

BSBP College Preparatory Program



In Collaboration With Western Michigan University
Christopher Roach, MA, CRC

Goals for the presentation

- Review the history of BSBP involvement at Western Michigan University.
- Briefly review the interagency agreement for a BSBP Rehabilitation Counselor at the Disability Services for Students (DSS) Office.
- Review the BSBP College Preparatory Program.
 - Who, what, why, where, and how?
 - Components
 - 2017 Outcomes
 - Future Considerations and Potential



History of WMU/BSBP Collaboration

- BSBP has served students with legal blindness and low vision on the campus of Western Michigan University for approximately 30 years.
- BSBP has historically provided blindness-specific technical assistance to the WMU Office of Disability Student Services and the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies.
- Beginning in January 1, 2017, BSBP and WMU entered into an interagency agreement to house a Rehabilitation Vocational Counselor (CRC) at the WMU Disability Student Services Office. The primary purpose of the agreement is to provide direct assistance to any WMU students with low vision or blindness. The agreement is renewed annually.



Who am I and what is my role?

- Christopher Roach, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC)
- Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)
- Housed in the WMU Disability Services for Students Office on an interagency agreement and contract.
- Adjunct Professor, WMU Department of Integrative Holistic Health and Wellness. Guest lecturer, WMU Rehabilitation Counseling Program.
- Graduate of the WMU Master Counseling Education / Rehabilitation Counseling Program.



What: College Preparatory Program

College Prep is a 7-week program during the WMU Summer II semester (late June to mid-August) designed to:

- Provide a well-rounded opportunity for students to get a realistic impression of college and employment.
- Give students an opportunity to learn the skills needed to successfully balance the demands of college, work, and socialization on a residential college campus.
- Determine what accommodations will work best in a college setting.
- Use self-advocacy skills to facilitate accommodations needed for college classes and employment.



Who is Eligible for the Program?

- BSBP consumers who are legally blind and therefore eligible for VR services.
- High School Students completing their Junior or Senior year.
- Individuals who are attending college for the first time, or contemplating post secondary educational programs.
- Students must have completed a two week BSBP College readiness assessment, and have a written IPE (Individual Employment Plan) with BSBP including the services for the program.



West Campus entrance at Oliver Street and Student Recreation Center
Western Michigan University

www.wmich.edu
photo by Michael Lanka



John E. Fetzer Center
Western Michigan University

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College Prep Students



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Why? Student-centered focus.



'Brown and Gold' brown-eyed Susans near Stewart Tower
Western Michigan University

www.wmich.edu
photo by Neil Rankin

- Giving potential college students the opportunity to take classes for credit and find out what it's like to be a college student.
- Encouraging students by providing an opportunity to utilize and enhance their skills of independence prior to becoming a full-time college student.
- Providing students an opportunity to learn about themselves and make plans for their education and future employment goals.

Where? Kalamazoo Main Campus



East Campus entrance at Oliver Street
Western Michigan University

www.wmich.edu
photo by John Lacko



Waldo Library, Stewart Tower and University Computer Center
Western Michigan University

www.wmich.edu
photo by Neil Rankin

- The WMU campus encompasses 1200 acres on three locations in Kalamazoo.
- The Kalamazoo/Portage area and the WMU campus provides an excellent urban travelling training space for students from other areas of the state.



How? Pre-Employment Transition Services:

For eligible students with a disability, ages 14-26:

- **Job exploration counseling** in both a formal classroom setting and one-on-one with BSBP Rehabilitation staff.
- **Work-based learning experiences** in the form of their paid on-campus employment.
- **Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post secondary educational programs** from WMU advisory staff and BSBP Rehabilitation staff.
- **Workplace readiness training** both in a classroom setting and in student employment sites to develop social and independent living skills.
- **Introduction to self advocacy** skills from WMU, BSBP, and Disability Network Southwest Michigan staff.



Components of the Program

- WMU general education class(es) of 3 to 4 credit hours each.
- A paid, on-campus work experience, of up to 15 hours per week with wages sponsored by vocational rehabilitation.
- A weekly three hour self-advocacy, work place readiness, and job exploration class assessing student's individual skills and interests.
- A weekly three hour study skills class focusing on tools and practical skills for students with legal blindness.
- Daily access to two upper-class level WMU paid student mentors who are also BSBP consumers.



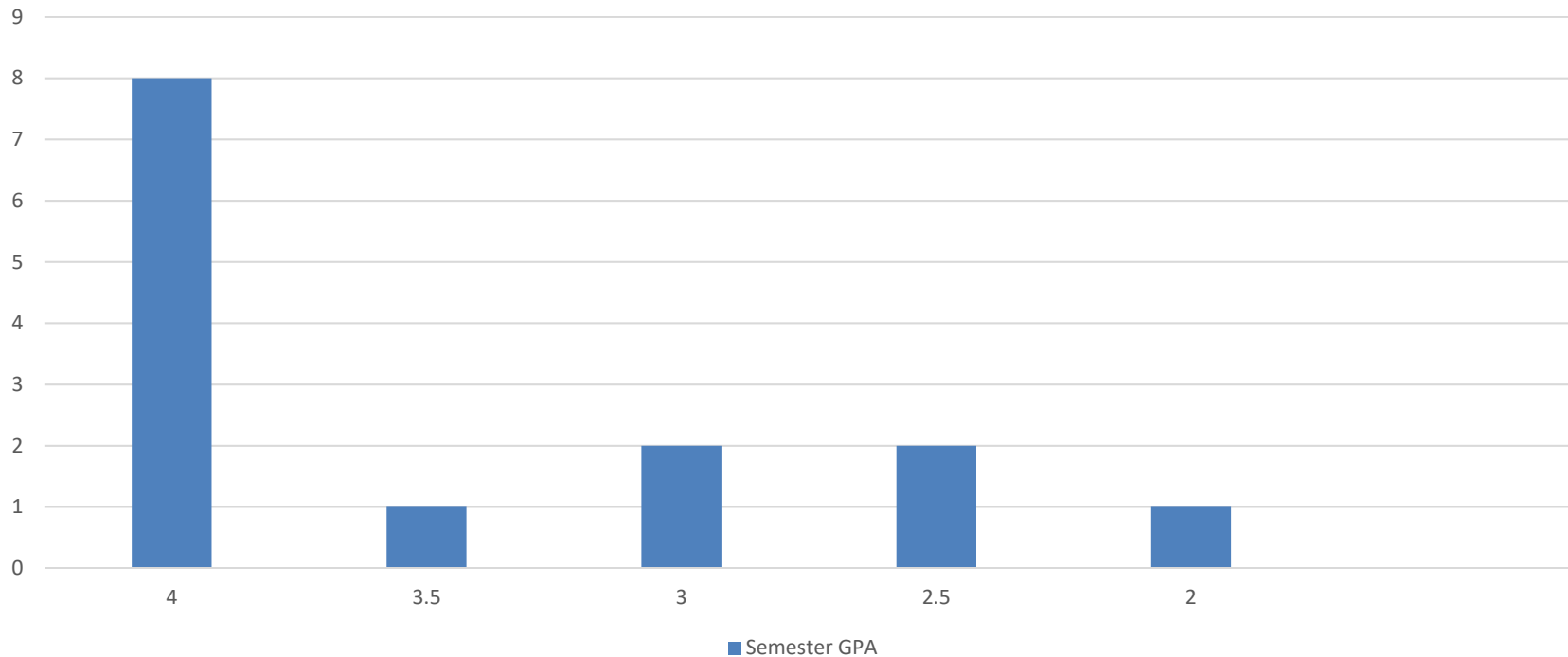
Academic courses offered in 2017

- **Public Speaking, (COM 1040):** Study of an application of principles of communication underlying effective oral presentations, with attention given to speaking in business, professional and public settings. Includes practice in preparing, presenting and evaluating speeches and other forms of oral presentations.
- **Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 2010):** An introduction to the philosophic study of morality. Deals with questions such as: What is the good life? Why should I be moral? What is the meaning of right and wrong?
- **General Psychology (PSY 1000):** An eclectic approach to a social and behavioral survey of major topics in psychology, including learning, motivation, intelligence, personality, mental illness, and social relations. Approved for General Education.
- **National Government (PSCI 2000):** An introductory survey of American national government. This course introduces the basic principles and theories of American government, explores the political process, describes the structure, and illustrates its functions. Consideration is given to the relationships of government to the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of the American society.



Academic Results for 2017 Students

2017 BSBP College Prep Summer II Grades (n=14)



Obtaining a work experience

- The BSBP Rehabilitation Counselor contacts program students and families to gather employment interest areas in the early spring. The counselor then contacts departments, services, and employment potential contacts on the WMU campus for job development conversations.
- Students can interview with employers over the phone prior to arrival for the program. Students have been placed in employment positions prior to program start.
- Students participate in an employment seminar learning the expectations of employers and employees the first week of arrival.
- Students who are not placed prior to arrival are given the opportunity to formal job interview with 2-3 employers.
- Employers then provide interview feedback and hiring interest.
- 2017 students were all placed in their first choice of employment.



Work site placements for 2017

- Pride Patrol at WMU Student Recreation Center.
- Registered Student Organization (RSO) Designs Support Assistant at WMU Student Success Office.
- Student Mentor at WMU Disability Services for Students (DSS) Autism College Prep Program.
- Office Assistant at WMU Office of Diversity of Inclusion (ODI).
- Office Assistant at WMU Office of LGBT Studies.
- Office Assistant at WMU Kalamazoo Promise Program through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- Office Assistant at WMU Writing center.
- Office Assistant at WMU Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies.
- Assistive Technology Accommodations software assessor through WMU Extended University Programs.
- BSBP Business Enterprise Program Vendor Assistant.



Accommodations for work experiences

- Accommodations such as labeling information in Braille or use of magnification technology or screen reading software may be necessary to allow the opportunity for equal access in the work setting.
- The employer, student, and BSBP staff work together to determine and implement the appropriate accommodations.
- Additional training from BSBP staff for the employer or consumer may be needed to utilize accessible technology.
- This requires skills of self advocacy and strong communication in order to communicate needs and determine the best plan to receive the most effective tools.



Student hours and earnings (Pre-ETS eligible)

- Dependent on the job position they were hired into, students earned between \$8.90 and \$9.20 per hour. They worked between 45 and 120 hours for the summer, earning between \$400 and \$1,100.
- The two student mentors (also BSBP WMU students) earned \$13.63 per hour, and worked 128 and 247 hours each, for earnings of \$1,744 and \$3,366.
- All students received training on Social Security Disability income (SSI/SSDI) work benefits, student earned income exclusions, and rules based on their situation.



Funding costs per student:

BSBP is able to fund this program out of our Vocational Rehabilitation and Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) budget.

Pre-ETS eligible:

- Paid Work Experience (varies by student hours and wage)
- Internal staff hours for direct service of the required or authorized Pre-ETS services.
- Vendor costs for the Study Skills Program Instruction: \$750 per student.
- Adaptive equipment as needed (possibly eligible if related to the program).

Not Pre-ETS eligible:

- Tuition: \$384.42 per credit hour for a 3 or 4 credit class (or two classes)
- Books: \$150 (approximate cost)
- Dormitory lodging and meal plan: \$2030
- Weekend food stipend: \$350 (\$50 for 7 weeks)



Additional services to consider

- Orientation to WMU Campus Services, including: the Disability Services for Students office, Career and Employment Services, Dining Services, Residence Life/Dormitories, Technology Labs and Help Services, Public Transit/Bus on and off campus, and local resources for leisure, entertainment, and restaurants.
- Travel trainers (Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists / COMS): WMU is a large urban campus. Students are given on campus travel instruction the first week of the program. Additional travel instruction if needed is provided through services vended with COMS in the Kalamazoo Area.
- Individual Social Security Benefit Counseling through the local Center for Independent Living (CIL), Disability Network Southwest Michigan.
- Additional accessible technology training, specifically for the WMU electronic learning platform, or website navigation.



Post completion of the 2017 Program

For the 2017 students (n=14):

- 3 returned to High School for their Senior Year.
- 2 are degree enrolled at a Michigan Liberal Arts College.
- 4 are degree enrolled at WMU.
- 2 are attending a Michigan Community College.
- 1 is in a vocational training program.
- 1 is degree enrolled at another State of MI University.
- 1 plans to return to a community college in January 2018, and transfer to a State University in Fall 2018.



Potential for other populations or institutions

- College Prep allows students to experience a post-secondary residential program with added supports and assistance.
- The program was replicated for WMU Students on the Autism Spectrum in 2016 and 2017 through the WMU Department of Psychology, funded by Michigan Rehabilitation Services Pre-ETS funds.
- This program could easily be replicated for other students with disabilities at other post secondary institutions.



Questions?



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Works Sited and Resources

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Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

THANK YOU!

Christopher Roach

Cell Phone: 269.330.5336

roachc1@Michigan.gov

BSBP: 1-800-292-4200

BSBP TTY: 1-888-864-1212

