The WCU University Participant (UP) Program

A Model for Experiencing University Life and Learning by Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities

What is the UP Program?

• The UP program has been developed to provide typical college experiences for young people with developmental disabilities.

• The UP program began in the Fall, 2007 semester as a pilot project and has served two students completing requirements for a UP Certificate of Accomplishment.
What are developmental disabilities?

- A person with developmental disabilities is one who has a “severe, chronic disability” that can affect life functioning in areas such as self-care, language, learning, mobility, self-direction, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.
- Persons with developmental disabilities include those diagnosed as having intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, or autism spectrum disorder.

Why WCU has a UP program?

- Allows WCU to develop a leadership and model role in a nationally developing trend
- Enhances WCU’s aspiration of creating “responsible citizens in a global community”
- Offers multiple benefits to UP participants, primarily learning to live in a normal community environment
What do UP participants do at WCU?

• Live on campus and experience college life with same age peers
• Have an individual plan that would allow personal development for post-UP success
• Attend a limited number of classes
• Participate in social events and activities

How is the UP program supported?

• Students pay normal tuition and fees
• Individual support is provided for students through the Community Alternative Program (CAP) if applicable
• Walmart Foundation Grant, the Arc of Haywood County, community contributions
• Volunteers provide natural supports
What are the accomplishments of the UP program thus far

- Two students have completed UP requirements
- Four currently enrolled for fall semester
- Successful participation in classes and integration into the WCU community
- High level of overall satisfaction with the program from students, parents, and community
- Grant applications and alternative ways of funding are continually being searched and submitted for greater sustainability

Notable Reactions to the UP Program

- UP Participant was nominated for homecoming court by his peers during fall 2007 semester
- Peers as well as professors have provided natural supports on their own time
- UP Participants have participated in many groups, activities, and sporting events on campus
- Campus internships have been positive
Be sure to have contact numbers for person’s responsible before and after your times

Be professional- volunteer badges need to be worn when volunteering.

See if you can seek out several activities to do during the times you are scheduled and offer choices to UP Participants

Professionalism/confidentiality

Logging volunteer hours

Parties, drugs, and alcohol

Cell phone use and ways to treat UP Participants

Substitute list

Schedules emailed by Sunday

Can my friends also be around? Yes!

Can I take them off campus?
Who are the UP Participants?

- Elizabeth Pritchett
- Aaron Hoefs
- Corey Hambrick
- Anna Grace Davis
- Facebook group Western Carolina University Participant group
- Pictures for ID badges