failing to adhere to the legal requirements of the ADA.

Funding continues to be a struggle for disability service provision in colleges and universities. While congressional support for the legislation of Sect. 504 and the ADA was solid, funding for it was not. As a result, “…the U.S. Congress excluded funding to states, institutions,
and public or private programs” (Rund & Scharf, 2000, p. 85). While enrollment numbers of students with disabilities and costs of accommodations have been sharply increasing, budgets and resources, including space and qualified staff, have been sharply decreasing, making meeting the access needs of disabled students challenging (Christ, 2007; Dowrick et al., 2005; Huger, 2011; Madaus, 2000; Rund & Scharf, 2000; United States General Accountability Office, 2009). Lastly, constricting funds to disability services runs counter to the stated purpose of most community colleges “to open access and to help underrepresented and underprepared students succeed” (Romano et al., 2016, p.7).

Faculty comportment presents another challenge. Research shows that faculty have been found to unlawfully deny the use of accommodations, doubt the student’s legitimate need to use an accommodation, and/or perceive unfairness to able-bodied students when students with disabilities use approved accommodations (Beilke & Yssel, 1999; Dowrick et al., 2005; Harbour, 2009; Schuck & Kroeger, 1993; Sweener et al., 2002; United States General Accountability Office, 2009; Vogel et al., 1999). Additionally, disability service providers already challenged by the issues addressed above are also tasked with faculty professional development related to disability law and the methods employed to implement equal and equitable access to all programs, services, and activities. However, lacking a mandatory requirement, in addition to navigating the different rules and laws according to employee groups (i.e., unions, tenure, professional staff, administration) while negotiating organizational culture, results in severely limited disability and access inclusion training for all employees at colleges and universities (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2013; Vance et al., 2014). Therefore, in order to minimize institutional liability due to possible disability discrimination, proactive planning and communication have been found to be critical, and these efforts take considerable collaboration
between all stakeholders and disability services (Lundquist & Shackelford, 2011). This undertaking would be especially critical to the development of broader campus policies and procedures, especially when decisions related to institutional commitments towards new ways of learning are being made. Said another way, the entire campus is responsible for ensuring compliance with Sect. 504 and the ADA, not just the frequently underfunded and understaffed office of disability support services (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014; Cory, 2011; Harbour, 2009; Harbour & Greenberg, 2017; Hong, 2015; Huger, 2011; Kroeger & Kraus, 2017; Myers et al., 2013a, b, &c; Raasch, 2017; Scott, 2019; Wilson et al., 2000).

Lastly, there has been a discernable philosophical shift triggering programmatic revisions in the approach to disability access and inclusion (Vance et al., 2014). “The medical model has been at the core of the problem,” limiting full access and inclusion for students with disabilities (Longmore, 2003, p. 218). The medical model suggests that people with disabilities are deficient and broken (Brisenden, 1986; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 2009). There is historical and ongoing discrimination from the nondisabled to the disabled populations because of differences in power and privilege, often leading to disempowerment and disenfranchisement (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014; Brown, 2014; Mithang, 1996). Current frameworks have proposed the social model of disability (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 2009). By reconceptualizing the medical model to the social model, the problems of disability are now located “in the sociopolitical and institutional components of society” (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014, p.28). As a result, disability service providers now think in terms of universal design across the entire campus infrastructure (Cory, 2011).
Studies have found that providing accommodations to students in nontraditional learning environments contributes to the academic success of students with disabilities. For example, ongoing collaboration and education provided by the university, such as access to sign language interpreters, resource sharing from Deaf student teachers, orientations to Deafness, and communication with parents of the students, have greatly contributed to the success of Deaf student teachers in classrooms learning how to become teachers (Martin & Lytle, 2000). Similarly, Nielsen (2016) found that the issue of accessibility of online course materials also created access for other students who may be impacted by poor internet access, are not visual learners, or are English-language learners.

In spite of the legal requirements, access and accommodations are not always provided in nontraditional settings. For example, medical school, and its related allied health sciences, is a nontraditional environment that presents unique access challenges for students with disabilities. In these instances, students with disabilities are often counseled away from entering medical fields by uninformed faculty or staff, stating “accommodations are not possible, too complicated, too costly or that trainees are simply unable to perform…” (Meeks et al., 2018, p. 1014). Even after being admitted, students with disabilities struggle to obtain accommodations as required by law and/or are held back by “technical standards” as opposed to “functional technical standards” (Bagenstos, 2016, p.1012), and curricular policies where the student can accomplish the task and achieve the learning objective, just in a different but equivalent manner (Bagenstos, 2016; Meeks et al., 2019). As a result, litigation is prevalent, as an increasing number of colleges fail to provide appropriate accommodations in the health science fields (Bagenstos, 2016).
Law schools are also a nontraditional academic environment. Law school presents such access hurdles as learning and instruction driven by the Socratic method, the use of moot court experiences to develop the skills necessary to practice law, and the selection of law review publications through competition (Adams, 1998). Discipline-specific textbooks and legal databases are often inaccessible and thus present their own additional barriers (Boyd, 2015). Likewise, interpreters for D/deaf law students must be qualified and possess the requisite knowledge needed to process the nuances of legal language (including Latin), and then translate that message via sign language (Adams, 1998).

**College Correctional Education Programs**

Correctional education programs, in general, consist of a variety of educational endeavors, such as high school equivalency programs, adult basic education/basic literacy classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, parent education classes, and vocational training programs such as welding, along with postsecondary education programs being provided by external colleges and universities (Hall, 2015). Most of the federal, state, and private correctional facilities offer some variety of educational options (Hall, 2015; Klein & Tolbert, 2007). The range of correctional education programs is difficult to assess due to nonstandard language used in the labeling of correctional education programs, thus creating nonstandard data collection by the various prison education programs (Klein & Tolbert, 2007).

Additional published data on the diversity of participants is available, especially related to participation in correctional education and college correctional education programs across different sex and racial groups (Klein & Tolbert, 2007; Vacca, 2004). However, there is limited
data related to the participation of students with disabilities in college programs in correctional facilities. Much of the literature on disabilities in correctional programs is related to either specific types of disabilities and the impact of these disabilities within the general prison setting (Hayes, 2007; Talbot, 2010) or is focused on delivery of special education, which falls under the purview of the K-12 educational system rather than on adult learners with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education programs (Miller, 2019; Steurer, 2000). It should be noted, this current research will not be reviewing the provision of high school equivalency programs for juveniles due to the stark difference in the application of the federal nondiscrimination laws at the K-12 level as compared to the postsecondary education level.

Educating the incarcerated, both at the high school equivalency or English as a Second Language level, along with postsecondary education programs, can have significant benefits (Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Esperian, 2010; Klein & Tolbert, 2007; Meyer & Randel, 2013; Nally et al., 2012; Simpkins, 2015; Vacca, 2004). These benefits include reducing recidivism, chance at gaining preferred housing, longer recreational time, increased visitations, reduction in time served, earning higher quality meals, positive change in inmate behavior resulting in less disciplinary action, improved relationships with staff and inmates, and improved self-esteem and confidence for the inmates themselves (Dewey et al., 2020, Meyer et al., 2010, Pelletier & Evans, 2019, Stern, 2014). Most relevant to this study, released inmates’ success as they re-enter society has been found to be closely connected to the level of education the inmate received while incarcerated (Larson, 2015; Stern, 2014). Davis (2019), for example, found postsecondary programs to be highly effective at reducing recidivism and improving social-emotional success. To this end, Simpkins (2015) found “community colleges are simply the most logical and best situated institutions to provide higher learning in prison settings” (p.28).
There are many challenges in providing corrections education. These challenges include a lack of instructor interaction when a program relies on a distance learning format, outdated course materials, limited library resources, unavailability of textbooks, delays in feedback on coursework, limited access to computers and tutors, and limited course selection (Meyer et al., 2010; Meyer & Randel, 2013). Another challenge facing college prison education programs is the barriers presented by the basic design and daily operations of the prison, including the structure of the facility, the policies and procedures, and the prison administrative hierarchy (McCarty, 2006; Simpkins, 2015; Vacca, 2004; Wright, 2020). These aspects all focus on prisoner control and prison security limiting access in and out of the facility (McCarty, 2006; Wright, 2020). With the focus on security, academic staff must undergo advanced background checks, specialized training on unique policies and procedures, and training on entry/exit searches of faculty and all of their education materials. Consequently, one of the first challenges is simply getting faculty and course materials into the prison (McCarty, 2006; Wright, 2020).

One additional challenge to providing college education programs in prisons is related to the dichotomy of cultures occurring in the prison education program (McCarty, 2006; Simpkins, 2015; Wright, 2020). One apparent culture is the prison culture which operates as a closed and constrained culture where authority governs. The other culture is the culture of the academy which views itself as an open culture that encourages questioning of authority (McCarty, 2006; Simpkins, 2015; Wright, 2020). This apparent conflict of cultures creates a challenge for faculty teaching in the programs because educating in prisons can cause culture shock, creating a disorienting dilemma for faculty (McCarty, 2006; Wright, 2020). Methods of teaching and related tools that may be accepted as traditional or commonplace on the community college campus for the general student population may be prohibited in the prison setting, thus the
faculty have to completely change their methods of teaching and the materials they use (McCarty, 2006; Wright, 2020).

Despite these challenges, several strategies have been identified in the literature offering potential pathways for improving postsecondary education in prisons. Researchers have found that 1) being able to earn a credential, 2) multi-agency partnerships, and 3) faculty and administrative support were key features in the implementation of effective college prison programs (Cantora et al., 2020; Davis, 2019; Larson, 2015). One important concern is whether postsecondary education offered in prisons ought to be focused on academic degrees or on job-related credentials (Davis, 2019). Most importantly, some recognize that postsecondary education should be “some type of credential (be it an education certificate or PSE [postsecondary education] degree) that is recognized by employers, colleges, and universities” (Davis, 2019, p. 3).

Lastly, other research identified the partnership between Jessup Correctional Facility (JCI), a state correctional facility in Maryland, and the University of Baltimore as critical to the success of starting its prison education program but program faculty involvement and the university administration supports contribute to its ongoing success (Cantora et al., 2020). Similar is the example of Attica. By focusing on the needs of the local community and by the community college providing strong administrative support from the beginning, it allowed for the creation of the college correctional education program to be established in the prison (Larson, 2015). Meanwhile, community college faculty developed the curriculum (Larson, 2015).
Application of the ADA in Correctional Facilities

Six years after the passage of the ADA, prisons had not made any strides towards accessibility for prisoners with disabilities (Robbins, 1996). Additional writings about specific infractions of the ADA or Section 504 with disabled inmates indicate that even after more than 25 years since the passage of the ADA, and more than 40 years after the passage of Section 504, prisons are still not implementing accommodations for disabled prisoners (Morgan, 2017; Vernon, 2010; Weiss, 2013).

Furthermore, in 1980 the U.S. Department of Justice issued 45 Fed. Reg. 37630 for clarification on application of Section 504 in prisons by stating correctional facilities must ensure “hearing-impaired inmates [are able] to participate on an equal basis with non-handicapped inmates in the rehabilitation programs offered by the correctional agencies (e.g., educational programs)” (National Association of the Deaf [NAD], 2020, para. 4). Additionally, the ADA regulations (United States Department of Justice, 2016) state:

that a public entity may not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability, or any group of individuals with disabilities, to cover any costs of measures required to provide that individual or group with the nondiscriminatory treatment required by the Act or this part. Such measures may include the provision of auxiliary aids or of modifications required to provide program accessibility. (p. 18)

In response to the continued inaccessibility by correctional authorities, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal class action lawsuit in 2018 on behalf of Deaf plaintiffs, imprisoned and released from the Georgia Department of Corrections, as the department was not providing communication access and accommodations (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2018). Additionally, the issue of disability access and nondiscrimination within the
prison setting was re-emphasized by the state of New York’s Corrections and Community Supervision Directive, “Reasonable Accommodations for Inmates with Disabilities” (New York, 2019), which directs specific procedures for requests of reasonable accommodations and provision of services for disabled inmates. Further evidence of the continued denial of prisoners’ civil rights because of disability discrimination and lack of accessibility is the recent publication from the Southwest ADA Center, *Americans with Disabilities Act: Disability Related Access for Inmates and Visitors Guide* (Ballinger & Nguyen, 2019). This guide directs prison administrators on issues ranging from how to provide access for prisoners who rely on mobility equipment to how to be inclusive of visitors who may also have disabilities (Ballinger & Nguyen, 2019). Given the large number of inmates who have a disability, or multiple disabilities, prisons now must legally respond to complex situations requiring accommodations that can be applied in these environments that have unique and stringent requirements and limitations on materials and technologies due to security concerns (Schlanger, 2017).

**Expectations of Effective Communication, Meaningful Access, and Diligent Efforts**

Recent court cases emphasized the responsibility of higher education institutions to provide “effective communication,” “meaningful access,” and show “diligent efforts” in offering services to students with disabilities. The federally funded ADA National Network has issued clarification on how the “effective communication” (ADANN, 2017) requirement can be met using sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, closed captioning, braille, large print, or other adjustments to assist in facilitating communication equally and effectively. Additionally, recent case decisions have further delineated the expected level of disability access in higher
education, especially related to creating standards of “meaningful access” (*Argenyi v. Creighton University*, 2012) and “diligent efforts” (United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2013). For example, the court found that under Section 504 and the ADA, Creighton University failed to create “meaningful access” through the use of accommodations and auxiliary aids/services (*Argenyi v. Creighton University*, 2012) that would have afforded the same benefit to the disabled student as their nondisabled peers, and as such, Creighton was required to comply. Similarly, the OCR complaint resolution with College of the Redwoods (United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2013) stipulated that “diligent efforts” (p. 2) are more than simply trying to locate the easiest, least expensive option. “Diligent efforts” (Simon, 2000; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2013, p. 2) should include seeking sign language interpreters from farther than the immediate local area, discussion with the students of using technology for class access (video remote interpreting), and creating an institutional policy and procedure to follow to build capacity in a rural area to readily secure interpreters when needed.

Other recent court decisions and consent decrees from the Departments of Education and Justice, such as the Harvard decision (National Association of the Deaf et al., 2019), the MIT decision (National Association of the Deaf et al., 2020), and the Miami University consent decree (United State Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Dudley v. Miami*, 2016a), have identified and expanded the expectations and standards colleges and universities are to follow related to the provision of effective communication, including the provision of online technology accessibility, accessible college and university course materials, and other communication modes. The concept of effective communication, meaningful access and diligent efforts, which are still a significant work in progress within general-population college
Methodology

To identify current procedures for providing accommodations to disabled students in for-credit community college programs and whether these efforts are meeting minimum acceptable guidelines to ensure compliance with the ADA and Sect. 504, I will use an exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods design applying a pragmatic framework. As such, I am seeking concrete answers in an expedient but rigorous manner, for which “mixed-methods may be the best way to go” (Datta, 1997, p. 35). By combining quantitative and qualitative data approaches and choosing to use a pragmatic framework, the focus is on the research question and solutions to the problems that exist in the real world (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Patton, 2002). Specifically, mixed methods approach allows the researcher to seek the solutions from multiple perspectives that are working in a practical way (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Basic statistical data would be insufficient in this instance. Likewise, understanding culture, meaning making, or telling a story also would not lead to solving the practical problem at hand.

A pragmatic framework acknowledges “that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts” (Creswell, 2007, p. 23). Furthermore, a pragmatic framework concerns itself with what works and seeks solutions to problems, focusing on the research problem or question and implementing all approaches to best understand the problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The research problem is central in the
pragmatic framework. Mixed methods research also utilizes multiple approaches to best understand the research problem, using both quantitative and qualitative data to gain that understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Therefore, utilizing the pragmatic framework in this mixed-methods explanatory sequential study is the most appropriate choice of research paradigm in which to base this study. Identifying services that are or are not being provided to disabled students in for-credit community college programs in correctional facilities and the strategies used by college disability service personnel to implement those accommodations will result in practical suggestions for reducing the disparate treatment of disabled students enrolled in prison for-credit college education programs.

Methods

To explore and describe what accommodations and disability services are provided within the college for-credit classes in correctional settings while also seeking the strategies used by disability service personnel regarding how they navigate barriers in providing services to disabled student inmates, this study will use an exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to collect broader knowledge and greater understanding from multiple perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An explanatory sequential mixed methods design consists of two distinct phases: a quantitative phase of data collection and analysis is followed by a qualitative phase of data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this design, the qualitative data is used to explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The study will be exploratory, as little information is known about this topic.
and this study will serve as a baseline for future research.

The quantitative part of the study seeks to account for specific types of disability-related services and accommodations, the number of college disability service offices providing specific services and accommodations, the types of barriers experienced in providing accommodations, and numbers of disabled student inmates asking for or provided accommodations by college disability service personnel in for-credit college classes in prisons. The qualitative portion of the study seeks to identify strategies and actions, not meaning making or beliefs, that disability services personnel implement as they strive to provide accommodations within the constrained correctional setting.

Rationale

Complex situations, like this study which involves the exploration of accommodations provided by college disability service personnel to disabled inmates in prisons in for-credit community college classes in correctional settings, warrant the use of mixed methods (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Additionally, there are several other reasons for selecting a mixed methods approach. First, using a quantitative survey will allow discovery of descriptive data such as which institutions are providing accommodations and frequency counts such as what sorts of activities they are involved in. However, quantitative data will not lead to answering the “how” question of the ways in which these accommodations are being provided in the unique highly constrained correctional facility setting, whereas qualitative data can answer this question. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to fully identify the provision of accommodations to disabled inmates in for-credit community college programs (Ivankova &
The “follow-up explanations variant” of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, in particular, achieves this goal as it “places priority on the initial quantitative phase and uses the subsequent qualitative phase to help explain the quantitative results” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 82). A second reason for using this design is that by collecting descriptive quantitative data first, the qualitative portion of the investigation will be more efficient and effective because of being able to get right to the process questions of how college disability service personnel provide accommodations to disabled student inmates in for-credit college classes in correctional settings. Finally, the pragmatic paradigm, best suited for mixed methods research, seeks to identify solutions to the issue of meeting the accommodation needs of disabled student inmates enrolled in the college for-credit education programs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participant Selection for the Study

Participants in this study will be individuals who work within the accessibility and accommodation function at public two-year colleges. These individuals often have a wide range of ages, ability, job titles, and years of experience in the function of disability service provision. Institutions targeted for participation will be public community colleges that are providing college classes for credit in correctional settings. The population is limited to two-year colleges, including technical colleges, that meet the definition of a “community college” due to the nature of the programs, which are often technical in nature, shorter length of time to credential, and the origin of funding support (Ayers, 2015; Bok, 2003; Ewell, 2011; Mullin et al., 2015). These characteristics can impact provision of disability-related services or needs for accommodations.
Limiting the population to only those community colleges classified as public institutions is necessary because public institutions often have additional societal expectations of providing education as a common good for all of society (Bok, 2003). For-profit and not-for-profit private two-year colleges often have alternative rationales for their existence and may draw from different resource pools (Mullin et al., 2015) that may potentially influence the provision of disability accommodations in prison settings. Therefore, eliminating private institutions will reduce possible confounding factors that could affect the findings of this study. Colleges that are providing classes only in federal correctional settings will also be excluded from the population. This exclusion is necessary because security rules and requirements for volunteer and contractor entry into the federal setting tend to be significantly different from those found in nonfederal correctional settings.

**Quantitative Sample Selection.** The quantitative portion of the research will use nonprobability, purposeful criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has approved approximately 140 colleges and universities to provide for-credit college classes in correctional facilities. Next, the list of colleges that were approved for the first round (2016/2017) of the ED Second Chance Pell Grant awards will be cross-referenced against the list of 140 colleges and universities for comparison, matching, and verification purposes to ensure the population includes all those colleges that have been approved to provide for-credit college classes in prison facilities. This preliminary list of colleges and universities will then be cross-referenced with the Carnegie Classifications online list to identify only those that are associate colleges, “special focus” two-year institutions, or baccalaureate/associates colleges and that are classified as public institutions for this study (Carnegie, 2020). Use of the Carnegie
Classifications for identification of public community colleges will reduce the estimated population of 140 colleges and universities to an estimated population of 50 public community colleges located in approximately 22 different states that will be invited to participate in this study.

Following the identification of the population institutions, I will next use the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) membership list to locate the person responsible for disability accommodation provision. If the institution is not a member of AHEAD, I will then review that institution’s website to locate the person responsible for disability accommodation provision. This group of approximately 50 individuals responsible for disability accommodation provision will be invited to complete the online survey.

Qualitative Sample Selection. Based on a typical return rate of 55.6% with a standard deviation of 19.7 (Baruch, 1999) for online surveys, it is anticipated that I will receive from the population of approximately 50 institutions a returned survey response from approximately 18-38 survey respondents. Of those returned surveys, I am looking for 10-12 who will volunteer for the follow-up interview.

If too many participants volunteer, my goal would be to maximize diversity in my sample. To do this, I will reduce the number of participants by first selecting for region based on the ten regions of the national ADA network (i.e., North, Midwest, South, etc.) in order to account for regional diversity. I will then select participants by level of service provision consisting of two categories (“no service to minimal service” and “moderate to robust service”) to capture participant perspectives across the continuum in providing accommodations. I will then select participants by size of their community college to capture any nuances in data based
on funding and staffing differences that may occur with institutional size. If I end up with a sample that represents only those providing one type of service level, I will evaluate my current participant pool and then phone and/or email participants from the original list of 50 Department of Education/Second Chance Pell Grant public community college institutions to ask for their participation. The goal of the qualitative sample is to include 10-12 individuals who can address the actions and processes used to navigate through the nontraditional setting of providing accommodation services within correctional facilities while identifying the challenges those who have limited or no experience in providing accommodations for disabled student inmates may be encountering.

Data Collection

I will collect data for this study using a survey instrument consisting of approximately 20 questions. As soon as survey responses are received, I will begin to collect the data for the 10-12 semi-structured interviews. I describe each of these data collection methods next.

Survey Instrument

For the quantitative portion of the mixed methods research, I will design and develop a Qualtrics online survey tool to collect descriptive and demographic data (see Appendix A). For any participant unable to complete an online survey, I will send a paper copy of the survey by United States Postal Service. A stamped self-addressed envelope will also be provided to facilitate the return of the completed survey. I will use the following surveys as a creative
starting point for generating the specific questions I will write in my survey: CeDaR/AHEAD database survey (National Center for College Students with Disabilities, 2019), the AHEAD disability resource professionals survey (Scott, 2017), the Dutta et al. (2009) research related to transition services for postsecondary students with disabilities, the Christ and Stodden (2005) questions for comparing educational supports, the National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports (NCSPES) survey (Tagayuna et al., 2005), and Loucks’s (2007) research on disabilities in prison. I will design my own questions from these general starting points to suit the goals of my study.

The format of the questions will be side-by-side questions: some closed-ended forced-choice questions, some text-based numerical format, and some in which the respondents can select all that apply. The survey will also include “other” as a choice with a comment box as an option for respondents to choose from in which the provided options might not match the respondents’ situations. The final question on the survey is an optional field where respondents can volunteer and provide their contact information to be included in the qualitative second phase of the study. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

The survey information for anyone who does not volunteer for the interview will be confidential and aggregated when reported out. The survey responses and the contact information for volunteers for the interview will be kept confidential and held securely. All collected survey data will be retained on a secure Qualtrics server until the researcher downloads the data to a secure, dedicated, external hard drive. The external hard drive will be locked in a filing cabinet when not in use and all data will be destroyed at the end of the required holding period following the completion of the dissertation research.
Interviews

Upon receipt of each completed survey, I will contact, by email or phone, those who indicated on the quantitative survey they volunteer to be interviewed in order to schedule an appointment with them. By completing the voluntary question on the survey, the participant who volunteers will be presented with the consent form / release and the completion of this question will acknowledge the participant’s consent to participate in an interview and to be audio-recorded during the interview. At the time of the interview, prior to commencing the interview, I will confirm with the respondent their agreement to the interview, confirm they agree to the recording, and answer any questions they may have.

I will be conducting the interviews either by phone or online through a virtual platform such as Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other software based on the participant’s request and comfort level. For any participants who need accommodations, such as sign language interpreters or real-time captioning for effective communication access, I will arrange and pay for that professionally provided service. For interview participants who are sign language users, the qualified, professional interpreter will appear on the video communication platform (i.e., Zoom) and will be included in the video recording if the respondent agrees to the video recording. The sign language interpreter will interpret audio into sign language and from sign language to oral answers if the Deaf participant requests that service; otherwise, the Deaf participant will orally state their answers. Either way, the Deaf participant provides their answers, the audio will be recorded for transcription. The interviews will be recorded on two Sony digital voice recorders, by recording through the software application being used, or use of both methods to ensure clarity of the recording for transcription.
The semi-structured interview questions will seek to explore the management and process strategies used by college disability service personnel to provide disability-related accommodations and services to disabled student inmates in the for-credit college classes. Additionally, the interview questions seek to identify the barriers, challenges, and dilemmas the college disability service personnel encounter and how they negotiate around any barriers to providing accommodations and services. I have two different sets of interview questions, one for personnel at institutions with experience providing accommodations in the prison setting and one for personnel at institutions with limited or no experience in providing these accommodations (see Appendix B and Appendix C). Semi-structured interview questions are “pre-determined but flexibly worded questions…[which allow] follow-up questions to probe more deeply” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017, p. 47). This structure will allow me to ask follow-up questions to elicit more in-depth explanations from the disability service personnel as needed.

Each of the interview participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Only the researcher will have access to the table of pseudonyms, which will be secured in a password-protected electronic folder on my computer and destroyed at the end of the required holding period following completion of the dissertation.

Lastly, after the interview session is concluded with each participant and I confirm the participant is no longer on the phone or the online session, I will write field notes to assist with the accuracy of the data collected. The field notes will include my initial thoughts, patterns I saw, anything that I expected would be part of the discussion that was not included, and key words, phrases, and concepts the participant emphasized. These field notes will be about half a page. This document will assist me as I start data analysis.
Data Analysis

Data analysis will consist of development of descriptive statistics based on quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative data through a pragmatic lens. As is appropriate for the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, I will first analyze the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Following quantitative data analysis, I will collect and then analyze qualitative data to explain my quantitative results in more detail (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative descriptive data collected via the survey instrument will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS and descriptive statistics will be presented in forms of frequency charts, tables, and graphs. When respondents answer by selecting “other” as an option, I will evaluate those text responses and either merge with existing responses or create a new response category. Following a brief analysis of the returned quantitative surveys, I will further refine the interview questions. I will submit an amendment to the IRB with any significantly changed questions before starting qualitative data collection.

Qualitative Data Analysis

A qualified, confidential legal transcription service professional will transcribe each interview. I will then review each transcript against its own recording for accuracy. Following this, I will read the transcripts. As each transcript is read, I will develop codes. In vivo coding
will be used to allow me to retain the explanations stated by the participants in the interview for data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). From these codes, I will develop categories. I will be using a thematic concept matrix that I develop to analyze and “cluster” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 131) the specific barriers, challenges, processes, and strategies disability service personnel discuss in the interview. During this analytic process I will develop decision rules to guide how I enter data into the matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994). When a cell on the matrix is left empty due to a lack of information, I will input “DK” to represent “don’t know” for the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 123).

If I observe a pattern appearing in the matrixes that suggests all the institutions are functioning in a similar manner, I will purposely seek additional interviews, by referring back to the quantitative surveys, that look to disconfirm the pattern established in the currently collected data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This is necessary because research that is exploratory seeks to identify and include the full range of responses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

In a final step of data analysis, I will compare qualitative themes drawn from the interviews to the descriptive numeric quantitative data. Integrating the 10-12 interviews (qualitative) to the descriptive quantitative data will allow me to look for broader patterns among the combined data to “explain or expand on the first-phase quantitative results” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 65-66). This broader understanding will result in a discussion of emergent promising practices to be disseminated to the field of disability service personnel.

Using the thematic concept matrix and integrating both the quantitative and qualitative
data through the pragmatic lens, I will be able to assess how this data addresses and informs the research questions of this exploratory mixed methods explanatory sequential study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The integrated findings will include quotations from the participants to provide additional explanation of the data for the reader to draw their own conclusions.

**Quality of Research and Trustworthiness**

Due to the nature of the study, only descriptive data will be collected in the online survey. Therefore, no cause-and-effect claims will be made, and this reduces concerns about the survey construct validity and internal validity. Nevertheless, individuals are not always objective sources of data, especially when it comes to assessing themselves or their performance on a job or at work (Spector, 1994). As this study is exploratory in nature, any divergent or disconfirming data will be reported in the final integration due to the need to explore all aspects of this complex research problem. Results will be displayed in a joint display graph that arranges the quantitative data to be easily compared to the qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Therefore, it is incumbent on the researcher to clearly articulate the purpose of the study so that the reader may be able to assess whether self-report bias is an important mitigating factor in the findings (Spector, 1994). In this study, the questions are of a more objective nature that seeks to examine process, thus potentially reducing the motivation of participants to inflate their responses to maintain their reputation. Additionally, confidentiality in the survey for those who do not volunteer to participate in an interview and aggregation of the survey results should also enhance authentic responses. Lastly, the use of mixed methods further enhances “the confidence with
which conclusions can be drawn from a set of data” (Spector, 1994, p. 387).

**Trustworthiness**

To improve the trustworthiness of my qualitative data, I am using several strategies. The first strategy is to use member checking of the concepts developed from the qualitative transcript analysis. Member checking is a strategy used to create the most accurate account of the participant’s statements, as the participant is the one who owns the words and text (Shopes, 2011). I will create a half-page to one-page summary of the findings from the interview, pulling out the concepts that developed from the coding completed on the interviewee’s transcript. I will then email this summary to the participant, asking for their feedback on the accuracy of the concepts based on what they said. The participants will be able to respond by email, or I will set up a phone/video call with them per their preference. I will then incorporate any corrections or changes from the feedback into the concepts and findings. Second, I will enact a process to resolve any imbalances in data by seeking disconfirming evidence throughout the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. If a pattern of imbalanced responses, such as mostly those institutions that are providing services in prisons are volunteering for interviews, I will conduct directed outreach, seeking interview volunteers, to the schools that are not providing robust services (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Third, I will show how the qualitative data explains the quantitative data through the use of the joint display graph for the reader to review the integration of both data types (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Lastly, I will clearly outline the research design and data analysis processes to allow for scrutiny by the reader (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).
Additional trustworthiness will be established by creating and following an audit trail (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The audit trail will document and detail the specifics of how I collect and analyze the data so the reader can understand and examine the processes I used.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that it is only a snapshot in time as disability service provision changes as student populations and accommodation needs change. This decreases the consistency over time and can be a limitation of the descriptive statistics. The process or system of providing the accommodations can change when national standards change, but overall, they are likely to remain stable for a longer period of time due to national standards that recommend certain best practice policies, practices, and procedures to be in place as colleges deliver disability services (AHEAD, 2020; CASHE, 2019).

An additional limitation of this study is the possibility of the “halo effect” (McMillan, 2008), also known as the “Hawthorne effect” (Berg, 2001). This effect is the change in behaviors or responses to those that will be perceived more favorably by the researcher. Due to the legal requirements for nondiscrimination on the basis of disability that public institutions must adhere to, there may be such an effect in the responses provided by the participants. This effect can be reduced by the researcher in how the questions are posed and how those topics that may lend to the respondents desiring to be seen favorably are approached in multiple, varied ways throughout the study.

As this study is limited to public community colleges providing for-credit college classes in nonfederal correctional settings, this presents another limitation for generalizability of the
findings. Furthermore, the findings would only be appropriate for colleges and universities located in the United States, along with the correctional facilities located only in the United States. No private community colleges nor any public or private universities were included in this study. Additionally, the results would not be generalizable to any for-credit college classes provided in federal prisons. Also, the findings would only be applicable to the provision of disability-related accommodations in the for-credit college classes and would not be appropriate to generalize to the adult basic education (ABE) or general education diploma (GED) classes nor applicable to any other classes that are not for-credit college classes.

A further limitation is that the data is solely from the public community college disability service personnel, rather than including any other stakeholders, such as correctional facility administrators, community college administrators, faculty teaching in the for-credit college classes in prisons, or the disabled student inmates. An additional limitation in included perspectives is separating the prisons based on the gender housed in the facility – male prisons / female prisons. This research is not looking at the disabled student inmates’ knowledge related to the availability of disability-related accommodations in the for-credit college classes nor their awareness of the types of disability accommodations they may be eligible to use.

Finally, the study is limited to exploring the frequency of different services provided by disability service personnel in the for-credit college classes in the correctional facilities, identifying the barriers they may be encountering in providing services to disabled student inmates, and outlining the strategies and management they use to provide the accommodations in the correctional facilities, rather than investigating any cause and effect of providing or not providing accommodations or looking at meaning making by any of the stakeholders in the provision of disability-related accommodations to disabled student inmates.
Researcher Background and Positionality

As the researcher, I have over 25 years of experience in advocating, providing, and consulting / directing the provision of accommodations for and with people with disabilities in a variety of contexts. These settings include non-profit agencies, federal government agencies, community colleges, and large research-intensive universities. I have also provided accommodations in nonstandard contexts including high school students enrolled in college classes (dual-enrollment programs), accommodations for disabled students in clinical health science settings, and college correctional education programs in two minimum-to medium-security state prisons. I have advanced skill levels in assistive technologies implementation, American Sign Language (ASL), and coordinating services for deaf/Deaf/Hard of Hearing persons as well as those who are Blind/Low Vision, and a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling. I am a nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and have received professional recognition for both my work in the field of disabilities and within the larger social justice / diversity movement.

As a provider of disability services and accommodations, I have insider knowledge of disability service provision in higher education, especially having witnessed and experienced significant changes within the profession and within higher education over the past twenty years. As a provider trying to arrange disability accommodations in the complex setting of for-credit community college classes within correctional settings, I sought resources. It became immediately clear that if any literature existed related to college disability service personnel providing accommodations for disabled student inmates enrolled in community college for-credit
classes in correctional settings, I was unable to locate it. From this perspective I had to build the systems I currently use at my community college within the for-credit college classes in the correctional institutions as I worked the problem of access. Therefore, I also want to know how other college disability service personnel are providing services, especially as it relates to highly complex accommodations such as bringing in external contractors for real-time captioning or sign language interpreting in the for-credit college classes held in the prison setting. As a service provider, I understand the challenges disability service personnel experience in trying to provide accommodations in general to students on open, interactive college campuses and specifically the struggle to provide accommodation for disabled student inmates in correctional settings. This shared understanding can lead to participants sharing not only the challenges but also their strategies in overcoming the challenges to provide accommodations. With my inside knowledge of how accommodations may be implemented and some of the common challenges and solutions disability service personnel encounter, I am able to ask directed, specific follow-up questions to elicit concrete steps used to solve the access issues. For example, if a participant responds that if a Deaf student inmate requests an ASL interpreter for participating in the college classes in the correctional setting, I recognize the provision is not as simple as picking up a phone and contacting a freelance interpreter due to security requirements. I would be able to follow up and inquire about the step-by-step process the participant would use to have the prison grant entry status to the interpreter.

My professional knowledge base is wholly grounded in the social justice model of disability. More specifically, instead of believing that people with disabilities, including inmates with disabilities, are broken and need to be fixed, as the medical model suggests, I believe the central problem facing all people with disabilities, and inmates with disabilities, resides with the
built and virtual environments constructed by society (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014). If society had originally engineered the environment with the idea of inclusion for all as a core concept, the need for adjustments or accommodations would be reduced or eliminated.

Lastly, my professional viewpoint is grounded in the idea that providing for-credit college education within correctional facilities offers a means for those who are incarcerated to improve their lives. Additionally, these opportunities have been proven to reduce recidivism (Vacca, 2004). I am also strongly committed to ensuring equal and equitable access to all college programs, services, and activities through providing the necessary accommodations and services. Regardless of the program or activity, if it is available for other qualified persons, then it should be available in a meaningful and accessible way for the person with the disability, whether they are incarcerated or not.

Significance

There have been longstanding power differentials between the able-bodied and disabled communities, often resulting in discrimination and disempowerment (Ashmore & Kasnitz, 2014; Brown, 2014; Mithaug, 1996). One of the environments identified as working toward nondiscrimination for people with disabilities is within the realm of higher education. However, there is no existing research into the equal and equitable provision of for-credit college programs within the correctional setting. Significantly, this research lays a foundation for future research into this topic. This research provides data on the provision of accommodations by community college disability services to disabled student inmates enrolled in the for-credit college classes in highly constrained correctional settings.
As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) point out “Knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society, and the purpose of knowledge construction is to aid people to improve society” (p. 40). Another significant aspect of this research is that there is an increase in colleges providing for-credit college programs within prisons. This will mean an increase in disabled student inmates needing accommodations in these for-credit correctional college programs. This research will provide the knowledge necessary to change how colleges approach equitable and nondiscriminatory provision of accommodations in for-credit correctional college classes.

As a pragmatic exploratory and descriptive study, this research seeks to develop a baseline for understanding the challenges of providing accommodations in for-credit college programs for disabled student inmates in correctional settings. This study will add to the literature by providing insights on promising practices used by college disability service personnel in addressing the needs of disabled student inmates in their college courses within the constrained setting of the correctional facilities. This research also seeks to provide insights into unique ways to provide standard low-complex and high-complex accommodations in prison settings. In addition, this study hopes to inform policies and accountability procedures for ensuring colleges are appropriately providing accommodations required by Sect. 504 and the ADA when they develop for-credit college classes in correctional settings.

Studies on college education indicate that college education programs in correctional settings are an important aspect of reducing recidivism and improving post release success for those who are incarcerated. If those who are incarcerated have an opportunity to be better prepared for their post release life, then those opportunities should be provided to the disabled inmates as well. Without equal and equitable access to the for-credit college classes, the disabled
inmate loses out on improving their future. This research is significant in that it provides a road map for colleges to be inclusive and accessible in their college for-credit programs in correctional settings.

If the disabled student inmates are not able to access postsecondary educational opportunities, not because they are scholastically incapable but rather because the college is not providing the appropriate equal and equitable accommodations under the ADA and Sect. 504, this is a compliance failure that has not only personal impacts but also broad social, economic, and political implications. This research provides the tools for each college offering for-credit postsecondary programs in correctional settings to develop strategies to meet the accommodation needs of disabled student inmates.
Abstract

Objective: This mixed methods study explores the provision of accommodations by community college disability service providers, specifically what accommodations are being provided and how those accommodations are being provided, for disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in for-credit community college correctional education programs set up in correctional facilities (prisons). Method: This study used an exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Disability service personnel (n = 158) at public community colleges across the United States were invited to participate in an online survey. Thirty-three respondents completed the survey and 12 completed the additional 45-minute qualitative interview. Results: Findings highlight limited provision of disability-related services and accommodations, numerous barriers, and three themes: proactively navigating among multiple stakeholders, making difficult choices about extent of DS engagement, and raising awareness and engaging advocacy. Contribution: Discussion includes the Unlocking Abilities model along with recommendations for improving accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) enrolled in community college for-credit correctional education programs.

Keywords: Incarcerated student, disabled student inmate, disability services, community college, accommodations, prison education access, for-credit college correctional education programs, Unlocking Abilities
Research shows that providing correctional education programs to the incarcerated population reduces recidivism and improves post-release reintegration into society (Nally et al., 2012; Pelletier & Evans, 2019; Vacca, 2004). In addition to colleges understanding this important benefit, the federal government has recently approved the Second Chance Pell Grant financial aid availability (Award Year 2022-2023) for those who are incarcerated and want to attend college (United States Department of Education, 2020b). Therefore, it is likely the number of colleges providing correctional education programs will increase.

While the exact number of incarcerated students attending for-credit community college courses who are disabled is not known, related statistics and research indicate that this number is likely high. Per the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017), approximately 19.4% of enrolled undergraduate college students identify as having a disability. Research indicates that the incarcerated population is “three times as likely” to be disabled than the nonincarcerated (Valles, 2016, p. 1). The most common identified disabilities in correctional settings are learning disabilities, autism, and intellectual disabilities (Vallas, 2016). Thus, community colleges that offer courses in correctional facilities should assume that many of their students have a disability, even if they “don’t look disabled”.

The majority of colleges provide accommodations to general, nonincarcerated students with nonvisible disabilities such as learning disabilities, ADHD, mental health conditions, and chronic health conditions (Raue & Lewis, 2011). Two federal laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (2015) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008), require that colleges and universities ensure their programs, services, and activities are accessible to people with disabilities, including all courses, course materials, and course activities. Thus, colleges providing for-credit programs within correctional settings must ensure these college
correctional education programs (CCEPs) are accessible. Currently, little is known about what accommodations are or are not being provided or how these accommodations are being managed in the highly controlled correctional setting. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify: a) what accommodations public community college disability service (DS) personnel are currently providing to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs), b) how many colleges are providing disability-related accommodations in college correctional education programs (CCEPs), c) what barriers the DS staff encounter in attempting to provide the accommodations, and d) how DS staff navigate the provision of accommodations.

Literature Review

This study builds on literature regarding services provided to college students with disabilities. The literature review first discusses service provision and student experiences in traditional campus environments. The second part of the literature review dives into the service provision in nontraditional or nonstandard learning environments.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Under federal laws Section 504 and the ADA, colleges and universities must not discriminate on the basis of disability. Simply put, the college must ensure equal and equitable access to all programs, services, and activities (U.S. Dept. of Education, Office for Civil Rights,

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1 Following the AHEAD (2022) Statement on Language, I use identity-first disability language as a social justice model, recognizing disability is an aspect of a person’s identity.
Colleges and universities determine appropriate accommodations, or “reasonable modifications” (Academic Adjustments, 1980), based on the impacts experienced by the person with the disability in different settings. Some common accommodations provided by colleges can include: test accommodations (e.g., extra time, reduced distraction, tests read aloud), use of assistive technology for reading or writing access, auxiliary aids for effective communication, (e.g., CART/communication access real-time captioning, closed captioning, sign language interpreters), alternate text materials and accessible textbooks, accessible built environment (e.g., buildings and paths of travel), accessible online materials (e.g., websites, course management systems, and student information systems), and modification of institutional policies and procedures (Academic Adjustments, 1980; Colker & Grossman, 2014; Evans et al., 2017).

Despite these legal requirements, disabled (nonincarcerated) college students indicate experiencing barriers in college due to lack of instructional accessibility, including delays in delivery of efficient and effective accommodations and services (Evans et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2000). Students have also encountered inaccessible course materials, including those online, course management software, and textbooks (National Association of the Deaf et al., 2020; 2019; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Dudley v. Miami, 2016a). The need to collaborate with faculty can lead to difficulties in providing accommodations. Faculty have been found to unlawfully deny the use of accommodations, doubt the student’s legitimate need to use an accommodation, and/or perceive unfairness to able-bodied students when disabled students use approved accommodations (Beilke & Yssel, 1999; Harbour & Greenberg, 2017; United States General Accountability Office, 2009).

Complicating disability service provision, and perhaps contributing to these barriers, is the funding of college DS offices. Federal disability laws are unfunded mandates colleges must
comply with, yet there are no federal funds to help colleges meet these requirements, leaving the funding of the DS office to the college administration (Rund & Scharf, 2000). Reduced or limited funding of the DS office can complicate provision of necessary accommodations due to the cost of the accommodations, the number of staff needed to coordinate services, and the skills needed for specific accommodations. However, case decisions like the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) decision against Francis Marion University (United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014) show neither lack of funds nor high cost of accommodations can be an explanation for not providing accommodations. Moreover, the entire campus is responsible for ensuring compliance with Sect. 504 and the ADA, not just the frequently underfunded and understaffed office of disability support services (Evans et al., 2017; Harbour & Greenberg, 2017; Huger, 2011; Scott, 2019).

Nonstandard College Learning Environments

Nontraditional, or nonstandard, learning environments can be defined simply as those outside the traditional lecture-based college campus classroom. Online courses, student teaching (Martin & Lytle, 2000), medical/health science clinical classes (Meeks et al., 2021), co-op or internship classes, and law school (Adams, 1998) are all examples of nonstandard learning environments. These environments present unique access challenges. Dual enrollment located in high schools and the correctional education programs can be considered nonstandard despite their classroom-based lecture formats in that control over the environment is not under the administration of the community college or faculty and may be nonstandard in rules, policies, and practices.
As research shows, students seeking accommodations in general, standard campus programs can encounter barriers. The complexity of the nonstandard college class environment increases the likelihood of additional barriers to accommodations. Thus, despite legal requirements of nondiscrimination, access and accommodations are not always provided in nonstandard college educational settings (Meeks, et al., 2021).

**Correctional Education**

Correctional education programs vary from prison staff teaching high school equivalency programs, adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and vocational training programs to formal postsecondary education programs provided by external colleges and universities using college faculty (Hall, 2015). Most federal, state, and private correctional facilities offer a variety of educational options (Hall, 2015; Klein & Tolbert, 2007). Many of these educational programs are focused on personal development or rehabilitation and are provided by the Department of Corrections (DOC) or contractors with the DOC. College correctional education programs (CCEPs) are those that are college managed, with college faculty teaching the for-credit college programs, often focused on certificates or degrees like those provided on campus.

Research highlights many challenges in providing college education in correctional settings. Some of these identified challenges include a lack of instructor interaction when a program relies on a distance-learning format, limited library resources, unavailability of textbooks, limited access to computers and tutors, and limited course selection (Meyer et al., 2010; Meyer & Randel, 2013). Additionally, college correctional education programs experience
barriers presented by the basic design and daily operations of the prison, including the structure of the facility, the policies and procedures, and the prison administrative hierarchy, all focused on security and control (McCarty, 2006; Simpkins, 2015; Vacca, 2004; Wright, 2020).

Much of the literature on disabilities in correctional programs is focused on specific types of disabilities and physical access within the secure correctional facility setting (Hayes, 2007; Talbot, 2010; United States Dept. of Justice, 2021). Other research is focused on delivery of K-12 special education in the correctional setting, mainly in juvenile facilities (Miller, 2019; Steurer, 2000). Little is known about the provision of college disability services in the correctional setting in for-credit college classes and programs, nor is much known about the types of college-provided accommodations or the barriers the DS staff experience in trying to provide accommodations to college-enrolled disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs).

Research Design

An exploratory explanatory mixed methods design was undertaken to explore the processes used by college DS providers as they provide accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs). Explanatory mixed methods research uses quantitative and qualitative data approaches to focus on the research question and finding solutions to real-world problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This research design allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the problem or central concern in relation to both numerical and narrative description (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Patton, 2002). Using this approach, this study could gain insights into not only the number of colleges providing accommodations and the types of accommodations provided but also the ways DS personnel navigated around the
various barriers they encountered in the correctional setting.

**Participants**

Potential participants were identified using publicly available information and databases, including the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison National Directory (2020), state agency correctional education websites, press releases or news articles, accrediting organizations’ websites listing college site locations (such as the Higher Learning Commission), the U.S. Department of Education’s Second Chance Pell Grant first-round recipient lists, and the Database of Postsecondary Institutions and Programs (DAPIP). DS staff at public community colleges (majority of which education programs are two-year or for-credit certificate programs) that provide for-credit college classes/programs in state-level adult correctional facilities were eligible to participate. Of the total number of colleges and universities providing prison education programs, 159 were identified as public two-year community colleges providing college education programs in correctional settings. One community college was identified as having been established solely for the purpose of providing college education in prisons within a state and as such was excluded from the invitation to participate, reducing the total number of participants to 158.¹ Invited institutions represented 39 different states,² the nine regional divisions of the United States Census, and the 10 ADA Network regions (ADA National

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¹ This exclusion is due to potential confounding factors, such as tightly established connections between the prison administration and the college, which would be unique to this college. Additionally, any DS personnel for this college would not have to manage and balance competing needs such as providing accommodations in multiple complex settings (dual enrollment at high schools, health facility clinical experience settings, online courses / offerings, etc.) and this was viewed as potentially skewing the results in terms of how DS could interact with the prison administration and the DSIs in terms of effort and effectiveness. It should be noted, though, that an additional case study solely of this unique community college should be undertaken to better understand the coordination of accommodations for college classes in the complex prison setting.

² Territories were excluded as they may have different correctional facility systems and/or security requirements.
The potential participant to receive the survey invitation at each identified community college was located by searching each college website for the person responsible for providing disability accommodations and services. The professional titles of these recipients ranged from administrative director and manager of the disability services office to disability service office coordinator or specialist. As some schools did not have a full-time dedicated DS staff member, recipients were identified with job titles such as academic or student success advisor who are tasked with providing disability services as part of their job role. To protect the anonymity of the respondents, no demographic data was collected with the surveys. Thirty-three individuals completed the survey, a response rate of 20.89%. All survey participants were invited to participate in interviews. Twelve participated in the qualitative interview, representing nine different states. Interview participants were assigned pseudonyms and institutions’ names were not included to protect participants’ confidentiality. See Table 1 for demographic information of the interviewees.

Data Collection Methods

After receiving IRB approval, the survey invitation was sent to potential participants (n=158) via the Qualtrics email system in February 2021. Three reminder emails were sent over the next four weeks. As only nine responses were received, a second shortened survey was sent out in April 2021 to the same 158 potential participants, after receiving IRB approval. Participants of the second survey were offered an incentive (i.e., electronic gift card worth $10.00) for participating in the survey. A reminder to complete was sent on 5/3/2021. This
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>College size</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th># of Campus Sites</th>
<th>DS Staffing Level</th>
<th>AHEAD Member</th>
<th># of FTE Enrollment</th>
<th>% DS of FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South, State #4</td>
<td>1 campus</td>
<td>1 PT Coordinator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~50/yr</td>
<td>~2500 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>West, State #3</td>
<td>4 campuses</td>
<td>1 FT Director, 2 FT, 3 PT</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~1400/yr</td>
<td>~11,000 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyndi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South, State #6</td>
<td>4 campuses, 4 counties</td>
<td>1 FT Coordinator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~100/yr</td>
<td>~3100 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South, State #1</td>
<td>6 campuses</td>
<td>1 FT Collegewide coordinator, 5 PT 'DS reps' secondary to main job role (advisors)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~180/yr</td>
<td>~4700 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>West, State #7</td>
<td>10 campuses (DS coverage at non-main sites ½ day to full day a week)</td>
<td>1 FT Director, 26 FT, 25 PT staff including staff interpreters; AT profs; etc.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~3500/yr</td>
<td>Over 50,000 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South, State #4</td>
<td>2 campuses</td>
<td>1 PT coordinator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~100/yr</td>
<td>~3400 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Midwest, State #9</td>
<td>4 campus sites</td>
<td>1 FT Director</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~160/yr</td>
<td>~2400 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassie</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>West, State #8</td>
<td>Over 10 campus sites</td>
<td>8 FT staff (incl. Director) 22 PT staff / interpreters</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~1400/yr</td>
<td>~27,000 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South, State #2</td>
<td>4 campuses</td>
<td>1 FT Coordinator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>~230/yr</td>
<td>~3800 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Midwest, State #9</td>
<td>4 campuses</td>
<td>1 FT Coordinator</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~150/yr</td>
<td>~2500 FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Midwest, State #5</td>
<td>4 campuses</td>
<td>1 FT Director 1 FT Staff Assistant</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~230/yr</td>
<td>~8100 FTE</td>
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<td>Pauline</td>
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<td>Over 10 campus sites</td>
<td>8 FT staff (incl. Director) 22 PT staff / interpreters</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>~1400/yr</td>
<td>~27,000 FTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
survey yielded an additional 24 responses.

Both the initial and the abridged survey asked for volunteers to participate in a qualitative interview. Participants were offered an electronic gift card ($15.00) to participate in the interview. All participants who agreed to be interviewed were contacted by email within 24 hours to arrange for an interview date and time. Interviews were semi-structured, 45-minutes long, and conducted either by virtual online meeting or by phone. Interviews were, with participant permission, recorded and later transcribed by a professional transcription service. I completed short field notes at the conclusion of each interview to capture initial impressions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed first. Data from the two surveys was merged and descriptive statistics were developed. Next, I started qualitative data analysis by reviewing each interview transcript as it was received and engaging in multiple rounds of coding. I used in vivo codes in the first round of coding to retain the explanations stated by the participants in the interview for data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Through additional rounds of coding, I collapsed codes into categories and eventually themes focusing on ways DS staff navigated barriers they encountered. During this process I utilized a thematic concept matrix (see Table 2) to “cluster” the specific barriers, challenges, processes, and strategies disability service personnel discussed in the interview (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 131). The final step of data analysis was to broadly integrate the qualitative data with the descriptive quantitative data, looking for patterns to “explain or expand on the first-phase quantitative results” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 65-66).
### Table 2

#### Thematic Concept Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem / Issues / Barriers</th>
<th>Sample Codes</th>
<th>Process Themes</th>
<th>Equity / Access / ADA</th>
<th>Final Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“the politics,” “your student, our student,” “delays,” “manual process,” “paper,” “obtaining permissions,” “going through the chain of command,” “silos,” “accommodations denied,” “ADA doesn’t apply to them,” “they don’t know” “no technology” “prison limits service coordination” “security prohibitions”</td>
<td>support, community college, CCEP, denying and doubting, accepting vs prohibiting, neglect, assumptions, judgments, access, willingness, dysfunction</td>
<td>Engaging administrations, Leadership, Collaboration/partnerships, Help / Hope / Hindrances</td>
<td>Administrative support, negotiated processes, security clearances done in advance, meaningful access, ADA complaint, FERPA compliant, continual collaboration among partners,</td>
<td>Proactively Navigating Among Multiple Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“detective work,” “communication breakdown,” “everybody doing their own thing,” “I send it out,” “don’t know” “talk to faculty” “referrals not being made”</td>
<td>Training, outreach, awareness, role acceptance, connecting, don’t know, staffing</td>
<td>Education Acceptance Outreach Professional Development</td>
<td>Collaboration and developmental workshops with deans and faulty, purposeful outreach</td>
<td>Making Difficult Choices About Extent of DS Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have not had any DSI requests for accommodations” “not for wimps” “I am just one person” “there’s only one of me” “we’ll figure it out” “we have to communicate by USPS mail” “no tech, no internet” “inability to engage in interactive dialogue” “no documentation”</td>
<td>DSI awareness, inaccessibility, documentation, easy/hard accommodations, Assistive technology, ethical and legal</td>
<td>Awareness Figuring out how Decision-making Implementing</td>
<td>Making contact with DSIs / interactive dialogue, accommodating with time restrictions in mind, accessible formats, creating /implementing solutions</td>
<td>Raising Awareness and Engaging Advocacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Direct comparison of the survey data with the interview data on a participant level could not be made due to survey anonymity. A modified joint display graph was developed to integrate qualitative explanations for the quantitative data (Table 3). The identification of patterns of practice, processes, and strategies (the focus of the data analysis) is reflected in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 3

Joint Display Representing Survey Data Explained in Interviews (Partially Represented Here)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Data</th>
<th>Comments from Interviews as Explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14/33 (42.42%) respondents provide no accommodations</td>
<td>‘[college VP telling DS staff why DS will not work with DSIs] ‘Because they’re incarcerated, the ADA will not be covering them the way it will be for people who aren’t incarcerated.’’; ‘I’m assuming that they [CCEP] don’t have anybody disabled...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the 19 (57.58%) who provide at least one accommodation: 17/19 (89.47%) identified at least one barrier in providing accommodations</td>
<td>‘I have talked to, all the way up to state senators... “...explore different accommodations that would be suitable and meet the safety requirements of the prison too.”’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers Stated – Survey Responses</th>
<th>Interview Statements Explaining Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No technology / assistive technology available or able to provide in correctional setting: 10/17 (58.82%) respondents stated this was barrier</td>
<td>“[we need] a text to speech program that does not require internet ...because there is no internet access . “…AT would take months to go in…but they don’t allow.”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison security prohibitions creates barriers to service provision: 8/17 (47.06%) respondents</td>
<td>“...if there is an ADA issue, we have to work around the constraints of safety...” ; “...security protocols are absolute...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality of Research

This study involved only anonymous descriptive quantitative data shared out in aggregate and no claims of correlation or causation were made. This reduces concerns about construct and
internal validity. For the qualitative data, strategies used to increase the trustworthiness of the data were interview confidentiality, member checking, and triangulation with available data sources. Member checking included sharing a summary of the salient findings back with key interviewees and inquiring if it is an accurate representation of the information they shared. There were no changes based on interviewee feedback. Triangulation included reviewing each college website to confirm DS information the interviewee said was available to students was readily locatable, reviewing any published college enrollment data, and comparing the interviewee’s stated number of registered disabled students with the national NCES 2017 published data point that 19.4% of all college students have a disability (NCES, 2017).

Findings

This mixed methods explanatory sequential study found that many institutions are not providing accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) in for-credit college correctional education programs (CCEPs). If they are providing accommodations, the majority are only providing limited accommodations. Interviews highlighted the complexity of trying to provide accommodations and unique barriers DS staff experienced when trying to provide accommodations. I will first present findings related to accommodations provided. This is followed by barriers encountered and ways DS staff respond to barriers.
Survey results \((n=33)\) indicated that 22 (66.67\%) college DS staff respondents understand the DS office is tasked or responsible for ensuring the DSIs receive appropriate accommodations. Only 19 of the 33 (57.58\%) indicated they have been providing accommodations to DSIs. Among those, there is great variation in the number of DSIs who are accommodated by the college DS staff (Table 4). Only 16 of the 19 (84.21\%) respondents providing accommodations track data on the number of DSIs they serve. Of those, 62.5\% serve five or fewer DSIs. Only 18.75\% of these 16 respondents provide services to more than 10 DSIs in their CCEPs.

**Table 4**

*Numbers of DSIs Receiving Accommodations and Survey Respondents Providing Services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of DSIs Receiving Accommodations</th>
<th>Number of Respondents ((n=19))</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have the number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is also great variation in the number and types of accommodations that are provided to the enrolled DSIs. Less than 25\% of respondents who provide accommodations \((n=19)\) are providing four or more different types of accommodations to enrolled DSIs. Almost
50% of the 19 respondents are only providing one type of accommodation or service to the enrolled DSIs (Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Number of Different Accommodations Provided to DSIs by Survey Respondents (n=19)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Different Accommodations Provided</th>
<th>Total Number Respondents Providing Accommodation (n=19)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Providing One or More Services to DSIs (n=19)</th>
<th>Percentage of All Survey Respondents (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides only one type of accommodation (Extra time / tests read; braille / LP; ASL / CART)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.37 %</td>
<td>27.27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 2 types of accommodations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.05 %</td>
<td>12.12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 3 types of accommodations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.53 %</td>
<td>6.06 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 4 types of accommodations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.79 %</td>
<td>9.09 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 5+ types of accommodations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.26 %</td>
<td>3.03 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Great variation also occurs in the data on the specific types of accommodations provided (Table 6). While most respondents provide test accommodations such as tests/quizzes with extra time or read aloud, few provide services like notetaking, braille/large print materials, audiobooks, or interpreting / CART services. Of all 33 survey respondents, not even 50% of the DS staff at colleges are providing any of the specific diverse accommodations.
Table 6

Number of Specific Accommodations Provided to DSIs by Survey Respondents (n=19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodations Provided</th>
<th>Total Number Respondents Providing Accommodation (n=19)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Providing One or More Services to DSIs (n=19)</th>
<th>Percentage of All Survey Respondents (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra Time on Tests/Quizzes and/or Read Aloud</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84.21 %</td>
<td>48.49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only Extra Time Tests/Quizzes and/or Read Aloud</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.84 %</td>
<td>21.21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille / LP</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.84 %</td>
<td>21.21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only braille / LP</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.26 %</td>
<td>3.03 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter / CART</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.58 %</td>
<td>18.18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only Interpreter / CART</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.26 %</td>
<td>3.03 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiobooks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.32 %</td>
<td>15.15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notetakers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.79 %</td>
<td>9.09 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barriers to Providing Accommodations in Correctional Settings

Survey respondents and interviewees identified several barriers they experienced in trying to provide accommodations to DSIs. Five themes of challenges or barriers are addressed: 1) actions or attributes of the prison administration, 2) lack of technology access, 3) limited access to documentation and interactive dialogue with the DSIs, 4) limited DS staffing, and 5) lack of understanding of legal requirements and responsibilities. Each of these themes is addressed below.
Actions or Attributes of the Prison Administration

Of the 17 survey respondents who identified barriers to accommodation provision, eight (47.06%) indicated that the prison security prohibitions and administration limit service coordination and affect the work the DS office does to provide accommodations. Interview participants shared that lack of accurate information about the prison setting and continuous staffing changes created barriers to service provision. DS staff are often unsure what is allowed in the prison setting per security requirements and are unable to connect to the correct prison staff to get permission to bring in the accommodations. For example, Kassie shared:

…it was like detective work, like who do I need to talk to…I got bounced around and talked to probably everyone in that [prison] facility…it was like getting information on how they [DSIs] access things that was challenging…and then all of a sudden, all the people I was talking to [in the prison] were gone and I had to start over again…

As Kassie noted, figuring out the right person to talk to was challenging, but the dynamic prison staffing further complicated the disability service provision process, as staff and administrators were often changed out without notice. Similarly, Felicia explained, “…there are so many moving pieces and then, if staff change and as captains [prison administrators] change, as [prison] chaplains change, that constitutes real difficulty, breakdown in communication…” The changing of the administration and prison staffing without notice disrupted the services for the DSIs and created additional work for DS staff like Felicia.

Prison security and administrative barriers created unique challenges to providing certain accommodation such as interpreting or CART. Josie shared:

The security requirements for bring individuals into the prison is that they have to have a complete background check, after that, they have to complete the [prison
security] training and then they get a badge [to enter]…so if I need to find a new sign language interpreter to go into a class, it could be a four-to-eight-week process…

Security requirements complicated services and accommodations that DS staff may be routinely providing in the standard college environment. The actions and attributes of the prison administration, especially related to coordination, collaboration, and security processes, greatly impacted the work and efforts of the DS staff as they attempted to facilitate accommodations.

**Lack of Technology Access**

The stringent security protocols in the prison setting often prevent the use of technology, including assistive technology. Ten of the 17 survey respondents (58.82%) identified the challenge of not being able to access technology. Interview participants highlighted the challenges that the lack of technology created. For example, Kassie explained, “I am operating like decades ago, like in an environment that is decades old. It’s just, like being in the Twilight Zone…how am I going to get this information to this person [without technology].” Due to the lack of technology in the prison setting, Kassie needed to revert to early 20th-century, nontechnology-based accommodations. This required problem solving and developing new processes while also limiting what accommodations could be provided. Another interviewee, Josie, highlighted the challenges of addressing the lack of technology:

…I am still working, going on two years, with our IT department and the CCEP director and the prison security protocols to find a software program that we can install on a computer for students to use to read their [accessible] books that doesn’t require internet access.
As Josie articulates, providing assistive technology in the correctional setting that is routinely available in the standard college setting entailed a great amount of effort. Moreover, DS staff did not always have the latitude to decide what technology to use in the prison setting. Claudia shared, “…I don’t have the power to tell the prison what they [DSI] can have access to…they [prison administration] decide if the [DSI] can have access to a typewriter.” Claudia may recommend a certain assistive technology but due to prison regulations, she may not be able to provide the accommodation. This lack of technology in the correctional setting and the restrictions on bringing in new technology limited DS staff’s service provision.

Limited Access to Documentation and DSI Interactive Dialogue

DSIs’ limited involvement in the accommodation process due to their incarcerated status and the correctional setting made it challenging for DS staff to provide appropriate accommodations. Five of the 17 (29.41%) survey respondents noted the limited interactive dialogue with the DSIs as a barrier. Additionally, 6 of the 17 (35.29%) survey respondents highlighted the DSIs’ inability to provide necessary disability documentation. Interview respondents explained that when the DSI is unable to articulate their disability or functional limitations or the DS staff cannot engage in the interactive process with the DSI in a meaningful way, DS staff are often unable to identify what accommodations are needed. For example, Josie, whose college’s CCEP is an in-person learning format, explained:

…many times the students will tell me that they had an IEP in high school but, of course being in the prison, they don't have access to the IEP and don't have access to the outside world to request the IEP [from the high school]....

The DSI’s inability to request the documentation from the high school is another barrier unique
to the nonstandard correctional setting. Similar to Josie, Claudia, whose CCEP is correspondence based, she highlighted these barriers:

> I think the biggest barrier that some of our students [DSIs] have is getting that verification [documentation]…they are lucky if they can get somebody to sign something for them. You know, we are trying to ‘fit shoes’ and we are not even in the same room [to determine appropriate accommodations].

As Claudia highlighted, the nonstandard correctional setting limits the involvement of the DSI in the interactive process and the ability of the DS office to determine and coordinate appropriate accommodations efficiently and effectively.

**Limited DS Staffing**

Limited staffing of the DS office created challenges for meeting service needs. Eight of 12 interview participants (66.67%) stated they only had either one part-time or one full-time DS staff member for the entire college, even with multiple campuses. Eleven of the 12 interview participants (91.67%) indicated that limited staffing curtailed the level of accessibility activities in which the DS office could engage. For example, Felicia, whose college has 10 campus and satellite sites with an additional three correctional locations, explained that even with a larger staff of 27 full-time professionals, they were not able to provide full-time coverage for disability services at the non-main campus sites. She shared, “The other sites are not fully staffed all week long. I mean…virtual appointments are available…” Not having staff on site limited the services Felicia’s office could provide at different sites, including the correctional locations.

At smaller institutions, staffing was limited even for the main campus. Bernice explained:

> I am part-time. I am the only disability person on campus and I am part-time. So, while we do have those two correctional facilities close to us…and I have been
here for about 5 years part-time—I haven’t had any contact with either correctional facility…not providing any accommodations to DSIs.

Being part-time, Bernice struggled to address the needs of students on the main campus, leaving no time to reach out to the correctional facilities. As the examples of Felicia and Bernice highlight, a lack of staffing significantly impacts the outreach and coordination of accommodation provision with CCEPs in correctional settings.

**Lack of Understanding of Legal Requirements and Responsibilities**

DS staff and/or their supervisors were often unsure who is responsible for providing accommodations and lacked a thorough understanding of legal requirements at the level of college administration, CCEP administration, and also among some of the DS staff. Because of this, DS staff delegated the responsibility to others or assumed others will take care of the accommodation needs of the enrolled DSIs. Eight of the 33 (24.24%) survey respondents stated determining and managing accommodations was the responsibility of others, including the prison administration or the CCEP faculty/staff. Other respondents indicated they were not informed of any disabled students needing accommodations, suggesting a lack of the college administration and the CCEP staff recognizing the legal requirements to involve the DS office to support the DSIs.

Five of the 17 (29.41%) survey respondents identified that they were not getting referrals for service requests or they were not being routinely informed about DSIs. As a DS staff not aware of the CCEP at their college, Bernice explained, “…I am not aware of the program…I’m assuming they [CCEP] don’t have anybody disabled…I have not been approached as the
disability person on campus…” Others, such as Maureen, explained her confusion about the DS responsibility to provide accommodations to DSIs enrolled in her college’s CCEP by saying, “I know I don’t, not with accommodations. Um, who does that?” Both examples highlight the lack of awareness of the CCEP, which could be due to several reasons, such as lack of communication by community college administration, limited stakeholder understanding of the legal requirements to involve the DS staff to support DSIs, or as a result of limited DS staff causing them to not actively seek out information and involve the DS office across campus programs to ensure accessibility for disabled students.

Lack of understanding or legal knowledge by supervisors limited DS staff’s ability to provide accommodations. For example, Miranda was preparing to start working with the DSIs. Then her supervisor halted her efforts, erroneously misinforming her, “You aren’t going to be working with the [DSIs] because they have a different set of rules or the law [ADA] doesn’t apply to them because they are incarcerated.” Miranda’s supervisor stopped her efforts to provide accommodations, which led to no accommodations being provided to the DSIs to Miranda’s knowledge.

Some interviewees identified they use either a proxy to facilitate the accommodations or they assumed that others would provide the accommodations for the enrolled DSIs. For example, Jack explained the CCEP director is the proxy for the DS staff: “…she will say [to me], ‘well, XYZ identified with me, and these are the accommodations he or she will need...’” Jack, thus, was not directly determining or providing accommodations as the DS staff, limiting his ability to ensure that DSIs were receiving effective and appropriate accommodations. An example of assuming accommodation provision by others, Daisy explained: “…having their [DSIs’] tests read out loud, the prison will handle that because they have volunteers that can help with that…”
In Daisy’s case, she is relying on volunteers in the prison to provide the college’s legally required accommodations, with no clear agreement delineating this task and how Daisy will ensure the accommodations are effective. From the data presented, the provision of accommodations by the college DS offices may not be implemented, as is required by law, at the level of equal and equitable access that supports disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in the community college CCEP.

**Responses to Barriers**

Interview participants shared how they were often unable to overcome the barriers they encountered. In response, participants made difficult choices about the extent to which they engaged in accommodation provision in the correctional setting. Participants who chose to engage tried to proactively navigate among multiple stakeholders. In addition, participants strove to raise stakeholders’ awareness and engaged in advocacy. I discuss each of these three themes next.

**Making Difficult Choices About Extent of DS Engagement**

Participants felt forced to make difficult choices about the level to which they engaged in the accommodation process. Some participants retreated when faced with potential issues or conflicts. For example, as shared earlier, Miranda’s supervisor told her the DS office was not responsible for providing accommodations to DSIs who are incarcerated. Miranda did not feel safe to engage in further discussion or advocacy efforts. She explained, “It is that I got to eat and...
I got to feed [my] kids.” Miranda believed that pushing back against her supervisor could risk her employment status, a risk she was unable to take.

For DS staff members who engaged with accommodation provision in the correctional setting, their level of involvement varied (Table 7). Some participants reduced DS engagement in the accommodation process due to the barriers they encountered. For example, Daisy and Jack, whose CCEPs were in-person, utilized a proxy who determines and provides the accommodations for the DSIs. This reduces the effort and activities DS is engaged in to respond to barriers. Others strove to step up their involvement and outreach. For example, Claudia chose to increase her level of engagement with DSIs to address barriers, though that engagement had to occur through different modes of communication. She explained:

So everything is done the old-fashioned way, through the U.S. Postal Service… the [DSIs] get a student handbook…everything [about DS] is through the student handbook…my actual communication about qualified accommodations is directly with the student via a [USPS] letter…then that letter is also the same I send to the faculty…not only goes to the instructor of record, but it goes to the educational liaison [prison staff] at the facility.

Claudia strove to engage directly with students, as much as possible, even if that occurred via postal mail rather than in person. She also communicated with various stakeholders, ensuring that everyone had the information they needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Type of Instructional Mode</th>
<th>Type of DS Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Claudia     | - Correspondence (USPS Mail in and out) <br> - Telecourse using recorded video lectures sent to correctional site | - Mail based communication with DSIs  
- Obtains signed releases for DSI-designated 3rd party communications  
- Ensures all recorded lectures are captioned  
- Communicates with prison-staff proctor |
| Daisy       | - In-person | - Lead college faculty is ADA Rep for college at correctional site  
- Lead faculty determines / facilitates all accommodations  
- All communication goes through lead CCEP faculty |
| Felicia     | - In-Person | - Badged to go in and meet with students  
- Nine college staff interpreters badged to go in and provide services  
- Investigating AT options/audiobooks |
| Jack        | - In-Person | - CCEP director determines / provides accommodations  
- All communication is through CCEP director |
| Josie       | - In-Person  
- Live stream lectures to one correctional site  
- Online within approved intranet course system  
- Hybrid (combo of any above) | - Badged to enter and meet with students  
- Arranges college placement test accommodations at correctional sites  
- Set up service request form with CCEP  
- Holds office hours at both sites  
- Arranged contract interpreters to enter |
| Kassie      | - Correspondence (USPS Mail in and out) | - Mail based communication with DSIs  
- Limited phone when DSI calls and reaches Kassie (30-minute prison-imposed limit)  
- Obtains signed releases for DSI-designated 3rd party communications |
| Pauline     | - Correspondence (USPS Mail in and out) | - Mail based communication  
- Experienced previously entering to train on AT with blind DSIs |
All 12 of the interviewees identified the need to proactively navigate and negotiate with multiple stakeholders in an effort to provide disability accommodations. The stakeholders identified were a) DS office staff; b) community college administrators, faculty, and staff; c) college correctional education program (CCEP) administration, faculty, and staff; d) prison administrators and staff; e) DSIs / students with disabilities; and f) state-level governing body, including the Department of Corrections (DOC). While participants strove to proactively reach out to stakeholders, not all attempts were successful. For example, Felicia tried to connect early with the prison faculty, though this was complicated. She explained, “So the [prison faculty] are barely getting hired by the time the class is being taught.” Felicia’s attempts to proactively collaborate were stymied by the CCEP hiring process. Other participants, like Josie, shared how proactive outreach turned into a game of “telephone.” She shared:

…I will talk to the [CCEP] director and I will say this is what I need and she’ll say, ‘well I have to talk to the warden’…and then it comes back down from the [state DOC] to the warden who then tells the [CCEP] director…the director then will inform me.

Unlike in the standard college environment, where DS staff like Josie can directly communicate with the community college faculty and appropriate staff, Josie had to navigate through several layers of staff, both at the community college and also at the prison and state levels to provide accommodations in the correctional setting.

Some participants relied on the DS support network to overcome barriers. As Claudia explained, the manual registration process used by the CCEP denied the DSIs their priority registration accommodation. She shared this barrier with the college dean of students who was
able to find a solution: “...it was only the pushing from the dean of students [that facilitated this accommodation].” For Claudia, navigating among stakeholders meant bringing in allies to accomplish the needed accommodation. Whether participants relied on allies or managed processes on their own, proactive navigation and outreach to multiple stakeholders was key in addressing the barriers they encountered in providing accommodations in the prison setting.

Raising Awareness and Engaging Advocacy

Participants tried to raise awareness of various stakeholders, particularly the DSIs, to ensure they would be aware of and could thus take advantage of the services provided. For example, Claudia, who worked with a correspondence-based CCEP, tried to raise awareness of the services available by including information about the DS office in the student handbook:

There is an inquiry form that is in that handbook...they will fill that out...let us know that they are interested in services. They will identify via a check box the nature of their disability and then we in turn will send them an application for services and explain what kind of verification we would need.

As every student receives a copy of the handbook, including DS office information in the handbook allowed Claudia to reach each student and inform them about their rights to request accommodations and the request process. Similarly, for the in-person CCEPs, Josie strove to increase the DSIs’ knowledge about disability services by establishing a request for services form provided to every student during the CCEP new student orientation. In addition, as she explained, “I would hold office hours one hour a week at each institution in order to have students meet with me...I actually completed several intakes during that office hour with several different students at both institutions.” Being available and easily accessible to DSIs allowed
Josie to increase the DSI’s knowledge about services and ease in completing the request process.

Participants also engaged in advocacy. For example, Felicia shared that previously the CCEP had been held in an inaccessible classroom on the second floor of the correctional facility with no elevator. She advocated with the community college, CCEP, and prison administration for the class to be moved “in order to be able to provide [college classes] for all students…” Participants like Felicia often engaged in advocacy for facility accessibility in the standard college environment; recognizing the barriers that existed in the correctional facility, Felicia expanded her advocacy efforts to focus also on disabled students who are incarcerated. Another participant, Kassie, advocated for the DSIs within the state agencies: “I have talked to, all the way up to state senators and…the director of education for the entire state, and I know there is some movement happening [toward addressing barriers].” Kassie used her advocacy skills to make the state decision makers aware of the barriers to college education the DSIs face.

Another form of advocacy was adapting or streamlining processes to apply for services, which increased access to accommodations for DSIs in the correctional setting. For example, Jack developed the practice of approving the DS proxy to provide provisional services on a temporary basis while documentation was acquired, usually from an outside family member. He explained:

…I provide those complementary [provisional] services, extended time, preferential seating…based on the information that was given to me [by the CCEP director]…we do have to make those provisions with an individual on the outside, whether it is the wife or it’s the mother or the father, they [DSI] will reach out and the [family member] will get the documentation to me…you have to have that flexibility.

Recognizing existing barriers, Jack advocated for students by developing an effective process for the unique setting where their education took place. Similarly, Claudia advocated for DSIs’
needs by creating a process that allowed students to “designate a family member that we can talk to.” Having a person outside the prison system who can get involved in the accommodation process and advocate for students’ needs allowed Claudia to better serve the students. Thus, by adjusting processes, engaging in advocacy with various stakeholders, and raising awareness, participants strove to address the barriers that limited disabled students’ ability to access accommodations in the prison setting.

Discussion and Implications for Research and Practice

The findings of this study highlight the room for improvement in the provision of accommodations to DSIs within CCEPs by DS staff. While some public community college DS staff are attempting to engage in providing accommodations to DSIs, many are not providing equal and equitable access in accordance with the ADA to DSIs pursuing for-credit coursework at community college. This study identified barriers participants encountered and ways they tried to navigate those barriers.

Study participants reported typical barriers encountered in the standard college setting were compounded and intensified in the correctional setting. Like CCEP faculty, DS staff faced prohibitions of many common instructional and accommodation materials because of the overall stringent security protocols and prison administrative controls (McCarty, 2006; Meyer & Randel, 2013; Simpkins, 2015; Vacca, 2004; Wright, 2020). These barriers intersected with challenges commonly faced by DS staff such as technology access, environmental barriers, instructional and course material access, and difficulty for disabled students to work with the DS office (e.g., Evans et al., 2017; National Association of the Deaf, 2020; Scott, 2019; United States Dept. of
Education, *Dudley v. Miami*, 2016a; Wilson et al., 2000). Combined these struggles led to unique hurdles DS staff had to overcome. For example, DS staff may be used to relying on assistive technology to provide accommodations, something they were unable to use in correctional facilities. Similarly, limited DS staffing is known to negatively impact staff's ability to meet the needs of the disabled students, coordinate services, and ensure accessibility, even on their home campus (Harbour & Greenburg, 2017; Huger, 2011; Rund & Scharf, 2000; Scott, 2019).

Considering the need to travel to a different location as well as the additional extensive collaboration required to provide accommodations in a correctional setting, limited staffing becomes an even more pressing concern.

Participants who were able to overcome some of the barriers utilized strategies that align with the international Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Program Domains, Standards, and Performance Indicators for “expanding the vision of disability equity at the postsecondary level” (AHEAD, 2020). First, they identified the need to proactively navigate multiple stakeholders to coordinate and collaborate to provide the accommodations. This fits Domain 1, which includes leadership and collaboration, including collaboration with multiple “relevant institutional personnel,” and Domain 2, “consultation and information dissemination” (AHEAD, 2020). Second, the participants altered and adjusted procedures, whether entering the prison to meet with students or creating new processes for receiving documentation to improve accessibility and services for DSIs in the CCEPs. These responses align with AHEAD (2020) standards related to identifying and resolving barriers and “sharing information” to create equitable access for disabled persons. Most importantly, participants engaged in awareness raising and advocacy, whether with the DSIs, the community college and prison, or even on a state level (AHEAD, 2020). This study, thus, highlights the importance of utilizing AHEAD
standards to navigate barriers encountered by DS staff in the correctional setting. The AHEAD domains provide guidance for DS staff on setting up and managing accommodations, facilitating access, and more importantly, creating disability inclusion on college campuses. Given the number of respondents who may not understand the legal requirements and responsibilities related to disability services, there should be support for professional development and training on these requirements for not only the DS staff, but for the college leadership and all members of the college faculty and staff. AHEAD Standard Domain 5, Professional Development, supports this as a program standard to be followed. Considering the low number of AHEAD members among invited institutions (30%) and interview participants (50%), more institutions may consider joining AHEAD as their resources may help address barriers the colleges encounter.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. Due to the low survey response rate (20.89%, 33/158 invited colleges), the data has limited generalizability. Future research should explore service provision in CCEPs with larger sample sizes to improve generalizability. Another limitation is that the study only looked at state correctional facilities, with no delineation for security level (i.e., minimum, medium, maximum) or type of facility (i.e., women’s prison / men’s prison). Future studies should explore how the type of security level or type of facility influences accommodation provision. Additionally, the study only explored one perspective, the DS staff members’ perspective, of service provision in the correctional settings. Future research that includes the voices of CCEP administrators, faculty, and staff; the community college administration; and the prison administration could provide a more well-rounded picture.
Moreover, future research should explore the provision of accommodations from the perspective of the DSIs to better understand the effectiveness of services provided and alignment of accommodations with the DSIs’ needs.

Overall, this study points to a need for more research in this area. While this study provides an overview of services provided, exploring why certain accommodations could not be provided went beyond the scope of this study. Considering the dearth of research in this area, more information is needed to understand accommodation provision in CCEPs and identify ways to improve services in CCEPs.

**Implications for Practice: Unlocking Abilities**

The study’s findings point to a need to increase collaboration among the DS office, the prison/DOC administration, the CCEP faculty and administration, and the DSIs. For example, several of the survey respondents indicated that they are not notified or contacted by the CCEP that a student needs disability services. Bringing the DS office into the collaborative structure can assist with remedying this lack of notification. Increased collaboration could also allow for more effective problem solving regarding ways to overcome the barriers that exist due to the correctional setting.

Based on study findings and Brown’s (2014) ad hoc triplex model, I developed Unlocking Abilities, a model to provide guidance for practitioners as an approach to reduce barriers and increase accessibility in CCEPs (Figure 1). Within this model for collaboration, the person with the disability, the DSI, is at the center. All stakeholders within the setting are connected and collaborating with each other to support the DSI in the CCEP classes by
programmatic and environmental changes to facilitate access and inclusion. Specifically, the college DS office will have communication with the prison administration / state DOC and be involved with the college’s CCEP to ensure DSIs are aware of the availability of disability accommodations. The CCEP administration and faculty, along with the prison administration, will be involved with the DS office to assist in identifying the barriers due to security protocols or the environment. From the center, the DSI will have direct connection to the prison administration as the incarcerated person, with the CCEP administration and faculty as the enrolled student, and now a direct connection to the DS office as the disabled student seeking accommodations and services. By providing means and opportunity for the DSIs to connect with the DS office, and for the DS office to provide effective accommodations, the student is included and able to access the courses, the same as their peers.

The Unlocking Abilities model supports this cross-participant emergent coalition and would facilitate earlier connection between the DS staff, the DSIs, the CCEP staff, and prison administrators. This process strives to “unlock” the abilities of the disabled student who is incarcerated. Without equal and equitable access and inclusion, disabled students are “locked” from participation and full opportunity to benefit from the correctional programming meant to improve the lives of the individual and their communities when they return.
If the CCEP staff has not approached the DS office, a more responsive strategy, supported by this model, would be for the DS staff to reach out to the CCEP administrator or the college senior administrator to explain the importance of equal access and legal compliance. Following this outreach, the DS staff could then work with the CCEP staff and faculty to facilitate outreach efforts directly to the DSIs. For example, some interviewees stated they provide outreach materials to the CCEP to share with all students. This could increase the requests for accommodations from DSIs. Additional outreach at the start of the enrollment process is a necessary collaborative approach to increase access and inclusion of the DSIs in the CCEP education programs.
The Unlocking Abilities model also points to important considerations when establishing a new CCEP. First, DSIs likely have no means to reach out to the DS office at the community college to activate their services. This is either because they do not know about the office and their rights and/or because they have little to no access to communication technology such as email, internet, or even the telephone. Thus, DS staff and senior administrators working in community colleges need to be more proactive in their outreach to DSIs in correctional settings. The collaboration efforts recommended through the Unlocking Abilities model allow for this proactive outreach. Second, community college administrators should invite the DS staff into conversations involving not only capital and operational projects that involve ADA compliance, but more importantly, to the academic initiatives being developed. This incorporation will allow the DS staff to offer their insights and expertise on the provisions of the ADA that may need to be factored into the planning and implementation of those initiatives. The DS office ought to be viewed in the same perspective as the HR or IT department, as one that extends its influence, knowledge, and skills laterally across the community college. By supporting students, faculty, and staff through creating disability access and inclusion, the DS office is protecting the campus from noncompliance with the ADA and Section 504.

Conclusion

This exploratory explanatory sequential mixed methods study sought to understand how public community college disability service staff are currently providing accommodations for disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) in for-credit community college classes in correctional settings. Findings indicate the current provision of accommodations is irregular and
may not be meeting the requirements of the ADA nor conforming to the AHEAD standards (2020). Numerous barriers exist to providing accommodations to DSIs because of the elevated levels of control and security in the correctional setting. Those that had developed responses to barriers in providing accommodations have identified the need to proactively navigate multiple stakeholders. Additionally, they are determining the extent of their engagement in the accommodation process and may be responding to the nonstandard prison environment through awareness raising and advocacy. Providing accommodations to DSIs who are seeking college for-credit coursework to improve their lives is evolving. This research, focused on this long-overlooked population, provides considerable opportunities for continued improvement for all involved stakeholders and should be continued and expanded.
CHAPTER III

REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Chapter 1 highlighted the increasing body of research related to providing for-credit classes in correctional settings while also pointing out how limited is the research regarding accommodating people with disabilities in correctional settings. Even less research exists related to the provision of academic accommodations for disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in for-credit college classes. This mixed methods descriptive study is my attempt at filling this gap in scholarly knowledge regarding equity in access for disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in community college correctional education programs.

As I sought to explore this gap, I focused specifically on attempting to answer four questions. The first question was designed to understand more fully whether public community college disability services (DS) personnel are currently providing accommodations for disabled students who are incarcerated and participating in for-credit college classes in correctional settings. Second, this research sought to identify what accommodations community college DS personnel are providing to disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs). Thirdly, I was interested in what barriers DS professional personnel encounter when trying to provide the accommodations in such settings and, fourthly, how these professionals have navigated the provision of those accommodations.

As outlined in Chapter 2, this study found DS providers providing accommodations
across a continuum from no/limited services at one end of the spectrum. On the other end are those with more robust, fuller services and accommodations in accordance with the ADA, including policies, processes, and procedures more closely aligned with the AHEAD (2020) standards. My description of the current state of affairs for disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) enabled me to discuss and recommend several courses of action to the field of professionals working in the field of disability services accommodations at community colleges.

In this final chapter, I reflect on my overall research experience, drawing attention to some of the challenges and limitations I confronted. Following my reflection, I outline implications for practice with some recommendations to share with my professional colleagues working in the field of disability service provision with DSIs pursuing for-credit coursework. I will also include some thoughts on how I will adapt my own professional practice in response to my research findings. Following my reflection and discussion of implications, I share my thoughts on the research process and its meaning for me as a scholar-practitioner as I continue forward in my work providing accommodations for students in higher education.

Research Topic Selection

As a professional with over 20 years providing disability services for students with disabilities in several colleges and universities (research-intensive doctoral university, very large rural community college, large rural community college, and very rural medium-sized community college), I thought I was well prepared for most disability services situations in higher education. However, one day in a meeting I discovered that the community college where
I was working was providing for-credit college classes within the walls of two correctional facilities in the community. After hearing this, I immediately met with the dean supervising this program and asked for a meeting with her and the college director of the correctional education program (CCEP) to learn more about the classes and how accommodations were being provided in such a tightly constrained, highly secure environment. During that meeting, it came to light that the approach being used was perfunctory and inadequate. In other words, “if a faculty could help a student, they would.” It was also made clear that prior to my inquiry there had been limited or no DS involvement or support for accommodation services. I perceived this to be more of a general administrative oversight than intentional neglect, but nonetheless it needed diligent attention and remediation going forward. Not surprisingly, immediately after my fact-finding meeting, the CCEP director reached out to me regarding two Deaf students who had signed up for classes and were requesting ASL interpreters for access. What followed next was a journey into the world of college correctional education programs. And thus began my search for documentary resources explaining best practices and other recommendations for how community colleges provide accommodations in the college correctional education programs (CCEPs). To be honest, and as outlined in the literature review in the first chapter, I was quite surprised to find limited information and resources. Nothing in my education and experience had fully prepared me for this unique accommodation situation.

It required trial and error, significant collaboration with the CCEP director, and support from the dean of the program to develop strategies to connect with the DSIs. Then I started facilitating access and implementing accommodations for this student population. For example, initially I could not even gain access to the prison to meet with the DSIs to hold an intake meeting. Initially it was a question of whether I could be allowed to enter, like the faculty, as a
contractor. Then I had to undergo a full background check, something that can take weeks to months. While it is entirely appropriate, this security process is nonetheless a consideration when attempting to provide accommodations within correctional facilities in a timely manner. While waiting for my approval to enter the facility, I also began to seek out possible available qualified interpreters willing to enter the correctional setting and provide interpreting services. Next, after identifying those interpreters, I had to undertake the long process of having each of the interpreters complete a background check and the required Department of Corrections (DOC) required safety and security policy training. This would allow them to enter on a contractor badge and not have to be escorted in and out of the facility by the CCEP staff/faculty for each class.

These experiences provided the impetus for the research presented here. I was interested in surveying and interviewing my colleagues also working in the DS field at community colleges providing CCEPs. I wanted to see who had started to figure out how to provide access to DSIs who were enrolled in for-credit courses at their community colleges. My goal was then to share this knowledge with the higher education DS field. The intent is to help other community college DS providers who may increasingly find themselves trying to provide access in a CCEP. There likely will be many colleges that begin to provide CCEPs under the Second Change Pell Grant recently approved by the United States Congress. Therefore, this is especially timely and important information for the higher education DS field.

Research Challenges and Surprises

Two challenges of this research included: 1) the complexity of employing a mixed
methodology and 2) having participants complete the original quantitative survey. Additionally, through self-evaluation of my efforts, I identified additional challenges that I created as a researcher, especially related to assumptions I had made in writing the questions. First, I will address the mixed methods methodology challenges, then the challenge of participation in the study, and finally, the impacts my assumptions had in my research process.

Mixed Methods Methodology Challenges

Mixed methods can be a challenging methodology for new researchers who are still working on tackling the uniqueness of both quantitative and qualitative research. The key for me was to follow the procedure I outlined in my proposal. I found the qualitative data was helpful for understanding and illuminating the survey findings. This helped to articulate and describe in Chapter 2 a deeper understanding of the research problem than I would have been able to gain by using simple descriptive statistics. The qualitative responses from the interviewees provided depths of insight into the barriers they were experiencing as DS staff, both within the correctional setting and in the standard college settings. Some of the other surprises had more of a disheartening or dismayng impact for me. These included one of the DS providers saying that in all his years he had never been asked about his providing accommodations to the DSIs. This struck me as clear evidence of higher education’s overlooking this large population of uniquely situated people. A more disheartening surprise from this research was one DS provider’s statement about health science clinical site accommodations. For health science classes the DS staff simply accepted the faculty’s statements without further investigation. The faculty informed the DS staff that nurses needed to have hearing and sight, so students with those disabilities
would not be afforded accommodations in the clinical settings. Another disheartening surprise from the research was the response that one DS staff simply looked at their budget and determined that the cost of sign language interpreters was not feasible and denied the Deaf student their effective communication. The disheartening part was that denial of an accommodation for undue burden (cost) needs to be made at the President or Board of Trustees level of decision making based on the finances of the entire college, not just the DS department’s budget. Additionally, this DS provider did not attempt further investigation of options for providing interpreters with the faculty. Investigating the actual format of the class could have elicited options. One such option is negotiation with an interpreter when the lab is a short lecture at the beginning with extensive individual hands-on activities for the remainder of the class time, like in an automotive or welding lab class. An interpreter may consider this format low risk for repetitive stress injury because of the extensive noninterpreting time when waiting for faculty clarifications of students’ questions. That could mean possibly not needing a team interpreter, thus cutting the cost in half.

Mixed methods research, by its nature, simply unearths and reveals considerably more data by sheer quantity than solely quantitative or qualitative. While the depth of the information shared was occasionally disheartening, it provided considerable data for the research. Likewise, I believe mixed methods research also produces a higher quality of data as the data is both numerically descriptive while also richly narrative. This is useful for gaining a more holistic understanding of what is happening in the field.

However, as a researcher for the purposes of this dissertation, the vast amount of data required that I cull it down to fit the parameters of the paper requirements. This meant having to select the focus of the findings rather than sharing all the data. I had to focus on the three
research questions and only present the data that directly answered these questions, especially with the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data. This means I was unable to do as deep a dive into the topic as I wanted. However, I do have mountains of data to continue writing on this topic. In final analysis the first lesson I learned was that mixed methods really was the most appropriate method to undertake this study. I wanted to know not only the number of schools providing accommodations but more in-depth information about how each DS professional was providing accommodations and what barriers they were experiencing. This study caused me to start thinking how a case study of a specific school that is providing DSIs accommodations might have produced data and insights into disability service provision in correctional settings. As much as I appreciate the mixed methods study, I also have developed an appreciation for the applicability of other methods, such as a case study – if I had had enough initial information to determine what school might be a good candidate for a case study.

On the second research challenge, I mainly attribute the low completion rate to any or all of the following four possible conditions. First, the longer length of the original survey. Second, an outcome of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Third, concern that other DS professionals would learn the participant’s school was not providing accommodations for general disabled student populations and/or DSIs, despite there being IRB protocols and protections in place. Fourth, the DS staff who were invited to participate felt they could not answer the survey questions in any meaningful way. For example, they either were not providing accommodations for DSIs or had little to no knowledge and/or skills facilitating access in the CCEP classes, so elected not to participate. As a means of trying to adjust for the initial low response rate, I revised the original survey to create a shorter, easier to complete survey that received IRB approval to send out. Additionally, I offered an e-gift card for $10.00 for completing the survey.
and $15.00 for completing the interview as a thank you for the respondent’s time and effort. One option, if I were to redo the study, would be to consider changing the methodology to solely qualitative and include a question regarding the program data about number of DSIs served and number and types of accommodations. However, the response rate of those completing the survey and then volunteering for the interview was only 36.36%, so it may be that I would have gotten a lower response rate of those completing just the interview.

If I could have completed this study with any means possible, I would have approached the U. S. Department of Education (ED) and asked for their assistance in assessing the provision of accommodations in the CCEPs. The ED has the means to facilitate the dissemination of the survey to all community colleges that have a CCEP program. They can also use the Education Department’s survey system to send out and collect the responses. Additionally, the ED has the means to send out a letter to each college president strongly encouraging the completion of the survey as part of the data reporting the Education Department needs from colleges. It is hard to discern if the responses in this study are fully reflective of the actual provision or lack of provision of accommodations to DSIs. On the one hand, I was pleasantly surprised by the number of survey respondents who indicated they were providing accommodations to DSIs (19). On the other hand, I was dismayed that out of 158 DS offices that received the invitation, only 19 (12.03%) responded that they provided accommodations. Staff in offices that do not provide accommodations may have been more likely to ignore the survey invitation. There is no way to know for sure if colleges that provide accommodations to DSIs in CCEPs likewise ignored the survey invitation.

One additional challenge of note was that no single comprehensive list of community colleges providing correctional education programs existed. Of the lists that did exist, most did
not identify whether the college was providing for-credit college classes or if they were
providing noncredit adult basic education programs. Cross-checking the many lists facilitated the
process of identifying potential participants, but this in and of itself was a cumbersome process.
Interestingly, a National Directory of Higher Education in Prison Programs was published by the
Alliance for Higher Education in Prison (AHEP, 2020) as I was sending out the survey invitation
to the invitees on the master list I had assembled. However, I found the AHEP list to be
incomplete. The college I work at was not included on the list and the school had been providing
for-credit classes in two state facilities for over 20 years. I did use the AHEP list to double check
the community colleges I had already identified to receive the invitation letter. At that point in
time, my compilation was more complete than the AHEP list.

During data analysis, I did have many surprises and insights. One surprise was that only
48 of the 158 invited to participate are Association on Higher Education and Disability
(AHEAD) members. More specifically, not as many AHEAD members responded as I had
anticipated. In other words, half of the interviewees were not members of AHEAD, nor was
anyone else at their institution. To me this was surprising as AHEAD is the premier professional
organization providing disability guidance and resources to higher education professionals
working in the field of disability services, access, and inclusion. A second surprise, as I
mentioned above, was that there was no one central, comprehensive source listing the
community colleges with for-credit partnerships with correctional facilities. A third surprising
finding was the number of college DS staff stating they had not been asked to provide DSIs with
accommodations. This is surprising as during this study it became clear that DSIs have zero
means of identifying the college staff person to contact and no method of communicating with
disability offices on community college campuses. Conversely, office staff within disability
offices had largely never really thought to proactively reach out to the DSIs either.

Lessons Learned as a Researcher

Survey creation and the subsequent lack of survey response to my original survey provided two additional growth opportunities for me as a researcher. While I have designed numerous surveys as a higher education professional, survey creation is an art unto itself. Despite having put a considerable amount of time into the questions, I think I overestimated both the amount of time participants would be willing to use to complete the survey as well as the eagerness with which participants would be willing to do so. During my survey revision, I determined several questions were not vital to the central questions I was seeking to answer. While there would have been nuanced data related to the frequency of providing every type of accommodation, it was more important to get a general overview of numbers of DSIs and common accommodations provided. The collection of data on providing accommodations for students in other nonstandard learning environments (i.e., clinical settings) would have been interesting for comparison. However, it would not have answered this study’s research questions. Another challenge was using Qualtrics as a survey builder. At times it was a steep learning curve to format the questions. This is a software tool that I hope to become more proficient with as I continue my research.

One final lesson was learning how to manage the semi-structured interviews. Although one of the reasons to use the semi-structured format is that participants’ interview responses could take many unanticipated directions, there is a learning curve in using this format. I discovered that in answering one of the early questions, respondents often ended up providing
information to answer later questions. Additionally, a respondent might understand the question in a slightly different way than I originally intended, which would often lead to even more information, but not necessarily directly tied to the research questions. A final point I learned was the differences in language and terminology used from one region to another or from one professional practice to another. An example is how a student affairs practitioner as a DS staff talks about student development and advocacy skills compared to a former special education teacher now working as DS staff at a college. Part of this challenge is due to being a new researcher using semi-structured protocol. I will continue to develop my skills for allowing the respondent to lead in their direction while ensuring that I am gathering the needed research data.

Another part of this challenge could have arisen from what I now realize are assumptions I made when writing the survey and interview questions. I wrote them using my practitioner lens as a veteran disability services provider with more than 20 years experience and an AHEAD member. As responses came from the interviewees, I began to recognize the assumptions I had made as I prepared the questions. First, I assumed when I stated “providing accommodations” that it is understood by DS staff to mean effective access / effective accommodations. However, I realized that not everyone has that same understanding of providing accommodations and what it involves to be truly effective. I also realized that many of the interviewees shared no procedural information that highlighted any incorporation of AHEAD or CAS standards into their DS office work. I also realized I had assumed that the DS offices are incorporating the student’s voice into the accommodation process, but several respondents shared unilateral and final decisions that denied accommodations and dismissed further interactive dialogue with the student. Now that I realize I came into the research process with my own assumptions, I look at how I am writing questions or surveys. I will work to not make those assumptions and be explicit
Implications for Practice

There are several practices that community college disability services, along with the college correctional education program (CCEP), college administration, and even the state Department of Corrections, can implement to continue to improve the equal and equitable access for disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs). For example, one of the interviewees shared that she has the students fill out release of information forms to fax to high schools to assist the DSIs in collecting their IEPs/504 plans. After hearing that, I developed a correctional site-specific release form that could be easily completed by the DSI. Then the CCEP staff would scan and email it to me and I would fax it to the high school. This change in practice has even allowed me to reach out to the correctional facility medical staff and inquire about their release of information practice and any HIPAA forms they use. I have been able to collect those forms from the medical staff to share with the DSIs when needed. When I meet with a student who indicates they have been diagnosed with disabling conditions by the correctional medical staff, I pull out the HIPAA form and explain the DSI can complete it and I can send it to the medical staff on their behalf. This has facilitated a more efficient and quicker response time to receive the documentation. What had taken months, if the student’s request to the prison medical office was even acknowledged, now takes only a day or two to receive the medical documentation.

Based on my research, I developed a set of best practices. I’m hoping to share this set via professional associations and publications with practitioners in the field. Some of these suggestions are found in the Correctional Setting Barrier Navigation Assessment Tool (CSBNA)
(Appendix D) and the Disability Accommodation Considerations for Community College Correctional Education Tool (DA4CE; Appendix E). While not all recommendations may be applicable to all programs, it would be important for each program to assess their current process and services and build these best practices in their strategic plans. I was surprised at the number of ideas and approaches that I gathered from my colleagues that I adapted or plan to adapt to my service provision. Additionally, it is also important to note that several of the recommended best practices ultimately align with the national AHEAD Disability Resource Program Domains, Standards, and Performance Indicators (AHEAD, 2020).

The first best practice will be to intentionally connect the disability services office to the senior administration and the administration of the CCEP, along with other campus resource offices such as information technology (IT). Applying the Unlocking Abilities model as a cross-participant emergent coalition approach to working with all the stakeholders is an initiative that will intentionally connect all the parties. This will facilitate greater barrier reduction and fuller inclusion of the DSIs. Given the unique setting and security requirements, successful implementation of full access and inclusion for disabled students who are incarcerated relies on support and involvement of the administration of the CCEP.

The next best practice is that the community college administration will know and understand the situational limitations imposed on the CCEP, such as the college IT department assisting with technological problem solving. The senior community college administration and the CCEP administrator would need to be included on communication and negotiation with the prison administration (warden) and ultimately the state Department of Corrections (DOC). This would be needed to advocate for policy or process changes to allow the college DS staff to facilitate the more complex accommodations of sign language interpreters, real-time captioning,
assistive listening amplification devices and large print/braille or audio-formatted print materials. Partnership in the educational process is necessary in the nonstandard educational setting of the correctional facilities. This best practice aligns with the AHEAD Standards Domain 1: Leadership and Collaboration and Domain 2: Advise and Educate about disability and inclusive practices.

Another best practice is to have the DS personnel directly involved with the disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) to complete the interactive process for accommodation requests. To facilitate this best practice, DS personnel may need to work with the CCEP administrator to facilitate the entry process, including background and required security trainings from the prison administration (warden). If direct entry is not possible, then the DS professional may need to work with the prison administrator or state DOC to allow the CCEP administrator to connect via the secure and approved internet and using an approved video-conferencing platform (i.e., MS Teams). Alternatively, the DS office may develop an efficient and timely paper and postal service-based interactive process. This will directly connect the DS personnel with the requesting DSI to complete the interactive process. Completing the interactive dialogue as part of determining the appropriate accommodations process is necessary to discuss with the DSIs the barriers they experience because of the learning environment impacting and interacting with the disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 direct nondiscrimination in the provision of all programs, services, and activities. By providing for-credit college classes in the correctional settings, community colleges are creating another program or activity that must be nondiscriminatory and provide equal and equitable access. Removing the DS personnel from this interactive process can complicate or even
eliminate the provision of appropriate accommodations by not providing equal access to the community college programs and services, including classes in nonstandard environments. This can potentially put the college at risk for an official student complaint of disability discrimination and subsequent state or federal investigation of the complaint. More important, this would impede the student’s ability to participate in postsecondary education with their peers.

In addition to the recommended best practices above, another recommendation is to have the disability services personnel actively involved with the correctional facility administration (warden) and especially the state Department of Corrections (DOC). This recommendation incorporates AHEAD Standards: Domains 1- “Leadership & Collaboration”; 2-“Consultation & Information Dissemination”; and 3 – “Access and Equity” (AHEAD, 2020). Involving the DS staff at this level of discussions will increase dialogue especially related to prison policies and processes that impact the DS office in providing the necessary accommodations. For example, when the prison or DOC is considering technology options for the incarcerated, being able to ensure accessibility tools are enabled to work with the new technology is critical to the DS office’s ability to facilitate the required accommodations. Recently I was able to develop this advocacy with the CCEP director and the department dean who sit on a state committee for correctional education. They informed me that the DOC is considering changing the technology available to the incarcerated from the secure, but unreliable and very small, keyboardless tablets to a secure Chromebook system. Knowing that there are some essential built-in accessibility features on Chromebooks, I advocated that both the director and the dean inform the state committee of the need for the accessibility features to be available. The response is the state will work with me to turn on the features for the DSIs identified as needing them. Ultimately, my goal is to continue to advocate that the state defaults all the accessibility features as available to
all the participating students. That way a student who chooses not to identify as having a
disability with the DS office, but who is impacted by a disabling condition in the learning
environment, can access their materials with no need to connect with the DS office. That would
be full equal and equitable access and inclusion, as the student’s peers do not have to connect
with an office and complete a separate process just to read their textbooks.

One additional best practice critical for DS personnel as they work to facilitate equal and
equitable access would be to develop skills in creativity and flexibility. Basically, what works for
disability accommodations outside the correctional setting may not work inside. In fact, as many
disability accommodations have incorporated digital technology tools, it is likely that DS
personnel will have to consider “going old-school” for accommodations inside the prison. For
example, with high-speed internet and computer video, accommodations for nonincarcerated
students who are Deaf or hard of hearing have moved to more internet-based services such as
remote real-time captioning or sign language interpreters. However, reverting to previously used
in-person sign language interpreters or real-time captioners/stenographers may be necessary due
to the security prohibitions that exist in correctional settings. This accommodation may be
complicated by the security process to approve outside contractors to enter the premises.
However, it ultimately could be the only means of providing effective communication to the
students who need the accommodation, given the numerous limitations. Another example of
appropriate accommodations that have transitioned from “low-tech” pen and paper to “high-
tech” methods is the provision of class notes. However, DS personnel may find prison security
prohibits recording devices, which are the tools that many high-tech notetaking devices or apps
use. College DS personnel can revert to the process that had been used historically before
technology was introduced to notetaking: the use of volunteer or paid notetakers (such as a
college class assistant) to provide the notetaking access. This suggested best practice incorporates AHEAD Standard Domain 3—“Access and Equity”, and Domain 4 – “Office Administration and Operations” (AHEAD, 2020).

Another best practice necessary for the success of the DS office in providing equitable access to DSIs is to ensure there is the appropriate level of resources and support for the DS office. This is needed for the DS personnel to be able to meet the accommodation needs in such a complex, nonstandard learning environment. This is the responsibility of the community college senior administration to provide the DS office with the resources it needs. The DS office is tasked with ensuring equal access to all programs, services, and activities of the college for disabled students. This includes the complex nonstandard learning environments that are emerging within the college academics, such as online learning platforms and course materials; dual-enrollment programs offered both on campus and at the high school settings; health science clinical experiences and program-specific internships; and the subject of this study, college for-credit classes provided within correctional systems. Therefore, the community college administration needs to ensure that DS office staffing and budget resources are appropriate to meet these increasing, and increasingly complex, needs. As identified in this research, many smaller community colleges operate leanly, often with a single full-time (or in some cases only a part-time) DS staff member. For these resource-limited offices, trying to address complex barriers arising from nonstandard settings may result in reduction of services and support to all disabled students. There may even be elimination of services to the disabled students enrolled in those complex settings due to simply not having time, staffing, or funding to facilitate problem solving needed in these highly complex arenas. This recommendation for community college administration to support the DS office through appropriate staffing and budget resources aligns

The last recommendation is for the community college senior administration to support DS staff, through funding and release time, to participate in ongoing professional development. The training opportunities should be related to disability services, legal requirements, higher education, assistive technology, and other quality trainings related to the responsibilities of the DS office. With rapidly changing technological and pedagogical approaches, along with increasing legal decisions, the skills and knowledge previously used by the DS office and the community college may no longer be effective or efficient. Ongoing training opportunities increase implementation of new approaches that can enhance capacity for meeting the needs of disabled students in a variety of environments, including the increasing number of nonstandard learning environments. This aligns with AHEAD Standard – Domain 5 – “Professional Development” (AHEAD, 2020).

In summary, because college disability services should be involved in facilitating access in all community college programs, services, and activities for disabled students, many of the recommended best practices focus on collaboration, communication, leadership, and coordination. Education or professional training and development of all stakeholders inside and outside the organization are critical to collaboration and coordination of processes and services. However, equity and inclusion for disabled students who are incarcerated and involved with the CCEP begins with conversations with the community college senior leadership and the college correctional education program administration to identify gaps and opportunities for increasing
this collaboration and coordination.

Future Research

Completing this research provided an opportunity to study a real-world situation and potential best practices to improve coordination and facilitation of disability-related accommodations in a highly nonstandard setting for college classes, the correctional setting. Completing this research also provided the opportunity to begin developing a research agenda. While completing the data collection and analysis, I began to realize additional areas that are needing further study. These include general accommodation provision among various sizes of community colleges, DS staff knowledge and understanding of determining effective accommodations, and the benefits to the community college of continued professional development participation by DS staff. What I envision for my future research dissemination is becoming a resource for other community college DS staff on how to develop and implement their accommodation process in the nonstandard correctional setting. Access and inclusion can be created in our CCEPs, and it is up to those of us who are doing so to support all the DS staff who are new to this environment.

Regarding provision of accommodations to DSIs, as this was an exploratory study, there continues to be significant opportunity to expand research on this topic. Given the amount of data I collected and analyzed for this dissertation, I plan on continuing to develop papers based on this study. Furthermore, I see this study as the starting point for my research agenda and plan to continue writing, and hopefully publishing, on access, inclusion, and disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs). One of my goals from this work is to develop a report that can be shared
out nationally that addresses the accommodations, barriers, and means of reducing or removing the barriers colleges would experience in providing accommodations in the correctional setting.

Based on this study, additional research should be completed by others in the field to increase the knowledge regarding disability service provision in for-credit college and university classes within the correctional system, including:

1. Assess how four-year institutions and private institutions are managing this required access;

2. Research the collaboration process from the perspective of the community college correctional education program administration, staff, and faculty;

3. Critically important is research to assess the DSIs and their perspective on the level of disability accommodations meeting their accommodation needs for equal and equitable access and inclusion;

4. Conduct a case study of the single community college that was established solely to provide college education to those who are incarcerated within the Alabama correctional system – J. F. Ingram College --in terms of their provision of disability-related accommodations;

5. After the Pell Grant ban for college classes within correctional systems is fully lifted, research whether the increase in colleges providing education changes the involvement levels of DS offices in facilitating equal and equitable access for DSIs;

6. Study the process of facilitating accommodations for college correctional education in regard to the collaboration and coordination between the college correctional education program administrator, faculty, and the DS personnel;

7. Additional research is needed on the involvement and/or perspective of the correctional system administration, including state DOC administration, on facilitating disability accommodations in for-credit college education programs hosted by external colleges and universities;

8. The current study did not delineate service provision along prison security levels, nor did it include review of services at federal facilities; therefore, additional research into service provision and barriers among minimum-, medium-, and maximum-security and between state and federal correctional settings could identify solutions that colleges and universities could use to provide disability access in their for-credit correctional programs.

While colleges and universities continue to support college for-credit education programs
within correctional systems, it will be important to continue to improve access for and inclusion of disabled students who are incarcerated. Similar to any other field of study, rigorous, ongoing research on the subject is needed. Neglecting this critical field of study would be to diminish inclusion of an underrepresented / marginalized population, essentially “locking abilities” when the DS office can unlock abilities through access and inclusion. With this topic, future researchers have an opportunity for developing a robust research agenda.

Career Goals

My future career goals include advancing into a senior leadership role, as an assistant dean or a dean/vice president at a community college. The dissertation process and the development of the collaborative model, Unlocking Abilities, have afforded me the opportunity to further recognize stakeholder networks. This is critical to the work of a senior administrator, as that position is really about collaboration, identifying the issues important to each stakeholder, and facilitating solutions that support the stakeholders. While I have considerable experience in student affairs and higher education that extends beyond the provision of disability accommodations, the dissertation process solidified that experience and knowledge in a more concrete way. Working in administration would allow me to provide leadership that supports initiatives that seek to unlock the potential of students, both those with and without disabilities.

Final Thoughts on the Research

This research investigated overall numbers across the United States of community
college disability services providers at schools that have for-credit college classes in state-level correctional settings. It also looked at the types of accommodations being provided along with the barriers DS staff experience when trying to provide those accommodations. Based on my findings, there is a considerable range in the level, quality, and types of accommodations being facilitated while encountering various barriers in implementation. It was important to collect this data, but it was also a slightly disheartening process for me personally. As the ADA has been in existence for over 30 years, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is coming up on its 50th anniversary, I was assuming that disability service provision at community colleges had achieved greater access and inclusion for disabled students, let alone DSIs. Witnessing the large variance in services, advocacy, education, and college administration support for disability services office was dismaying. The AHEAD and CAS standards are available to help each college develop fully robust processes and supports to increase access and inclusion of disabled students. From this research project, it appears that there is still room for improvement for colleges. It is my sincere hope that this study will be the beginning of greater effort and resources being extended in this area.
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APPENDIX A

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY ORIGINAL LONG VERSION
Survey

1. Are you the person at the college that facilitates or arranges accommodations for enrolled
students with disabilities?
   a. ___ Yes
   b. ___ No

2. As the respondent of this survey, what is your title or position at the college?

3. The college disability services office / personnel has (number of):
   a. ___ Full-time staff (director/manager; specialists/coordinators; administrative
      assistants/secretaries)
   b. ___ Part-time staff (director/manager; specialists/coordinators; administrative
      assistants/secretaries)
   c. ___ Student workers / interns / graduate assistants / volunteers
   d. ___ Other: ____________________________

4. The college disability services office aligns with (reports to) which college unit?
   a. ___ Academic Affairs
   b. ___ Academic Affairs/Student Services unit (shared CAO/SAO)
   c. ___ Adult and Community Education
   d. ___ Business Services / Facilities
   e. ___ Diversity Officer (DEI unit / Affirmative Action)
   f. ___ Human Resources
   g. ___ President’s office
   h. ___ Student Affairs / Student Services
   i. ___ Workforce Development
   j. ___ Other: ____________________________

5. The college prison education program / for-credit class coordination aligns with (reports
to) which college unit?
   a. ___ Academic Affairs
   b. ___ Academic Affairs/Student Services unit (shared CAO/SAO)
   c. ___ Adult and Community Education
   d. ___ Business Services / Facilities
   e. ___ Diversity Officer (DEI unit / Affirmative Action)
   f. ___ Human Resources
   g. ___ President’s office
   h. ___ Student Affairs / Student Services
   i. ___ Workforce Development
   j. ___ Other: ____________________________
   k. ___ Don’t know
6. Over the previous 3 years, has the college disability service personnel provided accommodations/services to enrolled general population students enrolled in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Number of students with DS worked with in each of the various settings over the previous 3 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dual enrollment at high school sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual enrollment in online classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual enrollment in college campus classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science major students in external clinical experience sites (nursing, PTA, OTA, Sonography, Radiology, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General students placed in external experiential learning settings (internships, externships, apprenticeships, practicums, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General students taking online classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. The college prison education program / for-credit college classes are provided in which type of prison or correctional setting? (If prison settings have changed, include those that were in effect within the past 3 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Correctional Setting</th>
<th>College classes at 0 institution of this type</th>
<th>College classes at 1 institution of this type</th>
<th>College classes at 2 institutions of this type</th>
<th>College classes at 3 institutions of this type</th>
<th>College classes at 4 institutions of this type</th>
<th>College classes at 5+ institutions of this type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Prisons (any level of security)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Level Prison – Public (minimum to medium security)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Level Prison – Public (maximum security)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Level Prison Private (minimum to medium security)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Level Prison – Private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Level Prison – private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>0 class per semester</td>
<td>1 class per semester</td>
<td>2-3 classes per semester</td>
<td>4-6 classes per semester</td>
<td>7-10 classes per semester</td>
<td>11-15 classes per semester</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face to face in prison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence (paper in and out)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Online (intranet) with teachers downloading completed work and uploading readings and assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid (face to face and online/correspondence)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV or live stream lectures with assignments/tests submitted electronically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV or live stream lectures with assignments/tests paper based brought in/out</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other format (explain):
9. Describe the faculty who teach in the prison education program:
   - Don’t have knowledge of faculty in the prison college classes (go to question 12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty employment classification</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Few (1-3)</th>
<th>Some (4-6)</th>
<th>Frequent (7-9)</th>
<th>Most (10+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time faculty assigned from general campus faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjunct regular general campus faculty assigned to teach in prison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-regular / non-general campus adjunct hired specifically to teach</td>
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<tr>
<td>in the prison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time faculty hired only to teach in the prison</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers only teach in the prison college classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other faculty type (specify):

10. On average, how are you notified that a general population (including dual enrollment / early college) student is requesting or needing disability accommodations or services?
    (may have multiple contacts regarding a single student in the counts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contact</th>
<th>None (0)</th>
<th>Few (1-5 times per semester)</th>
<th>Some (6-12 times per semester)</th>
<th>Frequently (13-20 times per semester)</th>
<th>Most often (21+ times per semester)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student contacts disability service office / personnel directly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent of student contacts disability service office / personnel directly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student discloses disability on admission application, Admissions staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>contact disability services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discloses on placement test materials or at the time of placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>test and testing center contacts disability</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services office / personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation is received from high school (no contact initially from student)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation is received from clinician (no contact initially from student)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Alert notification system (instructor or advisor submits alert notice)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in system, alert is received by disability services office / personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty contact regarding student concerns and disability services office personnel follow up on the referral with the student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Students / VP Academics / VP Student Affairs / Conduct Officer contact Disability Services personnel about concerns related to a student with disability or possible disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Mental Health Counselor contacts disability services personnel about student with disability or possible disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIT / CARE / Threat Assessment team coordinator contacts disability services regarding student of concern</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other means of notifying institution (specify means and frequency):

**11.** How are you notified that there is a disabled student inmate in the prison college program who is requesting accommodations because of a disability?

- Disability services office or personnel are not notified there are disabled student inmates enrolled in the college prison education program requesting disability accommodations (go to question 14)
- No disabled student inmates have been enrolled nor have not requested accommodations in the college prison education classes (go to question 14)
- Other: __________________________ (go to question 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contact</th>
<th>None (0)</th>
<th>Few (1-5 times per semester)</th>
<th>Some (6-12 times per semester)</th>
<th>Frequently (13-20 times per semester)</th>
<th>Most often (21+ times per semester)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student contacts disability service office / personnel directly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College prison education coordinator/director or liaison notifies disability services office / personnel when student asks for accommodations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discloses disability on admission application, Admissions staff contact disability services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discloses on placement test materials or at the time of placement test and testing personnel contacts disability services office / personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College faculty teaching in prison will contact disability services office / personnel</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
about student struggling or who has asked for ‘extra’ time or ‘extra’ help

Prison administrators contact disability services office / personnel about student requesting accommodations for college classes

Students request pass to attend office hours of disability office staff who hold regular hours in prison setting

Student requests documentation be sent to disability services / personnel (no student contact at this point)

Other means of identification (specify):

12. What is the total number (academic year 2019-2020) of general population students (including dual enrollment/early college) with disabilities for whom the disability service personnel / office worked/provided/approved services and accommodations over the past academic year? ___________ [if you don’t know the exact number, please provide close estimate]

a. Of the above number, how many students being served by the disability services office are identified as being dual enrollment / early college students (estimate)?
   
   i. ___ Do not have this information as the disability services office does not provide the accommodations to the early college / dual enrollment students
   
   ii. ___ The college does not have early college / dual enrollment students/program
   
   iii. ___ College has early college / dual enrollment program, but no students with disabilities requested accommodations over the past academic year
   
   iv. Other: __________________________________________

b. What is the breakdown of that number of general population of students with disabilities by disability category (over the past academic year) [If you don’t know the exact number, please provide close estimate]?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category (primary diagnosis)</th>
<th>0 students</th>
<th>1-2 students</th>
<th>3-5 students</th>
<th>6-10 students</th>
<th>11-25 students</th>
<th>26-49 students</th>
<th>50-74 students</th>
<th>75+ students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities (LD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deaf-Blind</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind/Low Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Other (list diagnosis and estimated number of students):

c. How many of these general population students with disabilities identify as having more than one diagnosed disability? 

13. What is the total number (academic year 2019-2020) of prison college program population of students (including dual enrollment/early college) with disabilities for whom the disability services personnel/office worked/provided/approved services and accommodations over the past academic year? [if you don’t know the exact number, please provide close estimate]

a. Do not have a number (because),
   i. ___ Have not identified any students in prison to with disabilities
   ii. ___ Disability services/personnel is not currently providing accommodations in prison classes
   iii. ___ The prison college program is providing the accommodations, so the general Disability Services office does not have this information.
   iv. ___ Other (explain):
   
   [if you do not have a number, answer above question and then skip to question 16]

b. What is the breakdown of that number of prison college population of students with disabilities by disability category (for the past academic year)?

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<th>Disability Category (primary diagnosis)</th>
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</table>

Other (list diagnosis and estimated number of students):

c. How many of these prison college program population of students with disabilities identify as having more than one diagnosis? _________
14. How frequently have you experienced the following challenges, complications, or barriers when trying to set up accommodations or services for enrolled general population (including early college / dual enrollment) disabled students? (Estimated over any given year from the past 3 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication or barrier</th>
<th>Not applicable to our college</th>
<th>Never (0 times)</th>
<th>Rarely (1-2 times an academic year)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3-7 times an academic year)</th>
<th>Frequently (8-15 times an academic year)</th>
<th>Always (16+ times an academic year)</th>
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<td>Being informed of a student needing accommodations</td>
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<td>Meeting the student to determine accommodations</td>
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<td>Student unable to articulate barriers experienced or accommodations needed</td>
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<td>Student unable to provide documentation of disability</td>
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<td>Faculty issues in providing accommodations</td>
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<td>Lack of technology or necessary materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty arranging accommodations due to off-campus location limitations</td>
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<td>Limited staff to provide the needed accommodations</td>
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<td>Limited funding to secure the needed accommodations</td>
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<td>Limited or lack of service providers in region to provide accommodations (i.e. interpreters or captioners)</td>
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<td>Lack of administrative support to make necessary institutional changes for access</td>
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<td>Requested accommodation would modify an essential requirement</td>
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Other (list barrier and frequency):  

15. How frequently have you experienced the following challenges, complications, or barriers when trying to set up accommodations or services for disabled student inmates in your college education program? (estimated over any given year of the past 3 years)

   a. Have not been tasked or asked to provide or arrange accommodations for disabled student inmates in college for-credit college classes (skip to question 18)
16. Accommodations that are provided for students with disabilities in the general campus enrollments (including online, dual enrollment, health science programs, etc.): [with estimated student numbers using accommodations over Academic Year 2019-2020]

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>0 students</th>
<th>1-2 students</th>
<th>3-5 students</th>
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<td>Extra/Extended time on tests/quizizes</td>
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<td>Reduced distraction on tests/quizizes</td>
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<td>Assistive Technology for vision loss (i.e. JAWS/ZoomText/Kurzweil/CCT V/etc.)</td>
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Other accommodations not listed:
17. Accommodations that are provided in the prison setting to disabled student inmates enrolled in for-credit college classes (with estimated number of students in Academic Year 2019-2020)
   a. ___ College disability services personnel did not provide accommodations to disabled student inmates in the previous academic year
      i. ___ not informed of student needs
      ii. ___ no students with disabilities enrolled in for-credit college classes needing accommodations
      iii. ___ other: ____________________________
          (go to question 20)

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<th>Accommodation</th>
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Other accommodations not listed:
18. Would you be willing to complete a confidential interview (about 45 minutes)? This interview would be to follow up on specific points related to challenges and strategies disability service personnel may experience in the process of providing accommodations to disabled student inmates in for-credit college classes in correctional settings. I seek to hear from all levels of providing or limited providing of accommodations. Within one week of receiving notice of your interest in volunteering, I will reach out to set up the appointment time at your convenience.
   a. Yes [individuals who select yes, will be redirected to the consent form for the interview.]
   b. No [individuals who select no, will be redirected to the end of the survey]
APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: EXPERIENCED INSTITUTION
APPENDIX B INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

Instructions: (note if participant has requested accommodations for the interview in order to participate: real-time captioning for deaf or hard of hearing who are not ASL users; sign language interpreters for participants who are Deaf ASL users; use of augmentative communication devices for those who have speech impairments; acknowledge the provision of the accommodation and clarify process for using the accommodation during the interview (role of the interpreter/captionist); note the format of the interview-online via Skype, Zoom, Teams or by telephone).

Good morning (afternoon). It is a pleasure to speak with you.

My name is Jenifer Montag and I am currently a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership program at Northern Illinois University.

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview as the second phase of the study on disability service provision in for-credit community college programs offered in the correctional setting.

This interview will be semi-structured and focus on your knowledge and experiences in providing disability accommodations in your institution's correctional education program classes. The purpose is to get your perceptions of your experiences in providing disability related accommodations and services in the constrained setting of the correctional facility. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. My goal is to understand your experiences. Along with some set questions, there will be opportunity for you to expand and clarify your answers or address any topics that were not addressed in the set questions.

RECORDING INSTRUCTIONS:

If it is okay with you, I will be recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can be sure I get all the details while at the same time focus my attention on our conversation. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. My report will be a compilation of the participants' comments without any identifiable reference to individuals or individual schools.

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT:

As we are conducting this conversation (interview) remotely (internet or phone), you already completed a consent form at the end of the Qualtrics survey indicating that you consent to participating in this study as well as being audio-recorded during the interview. Do you have any questions about the consent process or your rights as an interview participant?
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS WITH EXPERIENCE

Participants: Employees at institutions with experience providing accommodations in correctional settings in for-credit classes/programs.

This list of questions is not intended to be a formal structure, but rather will guide the researcher while exploring the processes disability service personnel use to facilitate the provision of disability-related accommodations and services in for-credit college classes in correctional settings.

1. Describe the disability services office (personnel) on the campus and the correctional education program office/department/staff; describe the organizational chart for the office and for the correctional education program department/office; to whom do each report?

2. To begin the conversation, please describe the current average number of students (previous 4-6 semesters) with disabilities registered with the disability services office/department at the institution including the breakdown of different types of disabilities.
   a. What is the current average number of (previous 4-6 semesters) disabled student inmates that are registered with the disability services office/department?

3. What accommodations are being or have been provided (over the last 4-6 semesters) to qualified students with disabilities enrolled in credit courses outside of the correctional education program (prison setting).
   a. What are some of the more complex accommodations that have been arranged or provided for students (i.e. sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, assistive technology software/hardware, etc.)
   b. What barriers have you experience in providing the more complex accommodations outside of the prison setting for disabled students? How have you navigated around these barriers, what steps do you take when you encounter the barrier to your process?
   c. Explain the process that you use to facilitate the provision of the more complex accommodations or services outside the prison setting. How have you been providing accommodations in non-traditional academic settings such as internships or clinical experiences?
   d. What would make the biggest positive difference to help in facilitating the accommodations outside the prison setting for students with disabilities?

4. What accommodations are being or have been provided (over the last 4-6 semesters) to disabled student inmates in the prison setting?
   a. What are some of the more complex accommodations that have been arranged or provided in the prison setting?
   b. What barriers have you experience in providing the more complex accommodations in the prison setting? How have you navigated around these barriers, what steps do you take when you encounter the barrier to your process?
c. Explain the process you use to facilitate the provision of the more complex accommodations in the prison setting.

d. What would make the biggest positive difference to help in facilitating the accommodations within the prison setting?

5. Please explain the process students, or prospective students, with disabilities connect with / register with the disability service personnel (how are they identified and the ‘intake’ completed)? What barriers have occurred preventing students with disabilities from completing the process and beginning to receive accommodations?

   a. Explain the process that connects the disabled student inmates with the disability services personnel (how are they identified and the ‘intake’ completed)?

   b. What barriers have you experienced that have prevented the disabled student (or perspective student) inmates from completing the process and beginning to receive accommodations?

6. Please describe how often and in what manner do you interact with the correctional education program coordinator/director/faculty related to enrolled disabled student inmates.

   a. What has / has not helped in that work?

   b. What would make the biggest positive difference in facilitating the work in the correctional setting?
APPENDIX C

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS:

LIMITED TO NO EXPERIENCE
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS WITH LIMITED OR NO EXPERIENCE

Participants: Employees at institutions with limited or no experience providing accommodations in correctional settings in for-credit classes/programs.

Interview Questions

This list of questions is not intended to be a formal structure, but rather will guide the researcher while exploring the processes disability service personnel use to facilitate the provision of disability-related accommodations and services in for-credit college classes in correctional settings.

1. Describe the disability services office (personnel) on the campus and the correctional education program office/department/staff; describe the organizational chart for the office and for the correctional education program department/office; to whom do each report?

2. To begin the conversation, please describe the current average number of students (previous 4-6 semesters) with disabilities registered with the disability services office/department at the institution including the breakdown of different types of disabilities.
   a. What is the current average number of (current and previous 4-6 semesters) disabled student inmates that you have become aware of enrolled in or interested in enrolling in the for-credit college classes/program? How many disabled student inmates have been (past 4-6 semesters) or are currently registered with the disability services office/department?
   b. What barriers have you experienced in working with the college correctional education program to connect with the disabled student inmates

3. What accommodations have been provided or have you attempted to provide (over the last 4-6 semesters) to qualified students with disabilities enrolled in credit courses outside of the correctional education program (prison setting).
   a. What are some of the more complex accommodations that have been requested and you have tried to arrange or provide for students (i.e. sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, assistive technology software/hardware, etc.)?
   b. What barriers have you experience in providing or attempting to provide the accommodations outside of the prison setting for disabled students?
   c. Explain the process that you use to facilitate the provision of the more complex accommodations or services outside the prison setting.
   d. What would make the biggest positive difference to help in facilitating the accommodations outside the prison setting for students with disabilities?

4. What accommodations are being provided to or have been requested by (over the last 4-6 semesters) disabled student inmates in the prison setting?
   a. What are some of the accommodations that have been provided or that you have attempted to provide in the prison setting?
   b. What barriers have you experience in providing the accommodations in the prison setting?
c. Explain the process you use to facilitate or attempt to facilitate the provision of the accommodations in the prison setting.

d. What would make the biggest positive difference to help in facilitating the accommodations within the prison setting?

5. Please explain the process students, or prospective students, with disabilities take to connect with / register with the disability service personnel (how are they identified and the ‘intake’ completed?) What barriers have occurred preventing students with disabilities from completing the process and beginning to receive accommodations?
   a. Explain the process that connects the disabled student inmates with the disability services personnel (how are they identified and the ‘intake’ completed?)
   b. What barriers have you experienced that have prevented the disabled student (or perspective student) inmates from completing the process and beginning to receive accommodations?

6. Please describe how often and in what manner do you interact with the correctional education program coordinator/director/faculty related to enrolled disabled student inmates.
   a. What has / has not helped in that work?
   b. What would make the biggest positive difference in facilitating the work in the correctional setting?
APPENDIX D

CORRECTIONAL SETTING BARRIER NAVIGATION ASSESSMENT TOOL (CSBNA)
Correctional Setting Barrier Navigation Assessment Tool (CSBNA)

Does your community college provide for-credit college classes within a correctional setting? In addition to asking your college administration about any college provided correctional education program offerings, also check out these resources: 1) the college’s accrediting body (i.e., Higher Learning Commission, Middles States Association of Colleges and Schools, or one of the other federally recognized accrediting bodies) for the list of your college’s approved educational sites, which may include a correctional facility, 2) the U.S. Department of Education lists of colleges approved to provide correctional education programs, 3) the U.S. Department of Education lists of colleges approved for the Second Chance Pell Grant to offer financial aid to qualified incarcerated students in for-credit college programs, 4) the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison directory (AHEP, 2020), or 5) your state department of corrections website, as many states will list available college programs that are approved within the state’s correctional settings.

Each of the suggestions below are offered as a means to assist DS staff and college administration to recognize specific considerations that must be undertaken in terms of integrating disability services accommodations within the college correctional education program (CCEP). If the community college administration has determined that an entity, other than the college disability services office, will be responsible for determining, approving, and providing appropriate accommodations for disabled students within the college correctional education program, the information below is still relevant, as DS staff will want to follow up and ensure that all qualified students with disabilities are having their disability access needs met by the assigned responsible entity.
1. Who is the college coordinator / director of the college correctional education program (CCEP)?
   
a. Who else at the college is part of CCEP staff?
   
b. Who is supervisor / dean of the CCEP?
      
i. What is the reporting relationship, on the organization chart, between the CCEP and the DS office and its supervisor/dean?
   
c. Who are faculty?
      
i. Full-time correctional education only
   
   ii. Full-time general campus faculty also teaching at correctional site
   
   iii. Adjunct correctional education only
   
   iv. Adjunct general campus faculty also teaching at correctional site
   
   v. Volunteers
   
d. What is level of staff/faculty knowledge of disability services access?
      
i. What training / education is needed to expand their understanding of DS access and inclusion?
   
      ii. How can training be provided to the staff and faculty?
   
2. What is the format of the college correctional education program (CCEP) courses?
   
a. Online (prison approved content management system)
   
b. Face-to-face in-person in correctional setting
   
c. Face-to-face streaming (i.e., web-based meeting software)
   
d. Recorded video lectures – How do students access these videos; where are they watching the videos, in a classroom together or individually on prison provided tablet devices?
   
e. Correspondence – Are all course materials/communication done by mail?
   
f. Hybrid – Which formats are used?
3. How is the memorandum of understanding or contract between the college and the correctional setting written in regard to division of responsibilities?

   a. Identify who is responsible for accessibility

   b. If not spelled out, communicate with college administration on ensuring all college programs, services, and activities are accessible, including the CCEP classes

   c. How will the DS staff ensure the physical and technological learning environment in the correctional setting meets the legal requirements for accessibility, as Section 504 C.F.R. 104.43 (b) prohibits discriminatory actions through a contractual relationship (i.e., simply stating the prison is responsible for accessibility does not eliminate the college’s responsibility in ensuring equitable access is actually implemented for the disabled students) (U.S. Department of Education Title 34 Part 104, https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr104.html#S4; Letter to: San Diego State University, No. 09-08-2079 (OCR 11/07/2008))?

4. Who is the contact for the prison administration to obtain approval when bringing in necessary accommodation materials from outside?

   a. What is the process for gaining approval for entry if classes are in-person?

   b. What is the process for approval of 3rd party vendor (interpreters/captionists) to enter facility to provide services?

5. Where are classes held within the correctional facility?

   a. Are the rooms physically accessible? Is there accessible furniture located in the classrooms?

   b. How can classrooms be moved to accessible location if needed? How can accessible classroom furniture be secured?

   c. If lectures are recorded and shown to class, where is that location? Is it physically accessible? Who sets up and runs the recordings? What is their knowledge of engaging closed captioning?

   d. Are there adult basic (ABE) educators (prison staff) already providing adult education in the setting? Can they be resources for assisting in providing services (i.e., providing accommodated tests if DS staff entry is not possible).
6. What tools, devices, equipment are available for all students to use?

   a. Are students using prison approved personal instructional electronic devices (i.e., secure tablets such as JPay or secure prison-provided and maintained Chromebooks)?

      i. What are these devices? What equipment comes with them? Keyboards, or are they touch screen only?

      ii. How do students connect to the course materials? Is it a sync kiosk? Is the kiosk accessible for persons with a print disability or who are unable to use a touchscreen?

      iii. Can the DS staff access the content management system used by the faculty in the correctional setting? Can the DS staff provide materials directly via the CMS?

      iv. What assistive technology (software/hardware/built-in) is available on the prison-provided devices? Is the assistive technology engaged or by default not available but can be engaged by prison IT staff? Are the video settings defaulted to display subtitles / closed captions?

7. How are the CCEP potential and current students notified of the availability of disability services?

   a. Will the DS staff be able to present informational materials to be distributed to the potential students / currently enrolled students?

      i. Is there a means to ensure accessible format of this information is available to students with print disabilities?

   b. How will the DS staff ensure that this information is disseminated to the students each semester?

   c. Are potential students completing a placement test prior to enrolling?

      i. How are testers notified of accommodations for placement tests?

   d. How do the disabled students who are incarcerated (DSIs) and the DS staff connect to communicate (engage in interactive process) and negotiate any additional barriers during the semester?

      i. Is there prison approved email system that the DS staff can have access to for direct communication with the incarcerated students?
ii. Will communication have to go through the college CCEP representative?

iii. How will timely resolution of barriers occur if all communication is via mail?
APPENDIX E

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR
COMMUNITY COLLEGE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION TOOL (DA4CE)
Community college disability service staff are very familiar with common accommodations, such as extended test time, in the standard general college education setting, such as in campus-based classes. Many college disability services staff have also had experience with more complex accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, or providing braille materials, in the standard general college education setting. As exemplified in this study, many DS offices have established routinized procedures for: 1) notifying students of the services available; 2) engaging in the interactive process with disabled students; 3) collecting disability documentation; 4) determining the appropriate accommodations; and 5) notifying instructors of the accommodations the students are entitled to use in their classes. Additionally, in on-campus classes, navigating barriers as they arise may be a process that the DS staff is quite familiar with, especially with easy access to the students and the faculty. However, disability accommodation provision within the highly controlled, high security, nonstandard, non-college managed setting of the correctional facility creates additional barriers DS staff may confront when providing accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated and enrolled in college correctional education programs (CCEPs). What may typically be a non-complex accommodation outside prison walls, such as test accommodations, may become a complex accommodation inside prison walls because it is a nonstandard learning environment. Below are some considerations the DS office will want to assess when preparing to provide accommodations for disabled students who are incarcerated and taking for-credit college correctional education courses.
ACCOMMODATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS (not exhaustive list)

Extra time Tests/Quizzes

- Need to know the class time and also the ‘return to block/dorm/cell for count’ times
- May not have enough time out of block/cell to complete extra time testing at the time of the class testing
- May have to arrange for student to be ‘passed’ for additional time to complete test with allotted extra time
- May have to arrange separate proctor for accommodated testing within the correctional setting

Reduced Distraction Tests/Quizzes

- College education classes may be assigned only limited classroom space for classes, no office space to use for creating reduced distraction test setting
- If additional space can be located that may be conductive to reduced distraction, may have to arrange separate proctor for accommodated testing
- All rooms will likely have a window from the hall for guard observation, may be difficult to place student in a location in the room in way to reduce distractibility caused by movement past the window

Tests / Quizzes Read Aloud

- Limited space available for live reading of exams/quizzes
- Recorded test/quiz reading might not be allowed (no recording devices)
- If course is correspondence-based, what options are available to provide test/quiz aloud remotely? May have to secure provision by point of contact at facility. How assess “effectiveness” of this 3rd party in providing accommodation?
- Limited access to technology / computer with assistive technology to read test aloud in classroom setting
- Facility may have security requirement that more than one staff is in education location when students are in education sector – may need to secure additional staff or additional proctor
- Test / quiz on secure course management system, need to ensure test materials are in accessible format and there is text to speech or screen reading software on the student’s learning device
- Look at possible use of optical scanning tool without internet access or recording capabilities for paper-based tests that would require pre-approval of warden for entry into setting with continual staff monitoring of device and locked in secure drawer when not in use by student
Speech to text (STT) tests/quizzes

- Limited classroom space for student to use speech-to-text (STT) software if allowed by prison administration to be used
- Securing STT software for classroom text material access may require internet access for license approval upon start-up, most current versions of such software have a requirement for license activation and software updates via the internet, it might not be possible to gain internet access in prison setting
- May have to consider use of live person scribe for STT access
- Location for student to complete test using STT may not have sufficient sound control for clear dictation or speech recognition, especially if the test is on the secure course management system and student must complete the test in their cell/dorm setting
- May have to arrange proctor to provide STT access, may need to train proctor for scribing process
- May need to discuss with faculty member the option for the instructor to live proctor their exam as an oral exam with the student

Notes / Notetaking Access

- Recording devices are usually not allowed within the correctional setting, so recording of lectures as a means of providing notetaking access is likely not possible
- Internet access is limited, so use of any internet-based notetaking apps would also likely not be possible
- Copy of the slides may be possible, as long as approved by the prison administration
- Use of in-person notetaker may be means to provide notetaking access
- May have to arrange for either volunteer notetaker or use of program aide to assist in taking notes in classes where needed

Braille / large print format course materials

- Some correctional facilities are training select incarcerated persons to learn to become certified braille transcriptionists. If your facility is one such institution, your college may be able to negotiate with the training classes to provide some of the course materials conversion you need
- For facilities where the DS office would have to secure the converted braille materials and provide them to the incarcerated student, additional consideration would have to be undertaken for entry of the converted materials
- Some facilities might ban the comb bindings often used in holding braille materials together as a spine, other ways of organizing and holding together the materials may be needed
- If the course is correspondence-based and the materials are to be mailed to the incarcerated student, additional approval may be necessary for the mail materials to be approved for entry and the student allowed to pick up the materials
• Discussion with the incarcerated student may be necessary if the student uses braille and does not have access to word processing equipment with audio output in order for them to complete and return homework, a scribe may need to be provided for documenting the student’s homework as it is completed – often seen as a personal service and does not have to be provided by the college, but given the environmental limitations, this may need to be discussed as an option to provide the access to the completed homework for the faculty (unless the faculty are braille readers as well)

• If computer / tablet equipment is provided to the incarcerated students, DS may have to investigate options for refreshable braille output and possible software to create the braille output. Have to investigate devices that are secure and do not have WiFi/Bluetooth or recording capabilities. Tablet devices may not have connection ports or allow connecting nonstandard components (braille display) to the tablet.

Audio books

• Most correctional facilities have limitations on recording equipment and materials, therefore books on tape would not be feasible (including CDs)
• Check with the prison library, as they may have some books on CD for use in the library and it may be possible to arrange a check out system for CDs to be approved for entry into the library and used by the student in the library during the library open hours
• Assistive technology software installed on computers may not be feasible either because students are not allowed access to computers or the software requires internet access (which is not allowed in most correctional settings) for license verification upon start-up of the software
• Use of dedicated single license install software that does not require activation upon start up may be feasible if student is allowed regular access to computer equipment
• Creating electronic version of books and providing to the student for their use may be another barrier as uploads to student tablet system may be prohibited
• Most institutions have limitations on entry of USB/flashdrives, negotiation with the prison administration would be necessary, but it is unlikely that any provision of the electronic format of books cannot be done directly to the student on a USB drive – rather it may be possible to upload off the USB drive to an intranet (internal network system available to the students) folder that is the student’s, but this process will likely involve the college administrator responsible for organizing and maintaining the correctional education program
• Some institutions are implementing new computer options for students, including an actual system that is more like a laptop than a tablet (which is often about the size of a large cell phone), and if it is a more ubiquitous brand of laptop type device, there may be built in assistive technology that would make accessing the provided electronic textbooks easier for the students
• With the implementation of the new computer options / laptop type devices, some facilities are also implementing new content management software that may actually be the college CMS system rather than a prison-controlled 3rd party system that requires the student to ‘sync’ at a kiosk – upgrading use of the college CMS is beneficial as there may
be a process to upload the accessible textbook to the student’s list of classes for them to access more readily

- If the class is correspondence based, again, close negotiation with the prison administration would be needed for approval of any audio book formats to be delivered – it may be that the student does have access to computer device and there would need to be discussion about how the DS office can control the delivery of the electronic accessible book to the student

Accessible classroom and furniture

- Most often, the prison administration determines the location that will be used by the college classes, and it may include assigning the class to an inaccessible location
- The college administration, with consultation from the DS staff, would have to discuss options for moving the class to an accessible classroom space
- Don’t assume that all videorecorded lectures or tele-streamed classes are to be watched by the student on their personal educational technology devices as the class could be watching as a group in a classroom; and DS must ensure that location is physical accessible
- In addition to the classroom location, the provided furniture will be prison-controlled and if the college administration wants to bring in any additional furniture, including accessible furniture, it would have to meet the prison administration security and safety requirements
- The process for prison administration approval can be complex and take additional time, as some approvals must go to the state department of corrections for approval before being returned to the warden to then communicate to the college administration or the college correctional education director or coordinator, who will then communicate that to the DS staff
- Additional conversations and negotiation with the prison administration may be required to identify what security concerns a piece of accessible furniture may cause – for example an accessible desk with a removable crank handle may be seen as a threat to safety as the handle can be removed and used as a weapon

Sign Language Interpreters

- For in-person classes it may be more appropriate to provide in-person sign language interpreters
- Depending on the length of the classes, more than one interpreter will need to be in attendance
- The DS office will have to identify qualified sign language interpreters who are willing, and able, to enter into the correctional setting, including passing the correctional facility required background check and security training
- Understanding and completing the approval process to have the 3rd party interpreters (if using freelance or agency interpreters) or the college’s staff interpreters able to enter the correctional setting for each class will be important
• If using freelance or agency interpreters, it is important that all interpreters are pre-approved for entry, either on a gate pass and escorted by a college staff member who is approved for full entry (usually with a full contractor type badge), or to complete full approval process with the prison administration for acquiring a contractor-type badge for full entry unescorted.

• Some barriers to providing in-person sign language interpreters can be limited available qualified interpreters who are willing to enter the correctional setting and finding qualified interpreters who are able to pass the background check, including usually not having any known association (friend/family/previous customers or students) who are incarcerated in that correctional setting – all approvals for unique dispositions will require negotiation with the prison administration and possibly the state department of corrections.

• One of the possible barriers the DS staff may have to navigate is with the college administration if the provision of interpreters may be an additional cost, depending on the freelance interpreters and agency billing practices, there may be additional costs associated with early morning or evening service provision – and if class times are severely constricted due to mandatory return to dorms/cells for resident counts at specific times, classes may actually start earlier in the correctional setting than they would on campus or may start later in the evening than usual for on campus night classes.

• If the class is a tele-stream or recorded lecture and the provision of sign language interpreters is the appropriate accommodation, then the DS staff would have to navigate providing either live sign language interpreters in a setting where the actual teachers are not even entering – this would entail additional discussion and collaboration with the prison administration along with the college’s correctional education program director/coordinator or facilitating providing recorded sign language interpreters embedded onto the recorded lectures.

• If the facility allows internet access, it may be possible for the DS office to work with the prison administrator and the college’s correctional education program director to connect with remote sign language interpreting services, however the DS staff would have to work to ensure that the image quality is clear and that the upload and download speeds support the interpreting without pixelization or freezing of the image, which would not be effective communication.

• If remote access interpreting services are provided, it may be necessary to train the faculty or provide a trained aide who will manage the equipment and connection of the service for each class, resulting in possible additional staff coverage needs.

• Regardless of whether the provision of interpreters is done in-person or remotely, the DS office, in conjunction with the college director of the correctional education program will have to inform the provider of the setting, expectations, and possible scenarios that may occur in this nonstandard setting – such as unexpected alerts, alarms, or removal of students from the class for any number of prison administration reasons.
Communication Access Real-Time (real-time captioning) – CART services

- While many college DS offices are familiar with providing remote real-time captioning (CART) services, it may be necessary to provide in-person CART services due to the security barriers created in the correctional setting.
- In-person CART services would require the CART provider / vendor to complete the background process and approval by the prison administration for entry.
- Additionally, the specific equipment that the CART provider uses would have to be approved – which may be difficult as many of the newer versions of the court stenographer equipment and computer systems use Bluetooth or other wireless connectivity – which is often not allowed in the correctional settings, so the provider may have to use wired system to connect the stenography machine to the output computer for the student to view the captions.
- Depending on the prison administration, the CART vendor may have to have the equipment inspected upon entry each time or there may need to be a discussion about how the equipment can be provided under the security requirements.
- If the correctional setting allows internet access and use of one of the web-based meeting platforms for audio access (most facilities prohibit personal cell phones within the setting) remote real-time captioning may be possible to provide, but again the prison administration may be involved in approving the specific vendor that access, even though they are not in-person, they would still be considered as accessing the facility and would be required to understand and abide by the security requirements.
- Regardless of whether the provision of real-time captioning is done in-person or remotely, the DS office, in conjunction with the college director of the correctional education program will have to inform the provider of the setting, expectations, and possible scenarios that may occur in this nonstandard setting – such as unexpected alerts, alarms, or removal of students from the class for any number of prison administration reasons.

Assistive listening devices (ALDs)

- As non-approved communication devices are not allowed, provision of assistive listening devices can be a bit more difficult in the nonstandard correctional facility setting than one may experience in the standard general campus classroom.
- Currently, most ALDs are wireless connections between the microphone and the receiver with the student, including FM radio waves and or Bluetooth systems – both of which are highly controlled or not allowed within the correctional setting.
- Hard-wired ALDs or infrared systems may be an option to discuss with the prison administration.
- Discussion with the student with the hearing loss would be important, as many times the individual may not be using current digital hearing aids due to security concerns or because of the cost of digital hearing aids, but may be using older, analog type hearing aids that may or may not be compatible with an ALD system.
- It may be possible that even if the student’s level of hearing loss would require only the use of an ALD system, provision of remote or in-person real-time captioning (CART)
might be the feasible means to provide effective communication in the nonstandard correctional facility, of course this would be discussed with the student in the interactive process
APPENDIX F

WORKING IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS:

TIPS FOR DS PROVIDERS
Working in Correctional Facilities: Tips for DS Providers

While several researchers, including McCarty (2006) and Wright (2005), have discussed college faculty experiences when teaching college classes in correctional settings, no one has discussed the impacts this nonstandard, high security correctional environment has on postsecondary disability service providers and their accommodation efforts. This brief cultural awareness tip sheet hopes to provide further insight for postsecondary disability service providers. The state’s department of corrections may have additional information on limitations and security requirements on their website and would also be a good resource.

Entry

Even before entering the facility, the entry process is controlled by having the individual complete background checks and security processes in order to be allowed to enter on either a gate pass or a contractor pass. A gate pass is secured each time a non-badged individual is requesting to enter, and that person has to be escorted throughout the facility by the host who requested the gate pass. In the case of the community college requesting a gate pass for an individual to enter the facility, the host would be one of the college correctional education program staff. The warden of the facility approves the gate passes and can deny the entry of the requestor for any reason. Contractor badges are provided for those who apply and will be entering on a continual basis, such as the college correctional education (CCEP) faculty and staff. The process to be approved for a contractor badge requires the same background and security approvals, but the individual then completes the required security policy and process
training. Upon completion, and with the warden’s additional approval, a contractor badge will be
provided to the individual. This badge is to be presented upon each entry and clearly displayed
for the entire time inside the facility.

Entering the correctional facility, for those who have never visited before, can be a
disconcerting process. This can be an even more unfamiliar process for those who are
accustomed to entering the often ‘open’ and free-flowing public buildings of a typical
community college. Simply entering the facility requires one to sign in and walk through a metal
detector. All items being brought in are searched and must comply with all prison security
requirements. One may even have to go through a search, pat down, or be ‘wanded’ by a guard
with a handheld security detector to identify any potential metal items, like bra underwires or
steel support shanks in soles of shoes, that could potentially be used as a weapon and that may
have set off the metal detector. In many cases, only clear plastic purses and backpacks are
allowed, food and beverage containers will be inspected, even hand sanitizer may be prohibited
or highly controlled. Don’t expect to bring in any electronic devices, cell phones and even smart
watches may be prohibited. Flash drives may be pre-approved with review by the warden and
placed on a gate-pass to allow entry of the item, but not as an in-out option, so be prepared in
advance to load the flashdrive with all your documents for the semester for security review, if the
warden even allows it to enter the prison at all.

Also, be prepared to meet the required dress codes for entry. Clothing also must meet
specific requirements. Even in the heat of summer, no sleeveless tops are allowed and only
closed-toe shoes are permitted. Likewise, no leggings as pants or other similar casual clothing
are allowed. Most facilities also prohibit facial piercings or other items that might pose a possible
health/safety risk. Additionally, depending on the facility and the location of the education
program within the facility, one will want to consider comfort of shoes for walking long distances on concrete. Layering is also important, as travel to the education location may involve traveling between buildings, through the weather, or through locations less heated, while the actual education site may be overheated. Outer clothing is removed at entry for search, and depending on the layers worn, additional layers may be removed for inspection. If you wear a cardigan or dress jacket, be prepared to remove it for inspection.

Once through the gauntlet of entry security processes, the next disconcerting interaction with the facility is acquiring the man-down / spider alert / emergency alert button that staff and contractors are required to wear in the event of an emergency, a fight breaks out, or you are attacked. When the button on the alert device is depressed, the guard at central control is alerted and central command will send corrections officers to respond to the incident where the button shows you are located on their command screen.

The next unfamiliar process is to wait at the security doors for entry into the sally port. The heavy steel door is unlocked by security control and slams shut behind you with a body shuddering finality. The door in front of you will then unlock and open for entry into the facility where the incarcerated population is located. Additional security gates or doors may also have to be passed through, each with its own security process of identifying yourself, waiting for the gate or door to be opened, passing through, and then hearing the closing of the door or gate.

Inside the Facility

Walking the hall to the classroom can begin to feel similar to the college hallways, passing the incarcerated like one might pass college students, but then you see some who are
incarcerated assigned to cleaning and mopping, moving from one room to another, coming and going from the cafeteria ("chow") or the commissary, all under the watch of the correctional officers located throughout the facility. And, unlike the college environment where a person walking in a hallway will move around an individual in the way in the hall, don’t be surprised when the incarcerated person is the one to move out of the way of staff or contractors – it is part of the expected culture that the incarcerated ‘give way’ to the nonincarcerated. This can cause cultural dissonance or incongruity for those of us who work in social justice and equity.

Likewise, resident movement is highly controlled and always under the correctional officer’s watch. The residents’ bathroom facility is semi-open, for example with top third and the bottom third of the door missing, for ease of observation by the correctional officer. Even access to paper products such as toilet paper can be highly-controlled and in many cases, the incarcerated are required to request a roll of toilet paper from the correctional officer that has to be returned.

In the Classroom

Arriving in the classroom can be disconcerting. For security measures, there are windows from the hall into the classroom, with correctional officers (COs) patrolling past regularly, often stopping and observing the class. Fair warning, COs’ demeanors are highly individualistic, some could be described as more intrusive than others. While faculty/staff and any incarcerated students are in the room, the classroom door has to remain either wide open or, if it has to be closed, the door has to remain unlocked for safety reasons. This will allow the COs easy access into the room in case there is an emergency situation that arises in the room. If there is a
computer available for the teacher to use during the class, the staff has to ensure that no incarcerated student is allowed in the room with the computer equipment without staff being present. More specifically, there is no last minute leaving the classroom and running down to the photocopier to make copies for the class.

The actual arrival of the students to the classroom can also be a bit unsettling for the uninitiated faculty/staff member or third-party vendor such as a sign language interpreter. Students can, and will, be interrupted and taken out of class, known as getting ‘passed,’ for general prison activities without prior notice. These removals from class or late entrance to the classroom can be for things such as a medical call or the weekly assigned commissary time for the student’s dorm. These activities will take precedent over class attendance as students can be written up for not following prison directives. In other words, students may not arrive at all, will arrive part-way through their class time, or have to leave in the middle of class, adding additional interruptions. Then, there are the unique, prison specific events that occur that the college faculty also have no control over, such as calls to return to the dorms or cells for searches or on-demand counts of residents if there was a security concern or violation, cancelling the rest of the class period – no matter if it is lecture or an exam day.

Lastly, the college staff may experience a “stay in place” command where there is no movement allowed between locations in the site, such as moving from one room to another, or moving from the classroom back to the facility entrance to leave. This means it is possible that faculty or staff might not be able to leave at the end of class until they are officially released by the correctional officials. In such a situation, they may even be barred from entering the facility if it is in lock-down mode upon arrival at the facility. Remember, if the prison does enter a lock down situation, and this can happen more frequently than one would think, you will not have
your cell phone. You will want to plan ahead, including building in buffer time on your calendar for this possibility.

Communication and Contact

Contact and communication with the incarcerated persons is tightly controlled in several ways. From the initial background check required for the contractor badge, to providing a list of any known family/friends/associates who may be incarcerated in the facility, to the means in which contractors can communicate with the individual students. To further the communication conundrum, complications arise when the student is ‘passed’ for a meeting with the DS office or the college education director/coordinator, as the passes are controlled only by central control and the correctional officers assigned to each dorm or cell block. The college education director/coordinator submits all the requests for passes to central control, and if approved, the passes are created and sent to the correctional officers in the cell block / dorm to pass out to the incarcerated. But whether the process is fully completed, and whether or not the student actually receives the pass is wholly uncertain until the student does or does not show up for the meeting. Please do not assume the student is being lazy or doesn’t care about the meeting with you.

The use of the U.S. postal service or other delivery services for paper communication may also have similar complications in the timeliness of delivery. Flexibility of deadlines should be included in any communication that has to enter or exit the correctional facility. To complicate communication with the incarcerated student, the prison administration can move students between prisons without notice. Or, a student may have an infraction that puts them in isolation (“in the hole”) for a time. The college correctional education program will likely not be
informed and may not have any means of ascertaining the student’s location, other than
gathering information from the dorm mates of the individual who may share the known
whereabouts of the student with the faculty or college director.

During the two years of COVID, additional communication barriers occurred as entire
prisons were closed to all but essential staff (correctional officers and support staff, no
contractors), or once reopened, dorms were closed and those residents quarantined as COVID
cases continually spread through the facility. Without reliable communication modes between
college faculty/staff and the incarcerated students, connection with the students is complicated,
sometimes reduced to only written correspondence.

Language is another cultural shift within the correctional setting. This is not simply the
increase in more base and possibly crass language, such as swearing, which can occur in any
setting. It is overhearing the language used by the correctional officers in talking to and about the
incarcerated persons. It is in the removal of respectful and inclusive language that we have come
to recognize as part of the open and learning nature of higher education. There are still many
individuals working in correctional facilities who hold implicit and explicit biases towards those
who are incarcerated, and that is reflected in the use of demeaning language towards the
incarcerated as a means of furthering control and power over them. Even the term inmate has
come to be highly laden as there are those working in corrections who use the term not as a
means to describe someone who is incarcerated, but rather, as the sole identity of the person. No
longer is an inmate identified with their given, or chosen, name, which is the sense of identity for
many, but they are identified as “Inmate Johnson.” Within the CCEP classroom, students are
recognized and respected as students, then they step into the hall and are identified as “Inmate”
or by their inmate incarceration number. And, while most of the correctional staff and those who
are incarcerated are respectful, steel yourself for potential language by the correctional staff that
we would not hear from educational professionals, or under-the-breath comments from those
who are incarcerated. If the incarcerated person is overheard by a correctional or educational
staff member, they can receive an official reprimand, but there are times when you may have
unexpected, and maybe even disparaging language, come your way from the general incarcerated
population, though usually not from the students who are incarcerated. This is going to be a stark
departure from the type of communication and language educational professionals may be used
to in higher education.

Disabled Students Who are Incarcerated (DSIs)

In working with the general disabled student population outside the correctional facility,
DS staff is very used to having direct interactive communication with the students regarding
accommodations. Within the correctional setting, communication may have to be through a third
party, such as the coordinator of the college education program, through a designated family
member via a signed release of information form, or by using the U.S. postal service, which is
much less interactive. If the DS staff is granted the ability to enter into the setting and meet with
the students, communication may still be limited, as the incarcerated student’s time is tightly
controlled. They may have to be “passed” in order to meet with you and they may have to return
to their dorm/cell within a certain time frame. I have had to tighten up my own intake discussion
about accommodations, including: 1) explanation of how to use the accommodations, 2)
answering the student’s questions, and 3) encouraging them to reach out if there are any
questions or concerns. What has been a more conversational intake process for the disabled
student population enrolled in classes outside the prison setting has become ‘colder’ and more transactional in order to be completed in the shorter time inside the prison. In addition, all of the intake forms have to be paper based, as there is no internet or computer access inside the facility. The completed forms all have to be manually entered in the computer once back on campus, often at the end of a long day. The list of approved accommodations (LOAA) is completed during the meeting, with the student signing the document. I then, upon return to my college office, scan and email the LOAA to the CCEP director to print and deliver to the student as their own record. Due to this technology limitation, I have explained to the incarcerated students they would have a copy for their records, but that it would have to be emailed to the director of the college correctional education program to print and physically provide to the student.

The Learning Environment for the DSIs

For DS providers, whether the college’s for-credit classes are held in-person, on the proprietary secure course management system, recorded video lectures, correspondence, or a hybrid of any of these formats, one must recognize that the student has very little control over their learning environment. For example, one accommodation we often suggest to the general on-campus student who is easily distracted is to simply remove themselves from the room filled with distractions and go study at the college library; we must recognize this is likely not an option for DSIs. Use of the prison library can be highly controlled, including only movement to the library based on the dorm’s assigned time to visit the library. The prison library hours are often limited to first shift hours, when the incarcerated student may be in class and working their job cleaning bathrooms, leaving them only the evening to study, when the library is not open. In
this instance, the shared cell block or dorm setting is less than ideal for studying, as there is continual raucous movement and activity and may be no designated ‘quiet space’ for reading or studying. In other words, study strategies that work in the standard setting of the general campus for disabled students are not feasible within the correctional setting. Even something as simple as suggesting the student highlight key terms and concepts within the textbook might not be possible if the books are owned by the college education program and distributed out each semester as a loan for the semester.

Final Thoughts on the Correctional Setting

Be prepared that everything will take longer when working within the correctional setting. From the process of entry into the facility, to having the students show up for meetings, to getting paperwork in and out of the setting, all the way to acquiring documentation of disability from the student to gaining approval for permission to bring specific accessible items into the setting for use by the disabled students who are incarcerated. Also know, if you physically try to enter the facility at shift change, the time is even longer as all the facility staff and correctional officers have to enter via the same process as you are entering, and their process can be even longer as they are collecting or returning the necessary equipment and sets of keys from central control, where you will also have to collect/return your man down or spider alert device. Please remember, the contractor badge has to be visible at all times, and the spider alert device should be easily and readily accessible, but trust me, not in a place where it can be accidentally pressed. These requirements often mean that you will be moving the badge and button from outer clothing to your dress clothes upon arrival in the classroom, and back to the
outerwear as you prepare to travel back to the exit of the building.

Often, it feels like the college education program is swimming upstream in the prison setting. Trying to maintain and balance equity, social justice, and access in an environment predicated on power and authority disparities is difficult, but not impossible.
APPENDIX G

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROFILES
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROFILES

BERNICE

Bernice is the part-time coordinator at a medium-sized single-campus community college in the Southern portion of the United States with an enrollment of about 2,500 students. There are approximately 50 students per year that are registered with the DS office at the college. Bernice shared that as far as she knows, there are not any DSIs requesting accommodations and that she has not had any referrals from either of the two local minimum-security prisons for students needing accommodations. When the subject came up about whether or not she was providing accommodations to DSIs, she became very reflective. She acknowledged that she was not aware of the college correctional education program and was surprised that there was not more college involvement in the correctional settings because the community college has several career focused programs, such as welding, which could be provided to the incarcerated population.

CLAUDIA

Claudia’s very large community college, located in the Western portion of the United States, has four campuses, enrolls over 11,000 students, and is staffed by a full-time director, two full-time professional staff, and three part-time staff. In addition to the DS accommodation services, Claudia’s office also manages several additional specialized programs, such as fee-for services programs. The disability accommodation portion of the office provides services to approximately 1400 disabled students a year, separate from the additional specialized service
programs that the DS office manages. As a veteran DS provider, she explained that she has basically “grown up in this department,” as her entire professional career has been wholly within the DS office.

While neither Claudia nor her community college are identified as members of the AHEAD organization, she explained that at the state government level there is significant support and guidance for the public community college disability service offices, including reporting requirements, captioning and communication access requirements, and other more standardized expectations for each DS office to meet. Therefore, Claudia shared with me several standardized procedures and processes she follows in providing accommodations to all disabled students, including DSIs, that might be expected from those who are members of the AHEAD organization.

**CYNDI**

Cyndi’s community college is a medium-sized school located in the Southern portion of the United States, with four campuses across four counties. The college enrollment is about 3,100 students and there are approximately 100 disabled students registered with the DS office annually. Cyndi is the only staff in the DS office to facilitate accommodations for disabled students, which she explained is a barrier to meeting the needs of all disabled students due to lack of appropriate level of staffing. She came across the interview as genuinely concerned and involved with the disabled students.

Though neither Cyndi, nor her community college, are members of the AHEAD organization, as a consummate professional, she articulated clearly developed policies and procedures for the provision of disability services, in alignment with the AHEAD expected
standards.

DAISY

Daisy’s medium-sized community college, located in the Southern region of the United States has an approximate enrollment of 4,700 students according to the Carnegie classification system, while there are an approximate 180 disabled students registered with the disability services office. It is interesting to note that when asked about the enrollment numbers of the college during the interview, Daisy stated it is about 2400-3000 students. The staff of the DS office consists of Daisy, as the full-time director, along with five ‘part-time’ staff who provide accommodations at the additional six campus sites spread across several counties as an additional duty to their primary non-DS role. One of the additional college-recognized campus sites is the correctional setting.

Daisy explained that she provides training on disability services to the staff who are the “part-time” DS reps at the other sites, but that DS is not their primary task, as they are more aligned with advisors or student success coaches for all students. She also explained that she will travel to the other campus sites from the main campus, as needed, to assist with the facilitation of accommodations; however, she explained that she had not been to the correctional campus and has not interacted with any of the disabled students who are incarcerated there. She explained at the correctional campus, the DS rep, who is also the lead faculty for the college correctional education program, manages all the accommodations. Daisy also mentioned multiple times throughout the interview that the current staffing levels were not sufficient for meeting the needs of all the disabled students enrolled at her school. Neither Daisy, nor none of her staff or the college, are identified as AHEAD members.
Felicia’s very large community college, located in the Western region of the United States has an enrollment exceeding 50,000 students across 10 campus sites. The DS office services approximately 3,500 disabled students a year. The DS staff is larger, including a full-time director, approximately 26 full-time staff, along with 25 part-time staff. The staff includes sign language interpreters, assistive technology (AT) professionals and other professional staff. Her college offers college correctional education in three, soon to be four, correctional sites across the state.

Felicia has completed the facility entrance requirements and has met with the DSIs in person on occasion, along with completing the interactive process through paper forms when necessary. She also explained that she is exploring additional accommodations, more assistive technology-based accommodations that might be implemented in the correctional settings. Along with Felicia, several other DS staff are all members of AHEAD.

Jack’s medium-sized community college located in the Southern portion of the United States has an enrollment estimate of 3,400 students and there are approximately 80-100 students per year registered with the DS office. The college has two campuses and is providing college for-credit classes in one private and three public correctional facilities. The security level of the prisons ranges from medium to maximum security. The DS staff consists of only Jack, whose role as the DS coordinator is only part-time, as his actual role is as a counselor/advisor. He also teaches both on campus and in the correctional sites. As he has taught for many years in the
correctional education program, he is familiar with the security entrance processes and the limitations that exist in trying to teach within the correctional setting. He expressed a passion for his teaching in the college correctional education program, appreciating the level of dedication the students demonstrate. Even though he has experience entering the prison for the teaching, he has not yet personally met with any of the DSIs to complete the interactive process. Jack shared his excitement that someone was asking him about his work with the DSI population. Additional barriers that Jack shared included having limited DS staff to meet all disabled student needs, including the DSIs; relying on a third party (the college CEP coordinator) for communication with the DSI; and faculty assumptions about students with disabilities in the college environment. Jack is not a member of the AHEAD organization.

Josie is the sole DS staff at a medium-sized community college in the Midwest region of the United States and has two campus sites, many high school dual enrollment sites, and has a college correctional education program providing for-credit classes in two minimum to medium security prisons. The college enrolls about 2,400 students and there are approximately 160 disabled students registered with the DS office each year. Josie was excited to share several ways she had figured out to remove barriers for the DSIs, including completing the process to enter the prison for the interactive dialogue with the DSI directly. Josie shared enthusiastically that the support of the college correctional education administration and staff (dean, director, administrative assistant) has been instrumental in building the collaboration to ensure the DSIs know about and are able to use disability accommodations. Josie is a member of the AHEAD organization.
KASSIE

Kassie’s very large community college, located in the Western region of the United States enrolls over 27,000 students, with approximately 1400 disabled students being registered with the DS office. The DS office has a full-time director, seven full-time professional staff, and 22 part-time staff, including sign language interpreters. While Kassie is not currently directly providing accommodations to disabled students who are incarcerated, she was highly involved in facilitating two DSIs getting enrolled in a high-level math class. Currently, the courses are correspondence-based, rather than in-person or internet based. Kassie sounded very frustrated with the entire process trying to work with the prison administration and the security limitations impacting her work with the incarcerated students, especially just trying to find out who could provide approval for any service and securing the prison-provided proctor. In contrast, Kassie unequivocally praised her supervisor, the Director of the DS office, in that her support was instrumental in the success of getting the class arranged and that the director is always advocating for increased accessibility and inclusion of disabled students in all areas of the college. More than five of the DS staff, including Kassie, are members of the AHEAD organization.

MAUREEN

Maureen’s medium-sized community college is located in the Southern portion of the United States and has four campuses. The enrollment is around 3,600 students based on the Carnegie Classification, as Maureen did not have the enrollment figures or an estimate at the time of the interview. Maureen shared that she has approximately 200 - 230 disabled students
registered with the DS office. The staff of the DS office consists solely of Maureen, which Maureen shared is a concern and a barrier to meeting the needs of all disabled students. It was my impression that although Maureen is passionate about the additional activities she undertakes, that are only slightly tangentially related to DS services, such as suicide prevention activities and virtual baby showers for pregnant students, but that she is feeling overworked with these additional activities. Additionally, Maureen shared that she has to say no to “expensive” accommodations, such as sign language interpreters when a student has more than one or two classes a week, because she simply does not have the budget for those high-cost services. Maureen expressed puzzlement with who might be providing accommodations for the DSIs, wondering if the Testing Center did when they completed the placement tests. Maureen self-assuredly shared that she had specific previous experience with disabilities as she had been a K12 special education teacher prior to transitioning to work in the postsecondary setting and her child had an IEP during high school. She also assertively shared that she had previous experience with the correctional setting as she had provided special education services as the K12 instructor within a juvenile correctional setting. Neither Maureen, nor any other member of the community college, is an AHEAD member.

MIA

Mia’s medium-sized community college, located in the Midwest, has an enrollment of about 2,500 students with approximately 150 disabled students registered with the DS office annually. Mia is the full-time director, and sole DS staff, to provide services across four campuses. As far as Mia is aware, there have not been any DSIs requesting accommodations. One of the barriers Mia identified through the interview is that there is limited staff to meet all
the needs of all disabled students across the four campuses and with the more than 30 high schools that are part of the college’s dual enrollment program. Mia articulated a number of clearly developed and disseminated policies, procedures, and practices that she has incorporated into the DS office work, aligning with many of the AHEAD standards. Mia is a member of the AHEAD organization.

MIRANDA

Miranda is the full-time director of the disability services office at a large community college in the Midwest. The enrollment is about 8,000 students and there are approximately 230 disabled students registered with the DS office. Miranda expressed relief that she now finally has a full-time office assistant in the DS office to assist her. There are four campuses across several counties at which the college provides classes and programs. The college just recently developed a correctional education program and at the beginning of the process, Miranda was involved. Then, as the program developed, Miranda was removed and the college vice-president informed Miranda that she would not be providing disability accommodations to the enrolled students at the correctional facility who had disabilities because, “the ADA does not apply to inmates.” It is my impression that Miranda was increasingly frustrated with the community college administrators making disability services decisions without understanding the legal and cultural impacts across the campus, further limiting the support she is able to provide to disabled students. Miranda has developed clear policies and procedures for disability services, access, and inclusion for all programs, services, and activities of the campus, aligning it with the AHEAD standards. Miranda is a member of the AHEAD organization.
PAULINE

Pauline is a co-worker of Kassie at a very large community college, located in the West region of the United States. Over 27,000 students are enrolled at the college with approximately 1,400 disabled students registered with the DS office. While Pauline, like Kassie, is not currently providing disability accommodations to DSIs, she is assisting Kassie in the set-up of classes to two DSIs. Additionally, Pauline has, in the past, worked with disabled students who are incarcerated in the correctional setting, especially with regards to training on assistive technology. Previously, Pauline provided training to DSIs on the use of JAWS screen reading software and is familiar with the barriers that occur in trying to provide accommodations to DSIs, including no computer or internet access for the student. When talking about her previous work in the correctional setting, Pauline seemed energized and appreciated the work she was able to do. With her previous experience, Pauline completed the correctional site entrance approval process and actually entered the correctional facility to meet with DSIs several times and stated several issues in entrance processes and security levels. Pauline, along with several of her DS office colleagues, is a member of the AHEAD organization.
## ADA National Network Division of ADA Regions by State

Created from: https://adata.org/find-your-region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>States Included</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands (PR and VI were not included in the study due to being territories and potentially having different security/prison processes; no community colleges located in either territory was identified as providing college education in correctional settings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>Delaware, District of Columbia (DC), Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia (DC was not included in the study due to being a district and not a state and potentially having different prison security or processes which would affect accommodation provision; no community college in DC was identified as providing college education in correctional settings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 9</td>
<td>Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Pacific Basin (the Pacific Basin was not included in the study due to not being a state and potentially having different prison security or processes which would affect accommodation provision; no community college in the Pacific Basin was identified as providing college education in correctional settings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 10</td>
<td>Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington</td>
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APPENDIX I

JOINT DISPLAY REPRESENTING

SURVEY DATA EXPLAINED IN INTERVIEWS
Joint Display Representing Survey Data Explained in Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Data</th>
<th>Comments from Interviews as Explanations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14/33 (42.42%) respondents provide no accommodations</td>
<td>“[college VP telling DS staff] ‘Because they’re incarcerated, the ADA will not be covering them…”’; “They are not going to get this [faculty disputed accommodation] on the state board.’”; “…for interpreting…we only have so much funding”’; “Maybe they [workforce development] work with the prison system?…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/33 (48.48%) respondents provide extra time/tests read aloud (minimal accommodations)</td>
<td>“They [DSIs] need extended time, preferential seating…”’; “Haven’t had any students that have requested braille, and that would be an issue…”’; “…we [college] need to make sure that we’re providing that support to rehabilitate the inmate…”’; “…minimal accommodations is really in only one [prison]…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>19/33 (57.58%) respondents state at least one accommodation is provided. Of those 19, 17 (89.47%) identified at least one barrier in providing accommodations (n=17)</td>
<td>“…part of doing the job is keeping us [community college] protected too.”’; “…as a college we have to ensure that their educational endeavors are accessible, and we are not creating barriers.”’; “…explore different accommodations that would be suitable…”’; “…we do all that [ensure captioning access] because quite honestly, well, there are a lot of hearing-impaired inmates.”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers Stated - Survey Responses</th>
<th>Interview Statements Explaining Survey Data</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No technology / assistive technology available or able to provide in correctional setting - 10/17 (58.82%) respondents stated this was barrier</td>
<td>“…finding a text to speech program that does not require internet access to validate…because there is no internet access.”’; “…we talked about getting them [DSIs] the technology that would read aloud and [we] could never figure that out because of the internet connection.”’; “…just not having electronic access…including notetaking…audio format…”’; “…they are so technology isolated…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prison security prohibitions creates barriers to service provision - 8/17 (47.06%) respondents</td>
<td>“…I can say they need braille, but will the prison allow the inmate to have that braille material?”’; “…the security requirements for bringing individual into the prison…”’; “…some of the barriers that the prison is putting into place because of the security protocols…”’; “…like security protocols are absolute…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prison administration limits service coordination - 8/17 (47.06%) respondents</td>
<td>“…we have to work with the ADA Coordinator at the prison and they have to approve the [assistive technology…]”; “We had to abandon all proctored tests.”’; “…he got approval [for secure technology] and then almost immediately a new set of people were hired in [prison administration] and they just gutted it and said ‘no more…”’; “…an overall kind of theme of, ‘we’re [prison administration] not going to make this easy…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to student’s disability documentation is barrier - 6/17 (35.29%) respondents</td>
<td>“…inmates do not have supporting documentation…”’; “…students didn’t have any documentation…”’; “That process [acquiring disability documentation] can go anywhere from 30 to 90 days to get…”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to engage in interactive dialogue with DSIs - 5/17 (29.41%) respondents</td>
<td>“…we are doing this [disability services to DSIs] all through, you know, the instructors, the facility reps…we would have [to have] somebody really in the actual setting to be able to meet with the students [DSIs]…”’; “So everything is done the old fashioned way, through the US Postal Service.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referrals for service / not being informed about DSIs - 5/17 (29.41%) respondents</td>
<td>“[DSIs] don’t have access because they depend on people on the outside to inform them [about DS]…”’; “And so there are so many multiple layers that have to happen to get the information [about DS]…”’; “communication is definitely a challenge…”’; “…I mean faculty who are not referring out like they should.”’; “I have not had any referrals for inmates who have accessibility issues.”</td>
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APPENDIX J

COMPARISON OF THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATIONS IN
NONSTANDARD ENVIRONMENTS: QUALITATIVE RESPONDENTS
Comparison of the Provision of Accommodations in Nonstandard Environments: Qualitative Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>In Prisons</th>
<th>In Clinicals</th>
<th>In Dual Enrollment Located at High School</th>
<th>In Dual Enrollment Not Located at High School</th>
<th>In General Student Online Classes</th>
<th>In General Student Internships</th>
<th>Per AHEAD Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maureen</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>N-3</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyndi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Y-2</td>
<td>Y-5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Y-1, 2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassie</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1- Extra time only. 2- DS not involved. CCEP staff determine and provide accommodations (Skill level, credentials, breadth of knowledge of CCEP staff unknown. 3- DS staff ready to provide services to DSIs. Supervisors stated to DS staff “ADA does not apply to inmates,” and denied request of DS staff to work with DSIs. 4- Clear, comprehensive policies and procedures that appear are not applied in all nonstandard sites. 5- Limited to only that which clinical worksite says is allowed. Modified clinical experience – desk work instead of patient care training.
APPENDIX K

STATUS ON PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS TO DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE 
INCARCERATED AND ENROLLED IN CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
### Status on Providing Accommodations to Disabled Students Who Are Incarcerated and Enrolled in Correctional Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Serving DSIs</th>
<th>Number DSIs Served</th>
<th>Types of Accommodations for DSIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>&quot;Do not have any disabled inmates.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I don't have any disabled inmates now or in the past.&quot;</td>
<td>None (not in prisons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>Extra time/read aloud tests; braille/LP print materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyndi</td>
<td>No, &quot;no students requested&quot;</td>
<td>None - &quot;no students requested&quot; but said &quot;lack of awareness that accommodations are available&quot;</td>
<td>None (no students requested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>No- &quot;No disabled student inmates have requested accommodations in the college prison for-credit classes&quot;</td>
<td>None - no DSIs requested</td>
<td>None (no DSIs requested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Yes- 4 sites</td>
<td>“don’t track this number”</td>
<td>Extra time / read aloud tests; ASL / CART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Yes 4 sites (1 private, 3 public)</td>
<td>1-5 DSIs</td>
<td>Extra time / read aloud tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie</td>
<td>Yes- 2 sites</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Extra time / read aloud tests; Braille / LP print materials; Audio print format; ASL/CART; Assist. Tech; Notetakers; Accessible furniture; Adj to attendance / deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassie</td>
<td>Yes - 1 site</td>
<td>2 SWDs, not requesting DS accommodations</td>
<td>None now - just trying to get students enrolled in class and get class offered at site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None &quot;no disabled student inmates have requested accommodations&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I have never dealt with this at [CC] in past 12 years. No students have inquired or requested accommodations&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Don't have this number*</td>
<td>Extra time/read aloud tests; notetakers; accessible audio print materials; ASL/CART*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>No - was supposed to and then VP said prisoners aren't entitled to ADA accommodations</td>
<td>None (DS staff is not in prisons per denial by supervisor to serve DSIs)</td>
<td>Never got to work with PEP, pulled from set up by VP saying &quot;ADA doesn't apply to prisoners&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Yes - 1 site</td>
<td>2 SWDs, not requesting DS accommodations</td>
<td>None now (Ext Time / Read Aloud/JAWS many years ago) – just trying to get students enrolled in class and get class offered at site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Response per survey, but in interview she identified no DSIs served with any accommodations and respondent is not connected to the community college correctional..."
APPENDIX L

APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH

IN VolVING HUMAN SUBJECTS JANUARY 08, 2021
Approval Notice

Initial Review

08-Jan-2021

TO: Jennifer Montag

Counseling, Adult and Higher Education


In a preliminary review, the Initial Submission of the above named research protocol was determined to meet the definition of human subjects research according to the federal regulations. The submission was then reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board through the expedited review process under Member Review procedures on 08-Jan-2021.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval period: 08-Jan-2021 - 07-Jan-2022

It is important for you to note that as an investigator conducting research that involves human participants, you are responsible for ensuring that this project has current IRB approval at all times. If your project will continue beyond the above date, or if you intend to make modifications to the study, you will need additional approval and should contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety for assistance. In addition, you are required to promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems or risks to subjects or others.

Please note that the IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Informed Consent:

Unless you have been approved for a waiver of the written signature of informed consent, this notice includes a date-stamped copy of the approved consent form for your use. NIU
policy requires that informed consent documents given to subjects participating in non-exempt research bear the approval stamp of the NIU IRB. This stamped document is the only consent form that may be photocopied for distribution to study participants.

If consent for the study is being given by proxy (guardian, etc.), it is your responsibility to document the authority of that person to consent for the subject. Also, the committee recommends that you include an acknowledgment by the subject, or the subject’s representative, that he or she has received a copy of the consent form.

You are responsible for retaining the signed consent forms obtained from your subjects for a minimum of three years after the study is concluded.

Continuing Review:

Continuing review of the project, conducted at least annually, will be necessary until data collection is complete and you no longer retain any identifiers that could link the subjects to the data collected. Please remember to use your protocol number (HS21-0218) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

Closing the Study:

Please note that a final report submission should be created in the record in lieu of an annual continuation form if data collection has ended and the data are free of identifiers. The final report is a separate submission form in the list of options in the InfoEd record, and it may be submitted prior to the annual review deadline.

With all of this said, the IRB extends best wishes for success in your research endeavors!

Please see the RIPS website for guidance on the impact of COVID-19 on research (including face-to-face data collection) https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/covid/index.shtml

Patty Wallace
Compliance Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance & Integrity
Northern Illinois University
APPENDIX M

APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL AMENDMENT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS APRIL 22, 2021
Approval Notice
Protocol Amendment

22-Apr-2021
Jennifer Montag
Counseling, Adult and Higher Education


Dear Jennifer Montag,

Your Protocol Amendment submission was reviewed and approved under Member Review procedures by the Institutional Review Board on 22-Apr-2021.

Proposed changes:
Survey tool, consent form and email recruitment letter revised.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval period: 08-Jan-2021 - 07-Jan-2022

If your project will continue beyond that date, or if you intend to make modifications to the study, you will need additional approval and should contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety for assistance. Annual review of the project will be necessary until you no longer retain any identifiers that could link the subjects to the data collected.

It is important for you to note that as a research investigator involved with human subjects, you are responsible for ensuring that the project has current IRB approval at all times, and for retaining any signed consent forms obtained from your subjects in a secure place for a minimum of three years after the study is concluded. The committee also recommends that the informed consent include an acknowledgement that the subject, or the subject’s representative, that he or she has received a copy of the consent form. In addition, you are required to promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
Please remember to use your protocol number (HS21-0218) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at (815) 753-8588.

Please see the RIPS website for guidance on the impact of COVID-19 on research (including face-to-face data collection) https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/covid/index.shtml
This is to certify that:

Jenifer Montag

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Northern Illinois University

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w6bf4201f-0076-43b7-a0ed-c206156c13b9-29289791
APPENDIX O

INFORMED CONSENT – QUANTITATIVE SURVEY
Survey Protocol and Sample Questions
Northern Illinois University
Consent to Participate in a Research Survey

Title of the Study: Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study of Community Colleges’ Disability Services in For-Credit Correctional Educational Programs

Investigator: Jenifer Montag, Doctoral Student, Northern Illinois University, Community College Leadership, Department of Adult and Higher Education

Key Information

- This is a voluntary study exploring community college disability service personnel providing disability-related accommodations and services for disabled student inmates enrolled in the college classes and programs.
- This study involves taking an 18-question survey, that will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.
- There will be the option on the survey to indicate willingness to participate in an approximately 45-minute interview, at your convenience within two weeks from completing the survey.
- There are no direct benefits to individuals participating in the study. The information you share may help institutions identify processes to enhance disability support to the enrolled disabled student inmates enrolled in community college programs and classes offered at the correctional setting.

Description of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory mixed-methods study is to explore what accommodations are being provided in the correctional setting and what barriers are experienced by the community college disability service personnel in facilitating the requisite accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in the correctional education programs. Specifically, this study will examine the processes used by the disability service personnel to negotiate any barriers experienced.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a 20-question survey. The survey will ask questions about your institution’s work on providing, or attempting to provide, accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in the correctional education program held in the prison(s). Additional questions will be demographic related to the institution’s general disability services and the general correctional education programs offered.

There will be the option to participate in a 45-minute follow-up one-on-one interview at your convenience, to be completed by the end of February. This additional research opportunity is voluntary, and you have the right to stop participating in this research at any point in time.
Risks and Benefits
There are no reasonably foreseeable risks for participating in this study. While there are no direct benefits to participants, your participation will help the field of disability service provision in community colleges through increasing disability accessibility in their for-credit classes and programs in correctional settings. The data gathered will help develop tools to assist community colleges improve and transform the process of providing appropriate accommodations and services to disabled student inmates.

Confidentiality or Anonymity
For individuals who only participate in the survey, your information will be anonymous. For individuals who participate in the voluntary follow-up interviews, your information will be kept confidential. More information will be shared in the consent form for the follow-up interview.

Your Rights
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in this study at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to skip any question or research activity, as well as to withdraw completely from participation at any point during the process.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time, feel free to contact the investigator, Jenifer Montag at [redacted]@students.niu.edu or [redacted]. Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at (815)753-8588.

Future Use of the Research Data
Your information collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future research, even if all identifiers are removed.

I have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study. I have read and understood the information provided above.
APPENDIX P

INFORMED CONSENT-QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW
Northern Illinois University
Consent to Participate in an Interview

Title of the Study: Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study of Community Colleges’ Disability Services in For-Credit Correctional Educational Programs

Investigator: Jenifer Montag, Doctoral Student, Northern Illinois University, Community College Leadership, Department of Adult and Higher Education

**Key Information**

- This is a voluntary study exploring community college disability service personnel providing disability-related accommodations and services for disabled student inmates enrolled in the college classes and programs. Specifically, the interview data will help to explain and elaborate on quantitative responses shared via the survey.
- This study involves an approximately 45-minute interview, at your convenience within two weeks from completing the survey.
- There are no direct benefits to individuals participating in the study. The information you share may help institutions identify processes to enhance disability support to the enrolled disabled student inmates enrolled in community college programs and classes offered at the correctional setting.

**Description of the Study**
The purpose of this exploratory mixed-methods study is to explore what accommodations are being provided in the correctional setting and what barriers are experienced by the community college disability service personnel in facilitating the requisite accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in the correctional education programs. Specifically, the interviews will be used to explore explanations for and elaborate on quantitative findings to better understand the processes used by the disability service personnel to negotiate any barriers experienced.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 45-minute follow-up one-on-one interview at your convenience, to be completed by the end of February. This additional research opportunity is voluntary, and you have the right to stop participating in this research at any point in time.

**Risks and Benefits**
There are no reasonably foreseeable risks for participating in this study. While there are no direct benefits to participants, your participation will help the field of disability service provision in community colleges through increasing disability accessibility in their for-credit classes and programs in correctional settings. The data gathered will help develop tools to assist community colleges improve and transform the process of providing appropriate accommodations and services to disabled student inmates.

**Confidentiality or Anonymity**
The information you share will be kept confidential. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Limited demographic information and information about your institution will be shared in reports and publications to ensure confidentiality.

**Your Rights**
Participation in this study is voluntarily. You may refuse to take part in this study at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to skip any question or research activity, as well as to withdraw completely from participation at any point during the process.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time, feel free to contact the investigator, Jenifer Montag at [students.niu.edu or blank]. Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at (815)753-8588.

**Future Use of the Research Data**
Your information collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future research, even if all identifiers are removed.

Selecting “I agree” below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

- [ ] I agree
- [ ] I do not agree

Selecting “I agree” below indicates that you give consent to the interview being audio-recorded.

- [ ] I agree
- [ ] I do not agree

Please enter your contact information, so I can reach out to you to set up the interview:

a. Participant Name: __________________________
b. Participant Phone Number: _____________________
c. Participant Email: __________________________
End of Survey Message:

Thank you for participating in this survey to assist disability services in higher education identify opportunities and strategies to provide accommodations and services to disabled student inmates enrolled in for-credit community college classes held in correctional settings.
Dear Respected Colleague,

My name is Jenifer Montag, and I am currently a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership program at Northern Illinois University (NIU).

I am conducting a dissertation research study about Facilitating Access in For-Credit College Classes for Disabled Student Inmates enrolled in community colleges’ prison education programs including a brief survey of disability service personnel.

Due to a very low response rate for the original survey sent out in February 2021, I have greatly modified the survey. The newly modified survey is being sent to all the community colleges identified as having college classes in prisons. All disability service personnel receiving this email are encouraged to complete the survey, regardless of whether you were one of the very few who completed the original February survey.

The first 25 respondents to complete the survey will have the opportunity to complete a contact form via a separate link to receive a $10.00 (ten dollar) Amazon Gift Certificate to be emailed to the respondent.

This nationwide research will help inform the extent of accommodations and services community college disability service personnel are providing in their college’s prison for-credit classes. Developing a better understanding about challenges disability service personnel may experience in providing accommodations, and the successful practices they are using to reduce or remove barriers, will contribute to the field of higher education disability service provision.

This very short, 7 question / 15-minute survey can be accessed by clicking here. Upon following the included link, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the survey before deciding to proceed. You may pause the survey and return to complete it at a later time.

The survey will close on June 1, 2021.

Survey respondents will also have the opportunity at the end of this survey to volunteer to participate in the follow-up 45-minute interview. The first 12 volunteers who complete the interview will receive a $15.00 (fifteen dollar) Amazon Gift Certificate.

Please contact the researcher by email (jennifer.montag@students.niu.edu) or phone at 815-753-8588, with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have. Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the NIU Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at 815-753-8588.

Respectfully,

Jen

Jenifer Montag, MA, NIC, CRC
Doctoral Candidate, Community College Leadership
Northern Illinois University
Email: jennifer.montag@students.niu.edu
Phone: 815-753-8588
# Facilitating Equal Access Short Survey - Final Copy

## Survey Flow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard: Informed Consent for Survey (1 Question)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch: New Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Informed Consent for Survey Northern Illinois University (NIU) Consent to Participate in a Research... Yes, I consent to participate in the survey Is Not Selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EndSurvey: Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block: Survey Questions (7 Questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch: New Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Would you like to volunteer for the interview portion of this research (informed consent on the n... Yes, I would like to volunteer for the interview Is Not Selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EndSurvey: Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard: Interview Informed Consent (3 Questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch: New Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Informed Consent for Interview Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the second portion... I agree and consent to voluntarily participate in the interview Is Not Selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EndSurvey: Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block: (0 Questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Start of Block: Informed Consent for Survey

1.
Informed Consent for Survey
Northern Illinois University (NIU)
Consent to Participate in a Research Survey

Title of the Study: Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study of Community Colleges’ Disability Services in For-Credit Correctional Educational Programs

Investigator: Jenifer Montag, Doctoral Student, Northern Illinois University, Community College Leadership, Department of Adult and Higher Education

Key information
This is a voluntary study exploring community college disability service personnel providing disability-related accommodations and services for disabled student inmates enrolled in college classes and programs.

This study has been approved by NIU’s Institutional Review Board.

The brief survey consists of seven (7) short questions that will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The survey can be paused at any point and resumed at a later time.

The survey will close June 1, 2021 or upon submission of 30 completed surveys, whichever comes first.

The first 25 (twenty-five) participants to complete the survey will receive an Amazon Gift Certificate of $10.00 (ten dollars).

Additionally, there will be the option at the end of this survey to indicate your willingness to participate in the second phase of this study, an approximately 45-minute interview, to be arranged at your convenience.

The first 12 (twelve) participants to complete the interview will receive an Amazon Gift Certificate of $15.00 (fifteen dollars).

Description of the Study
The purpose of this exploratory mixed methods study is to explore what accommodations are being provided in the correctional setting and what barriers are experienced by community college disability service personnel in facilitating the requisite accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in for-credit correctional education programs. Specifically, this study will examine the processes used by the disability service personnel to negotiate any barriers experienced. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the following short
survey. The survey will ask questions about your institution’s work on providing, or attempting to provide, accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in the college’s for-credit correctional education program held in the prisons.

As mentioned above, there will be the option to participate in a 45-minute follow-up one-on-one interview at a time and date of your choosing by June 30, 2021. This additional research opportunity is voluntary, and you have the right to stop participating in this research at any point in time.

Risks and Benefits
There are no reasonably foreseeable risks for participating in this study. While there are no direct benefits to participants, your participation will help the field of disability service provision in community colleges through increasing disability accessibility in their for-credit classes and programs in correctional settings. The data gathered will help develop tools to assist community colleges to improve the process of providing appropriate accommodations and services to disabled student inmates.

Confidentiality or Anonymity
For individuals who only participate in this survey, your information will be anonymous. For individuals who participate in the voluntary follow-up interviews, your information will be kept confidential. More details regarding interview confidentiality will be shared in the consent form for the follow-up interview at the end of this survey.

Your Rights
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in this study at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to skip any question or research activity, as well as to withdraw completely from participation at any point during the process.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time, feel free to contact the investigator, Jenifer Montag at [email protected] or [email protected]. Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at 815-753-8588.

Future Use of the Research Data
Your identifiable private information collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future studies, even if all the identifiers are removed.

- Yes, I consent to participate in the survey (1)
- No, I do not wish to complete the survey (2)

End of Block: Informed Consent for Survey

Start of Block: Survey Questions

Q2 Who determines, approves, or provides the disability academic accommodations and services for disabled student inmates enrolled in the college’s for-credit classes in the prison(s)? (select all that apply)

- College disability services office/staff (1)
- Director/Coordinator or staff of the college’s prison education program (2)
- College Prison Education Program faculty / instructors (3)
- Prison administration handles all the accommodations (4)
- Don’t know / don’t have that information (5)
- Other: (please explain): (6)
Q3 How many disabled student inmates have received (last 4 to 8 semesters) or are receiving disability-related academic accommodations or services?

- Don't have this number (1)
- 1-5 disabled student inmates (2)
- 6-10 disabled student inmates (3)
- 11-15 disabled student inmates (4)
- 16-20 disabled student inmates (5)
- 21+ disabled student inmates (6)
- Other: (7) ____________________________

Q4 Over the last 4 to 8 academic semesters, which of the following academic accommodations/services has the college provided to disabled student inmates enrolled in the
for-credit college classes in prison? (whether accommodations were approved by college disability services or not) - Select All That Apply

☐ Extra time on tests / tests read aloud (1)

☐ Braille materials / large print materials (3)

☐ Notetakers (5)

☐ Accessible print materials - audio format (6)

☐ Sign language interpreters / real-time captioning (7)

☐ None, no disabled student inmates have requested accommodations (13)

☐ None, no disabled student inmates qualify for accommodations (12)

☐ Don’t know - not involved in approving or providing accommodations in college for-credit prison classes (9)

☐ Don’t know - college prison education faculty or staff determine / provide accommodations for disabled student inmates in for-credit prison classes (10)

☐ Other: (please list / explain) (11)

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Q5 What barriers have the Disability Services staff experienced while trying to provide the academic accommodations to the disabled student inmates in the for-credit college classes?

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Page 6 of 10
Q6 If the college disability service staff is not, nor has not been, providing academic accommodations for disabled student inmates in the for-credit college classes, please share how the current arrangement was decided on and implemented to provide the access to the college classes in the prison setting?


Q7 In which of the following non-standard settings has the college's disability services office/staff provided accommodations or services during the previous 4-8 semesters? (select all that apply)

☐ Dual-enrollment students in college classes at the high school site (1)
☐ Dual-enrollment students in college classes on campus (2)
☐ Dual-enrollment students in online college classes (3)
☐ General student population taking online college classes (4)
☐ Health sciences students in external clinical settings (i.e., nursing, PTA, OTA, Sonography, etc.) (5)
☐ General student students in external experiential placements (i.e., internships, practicums, apprenticeships, etc.) (6)
☐ None - accommodations are not provided in non-standard settings (8)
☐ Other (please describe unique setting): (7)
8. Would you like to volunteer for the interview portion of this research (informed consent on the next page and the gift certificate contact information page is the last page of the survey)? If you choose not to volunteer for the interview, you will be taken to a separate survey to submit your contact information for the $10.00 (ten dollars) Amazon gift certificate.

- Yes, I would like to volunteer for the interview (1)
- No, I do not wish to volunteer for the interview. (2)

Skip To: End of Survey if 8: ≠ Yes, I would like to volunteer for the interview

End of Block: Survey Questions

Start of Block: Interview Informed Consent

9. Informed Consent for Interview

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the second portion of this study, the interview. Below is the consent information for the interview. The page to complete for the gift certificate follows the end of the consent for the interview. Northern Illinois University (NIU)

Consent to Participate in an Interview Title of the Study: Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study of Community Colleges’ Disability Services in For-Credit Correctional Educational Programs

Investigator: Jenifer Montag, Doctoral Student, Northern Illinois University, Community College Leadership, Department of Adult and Higher Education

Key Information
This is a voluntary study exploring community college disability service personnel providing disability-related accommodations and services for disabled student inmates enrolled in college classes and programs.

The interviews (approximately 45-minutes in length) will be completed by June 30, 2021, at a time and date of your choosing.

This study has been approved by NIU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).
The first 12 (twelve) participants to complete the interview will receive an Amazon Gift Certificate of $15.00 (fifteen dollars).

Description of the Study
The purpose of this exploratory mixed-methods study is to explore what accommodations are being provided in the correctional setting and what barriers are experienced by the community college disability service personnel in facilitating the requisite accommodations to disabled student inmates enrolled in the correctional education programs. Specifically, the interviews will
be used to explore explanations for and elaborate on quantitative findings to better understand the processes used or attempted by the disability service personnel to negotiate any barriers experienced. This additional research opportunity is voluntary, and you have the right to stop participating in this research at any point in time.

Risks and Benefits
There are no reasonably foreseeable risks for participating in this study. While there are no direct benefits to participants, your participation will help the field of disability service provision in community colleges through increasing disability accessibility in their for-credit classes and programs in correctional settings. The data gathered will help develop tools to assist community colleges to improve the process of providing appropriate accommodations and services to disabled student inmates.

Confidentiality
The information you share will be kept confidential. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Limited demographic information and information about your institution shared in reports and publications will be generic and unidentifiable (i.e., small mid-western community college; large northeast community college, etc.) to ensure confidentiality.

Your Rights
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in this study at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to skip any question or research activity, as well as to withdraw completely from participation at any point during the process.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time, feel free to contact the investigator, Jenifer Montag at [email protected] or [email protected]. Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at 815-753-8588.

Future Use of the Research Data
Your identifiable private information collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future studies, even if all identifiers are removed. Selecting "I agree" below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a interview research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

I agree and consent to voluntarily participate in the interview (1)

I do NOT agree (2)

[Skip To End of Survey If 9 = I do NOT agree]
10. Selecting "I agree" below indicates you consent to the recording of the interview.

   ○ I agree to the recording of the interview (1)
   ○ I do NOT agree to the recording of the interview (2)

11. Thank you for volunteering for the interview. Please provide your contact information below so I can reach out to set up the interview appointment, to be conducted at your convenience.

   ○ Participant's Name (1) ____________________________________________
   ○ Participant's Phone (2) ____________________________
   ○ Participant's Email (3) ____________________________

End of Block: Interview Informed Consent
Gift Certificate Contact Submission - Copy2

Start of Block: Gift certificate contact survey

Q1
Thank you for completing the Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates survey.

Submit your contact information (below) if you would like to receive the $10.00 (ten dollars) gift certificate from Amazon as a small token of my appreciation for your completion of the survey.

The information you provide below is submitted from and kept separate from the anonymous survey results. Your survey responses will not be identifiable.

The survey will close when 22 completed surveys are received.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact Jenifer Montag at [email protected] or phone [redacted]. If you have reconsidered and would like to volunteer for the 45-minute interview, you can reach Jenifer at the same contact information.

Thank you,
Jen
Jenifer Montag, MA, NIC, CRC, Ed.D. Candidate
Northern Illinois University
Community College Leadership
Email: [email protected]
Phone: [redacted]

☐ Yes, I would like to submit my contact information for the $10.00 (ten dollars) Amazon gift certificate (7)

☐ No, I would NOT like to submit my contact information - you will be directed to the end of the survey and your answers will be submitted (8)

Skip To: Q2 If Thank you for completing the Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates survey. Sub... = <strong>Yes</strong>, I would like to submit my contact information for the $10.00 (ten dollars) Amazon gift certificate

Skip To: End of Survey If Thank you for completing the Facilitating Equal Access for Disabled Student Inmates survey. Sub... = <strong>No</strong>, I would <strong>NOT</strong> like to submit my contact information - you will be directed to the end of the survey and your answers will be submitted
Q2 Complete your contact information below to submit for the $10.00 (ten dollars) gift certificate

○ Name of recipient: (1) 

○ Email where to send gift certificate: (2) 

○ Confirm email where to send gift certificate: (3) 

○ Phone number in case there are any problems: (4) 

End of Block: Gift certificate contact survey
Does not participate end of survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Confirm you do not want to complete the survey Facilitating Access for Disabled Student Inmates.

☐ I do NOT want to complete the survey. (1)

End of Block: Default Question Block