

Evaluation of the College Bound Summer Program
for
High School Students with Disabilities

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(ABSTRACT)

In the current education environment, students with disabilities may lack adequate transition planning in high school that may explain why these students often experience poor outcomes in higher education. The *College Bound Summer Program* was developed in 1999 as a supplement program within the state of Virginia to address transition issues and college success strategies for students with disabilities planning to attend college. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify and assess the strengths and needs of *College Bound*. The intent of the evaluation is to provide data to guide the continuing development and improvement of the program. An adaptation of Schalock's (2001) outcome based evaluation model is utilized to provide a practical, problem-solving approach to gauge the quality and effectiveness of the program and to establish whether the program has produced its desired outcomes for participants. Sources of data included (a) interviews with 26 participants who attended the program in 1999, 2000, and 2001; and (b) extant documentation regarding program implementation. Data were analyzed qualitatively using constant comparative methods to derive findings that addressed eight categories related to *College Bound's* strengths and needs: (a) Learning Outcomes, (b) Experiencing On-Campus Living, (c) Attending Workshops, (d) Facilitating Personal Networks, (e) Marketing the Program, (f) Assessing Satisfaction, (g) Gathering Transition Information, and (h) Offering Suggestions. Findings from this evaluation suggest that the draw of *College Bound* for participants is concern regarding disability challenges in higher education. The data suggest that both parents and students are anxious about attending college and meeting the challenges of the collegiate environment. *College Bound* appears to be meeting the needs of the participants with programmatic strength in the following areas: (a) developing self-advocacy; (b) accessing college support services, and (c) networking with other participants, and (d) interacting with successful college students with disabilities.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my sister, Louise. Your achievement of this milestone before me has always been a source of support and motivation. You are and always will be a source of strength in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Since I became the Assistant Director of Services for Students with Disabilities at Virginia Tech seven years ago, I have found myself working with a growing population of students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, psychiatric disorders, and medical disabilities. The changes these students face as they transition from high school to college can be dramatic as well as traumatic. Adjusting to these changes can be so overwhelming that these students may find themselves failing almost as soon as they have begun.

Often these students do not understand how their disabilities may affect them academically and socially when they no longer have the specialized support systems that sustained them in high school. They may not have the self-advocacy skills necessary to communicate with professors and other college personnel or the management skills needed to complete college course work. The loss of sustaining support systems may be so overwhelming that the student may have difficulty establishing new supports at their university or college.

Inadequate transition planning or a lack of any planning at all may explain why students with disabilities often experience poor outcomes in higher education (Grigal, Test, Beattie, & Wood, 1997). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandated high school educators prepare students for movement after high school graduation to postsecondary education, vocational training, employment, independent living, and community integration. This Act has encouraged a greater number of students with disabilities to pursue further education after high school (Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Henderson, 2001). Although resources exist at both the high school and college level in the form of accommodations, counseling, assistive technology, and advocacy curricula, students with disabilities often struggle to succeed in higher education. Therefore, it is important to provide supplemental programs to assist students with disabilities in the transition between high school and college. The College Bound Summer Program (referred to alternately as *College Bound*), the focus of this study, provides one supplemental program.

College Bound was established in 1999, as a means of addressing transition issues and college success strategies for students with disabilities. The program is one of several projects developed by a 11 year partnership between the college disability service providers at Virginia Tech, Radford University, New River Community College, state agencies serving student with disabilities, and local public school special education personnel. The mission of *College Bound* is to expose high school students with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth of Virginia and considering postsecondary education to a program that stresses the knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities, self-advocacy, and access to assistive technology that promotes a successful transition to college. The program, held in June at Virginia Tech, also provides an on-campus college living experience for the students. *College Bound* invites the parents of these students to attend so they can learn what services are available to assist their child and can, as a result, better guide their child through the transition process.

Statement of the Problem

Transition services for students with disabilities have not always been a priority in public schools. Halpern (1992) suggested that transition planning is frequently ineffective, if it exists at all. Secondary school personnel acknowledge the transition needs of students with more severe disabilities, but often leave students with more invisible disabilities, such as learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder, without adequate transition programming (Reiff & deFur, 1992).

These students may be placed in general education classrooms with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) reflecting a small amount of special education contact. Some of these students may have exited special education contact, and although some accommodations may be provided in general education classes, these students do not receive special education or transition programming because it is assumed that these are intelligent students who should grasp the skills they need to succeed in college in the same manner as students without disabilities. Although these students may realize what they need to do to pursue their goals, they lack the requisite functioning skills, the confidence, and the support to achieve these goals. Bassett and

Smith (1996) contended that transition services for students with disabilities offer what might be the ultimate challenge to our school system--looking beyond school to outcomes for successful adult living.

The problem also occurs, in part, because most students with disabilities have been on the caseload of a special education teacher in elementary or secondary school. This teacher guides the educational program of the student and often views his or her responsibilities as ensuring the success of the student and, therefore, acts as a liaison and a buffer between the student, other teachers, administrators, and sometimes parents and employers (Reiff & deFur, 1992). Although these individuals have the best of intentions, this protective buffer does not foster independence or encourage the development of self-advocacy skills. When these factors are coupled with the student's desire to be independent, he or she may want to hide their disability as much as possible and this behavior may prohibit the student from seeking assistance and services at the college level.

In 1975, when the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) first provided the assurance of a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities, it did not provide for adequate services to help these students make the transition from high school to adult life. The 1983 amendments to this Act remedied this omission by adding a federal initiative for the improvement of transition services for students with disabilities from secondary school to adult life. In 1990, the Act's name was changed to the IDEA, and transition services were federally mandated. In 1997, IDEA was amended to further strengthen transition services, which have the goal of providing supports for the achievement of personal satisfaction through employment, education, community living, friendship, and recreation while respecting the choices of the individual and family (Cashman, 2000). One way to address the needed transition services may be through programs, such as *College Bound*, targeted at specific populations of students with disabilities who plan to attend college.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative, formative, participant evaluation of *College Bound* to identify and assess its strengths and needs. The

evaluation will guide the future development of the program and identify areas for change necessary to continue the development and improvement of *College Bound*.

Research Questions

The over-all guiding research question for the evaluation was: How is *College Bound* meeting its established goals and objectives for its student and parent participants? Subordinate research questions assess both the performance outcomes for the participants as well as how the participants view the program's quality and value:

1. What are the outcomes of *College Bound* for its individual participants?
2. How do the student and parent participants describe their experience with *College Bound*?

Significance of the Study

The intent of this study was to provide information that could shape the continuous improvement of *College Bound*. During the past six years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of student and parent participants in *College Bound*. Each year, a short evaluation has been requested from the student and parent participants as well as the college student leaders and the program committee members. These evaluations, however, have not focused on the outcomes for the participants, but have addressed only the participants' satisfaction with program content for the year they attended.

As a public, fee-based program, *College Bound* should be accountable to those individuals it has served and to those it will serve in future years. The program must also strive for continuous improvement and effective management. The evaluation has provided feedback to: (a) enhance both internal and external program accountability; (b) focus on long-term goals and specific objectives; (c) provide program information to the stakeholders; (d) enhance decision making; and (e) determine effective resource use.

Definition of Terms

The following is an alphabetical list of definitions that was used for the purpose of this study. These terms will appear throughout the study.

Child with a Disability: terminology used to identify a child with mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (hereinafter referred to as emotional disturbance), orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or a specific learning disability: and who, by reason thereof, needs special education or related services (IDEA, 1990).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the law and that includes: (a) a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance; (b) a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmark or short-term objectives; (c) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided the child; (d) an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class; (e) the projected date for the beginning of the service; (f) beginning at age 14, a statement of the transition service needs of the child (IDEA, 1990).

Institution Of Higher Education: an educational institution in any state that: (a) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate; (b) is legally authorized within such state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (c) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; (d) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (e) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time (Higher Education Act, 1965).

Person with a Disability: an individual who has: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such

individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) been regarded as having such an impairment (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990).

Secondary School: a non profit institutional day or residential school that provides secondary education, as determined under state law, except that it does not include any education beyond grade 12 (IDEA, 1990).

Special Education: specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique and individual needs of a child with a disability including: (a) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (b) instruction in physical education (IDEA, 1990).

Transition Services: a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that: (a) is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment including supported employment, continuing and adult education, audit services, independent living, or community participation; (b) is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (IDEA, 1990).

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter One includes an introduction of the topic, a statement of the study's purpose and significance, research questions, and definition of terms. Chapter Two provides a review of related literature, a description of the problem in its current context while providing a review of the historical evolution of transition, and a discussion of the students involved in this transition process. Research articles focusing on transition are critically analyzed and synthesized. Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the study, indicating the study's design, sampling procedures, data collection management, and the data analysis procedure. Chapter Four contains the findings of the study, including the identification of predominant and underlying themes that emerge from the analysis of the interview data. Chapter Five summarizes the study,

discusses the conclusions, and presents implications for *College Bound* and for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The underlying foundation of *College Bound* is to assist the successful transitioning for students with disabilities from high school to college. Transition-planning issues provide the framework for the workshops and activities offered by the program. This chapter synthesizes the research literature related to transition for students with disabilities to higher education and is organized into six parts: (a) current context on college attendance; (b) background for transition; (c) college environment; (d) high school transition programming; (e) college support of student success; (f) changing the transition paradigm; and (g) components of successful supplemental transition programs.

In order to accomplish this review, a literature search of the computerized databases Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), PYSCHINFO, and Dissertation Abstracts International was conducted. References from journals, book chapters, related studies, and dissertations led to the identification of additional sources. The terms used in the literature search were, but not limited to: *transition, special education, secondary education, postsecondary education, higher education, disabilities, and students*. In this literature search, the term disability was not divided by specific disability categories. Dates were not limited in the search, because an historical development of transition was required.

The same database search terms were used to locate studies related to transition within special education. Because the concept of transition planning was implemented with the EAHCA in 1975 (PL 94-142), the majority of the literature search was conducted from 1975 to present.

Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

Until recently, there had been little attention given to assisting students with disabilities to make the transition to higher education even though they have been a part of higher education longer than most people realize (Jarrow, 1993). In 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed federal legislation to establish Gallaudet University, in Washington, D.C., for students with hearing impairments. Over the next 100 years, students with

disabilities were served primarily as exceptions to the typical student population or through the intervention of a benefactor or advocate (Jarrow, 1993).

By the 1960s, the idea that students with disabilities could attend colleges and universities became increasingly viable. Wilchesky (1986) suggested several reasons for this trend: (a) pressure by self-help and advocacy groups on institutions of higher education to accept and accommodate students with disabilities; (b) increased awareness of the broadening “social mission” of universities and colleges; and (c) legislation mandating the integration of children with disabilities into the mainstream of education. In addition, Wilchesky also suggested that advances in medicine and rehabilitation engineering have increased opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Since the 1970s, the number of disabled students who attend college has been slowly increasing. In 1978, slightly less than 3% of first-time, full-time college freshmen reported a disability (Henderson, 2001). A 2000 survey conducted by the HEATH Resource Center of 269,413 students attending 434 four-year, baccalaureate colleges and universities revealed that this number had grown to 6% of all first-time, full-time students enrolled during the fall of 2000 at four-year institutions in the United States (Henderson, 2001). Learning disabilities were the largest disability category with 40% of the students surveyed stating they had this disability, compared with 16% in 1988. In contrast, 10 years ago, “partially sighted or blind” was the most common disability reported in similar HEATH surveys. Slightly more than half of the students reporting disabilities attended public institutions (54%). Independent colleges and universities showed 42% attendance with 4% attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Students with disabilities were more likely, by a small percentage, to be male than female.

Despite the advances in education, disability rights policies, the support of federal mandates, and increased funding of programs for youth, the post-school outcomes for many youth with disabilities are still poor (The National Council on Disability and the Social Security Administration, (NCOSSA), 2000). In their November 2000 report entitled “Transition and Post-School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities: Closing the Gaps to Postsecondary Education and Employment,” these agencies presented an analysis of research on the status of transition, postsecondary education,

and employment outcomes for 14 to 22 year old youths with disabilities over the past 25 years.

In 1998, 486,625 students with disabilities exited special education. Twenty-seven percent of this number exited with diplomas compared to 75% of their non-disabled peers, 17% dropped out before graduating, 13% moved and were not known to continue special education, and 12% returned to regular education. Of the percent of students who exited with diplomas, only 27% enrolled in postsecondary education compared to 68% of their peers.

The report also cited that for students with disabilities attending postsecondary institutions, there might be real life disincentives that prohibit academic success. These disincentives include: (a) unreasonable criteria to qualify for services; (b) lack of accessibility to campus facilities; and (c) lack of financial assistance from federal and state agencies. These barriers may prevent far too many students with disabilities from pursuing postsecondary education, which would increase their knowledge and skills and enhance their employment potential (NCOSSA, 2000).

Legal Requirements for Transition

Over the past 25 years, the legal requirements for transition have changed because federal legislation has been enacted to change how children and youth with disabilities are educated, engage in higher education, and prepare for and engage in meaningful employment. These changes in education, human service, and public policy areas are due to: (a) the need to compete in a global economy; (b) the pressure of the federal deficit and tax concerns; (c) the depressed revenue streams available to government to operate its programs; (d) the broad and profound change in the philosophical and societal context of serving people with disabilities; and (e) the dramatically changing expectations of parents and consumers about what service systems will deliver for them (Gloeckler, 1993). Because the legal requirements that helped to strengthen special education transition planning form the basis for several *College Bound* workshops, an understanding of the federal laws governing transition and college service provision is needed.

Historical Perspective

Federal laws designed to assist individuals with disabilities have existed since Congress passed the first such law in 1878 (Braddock, 1987). This law authorized a Marine Hospital Service to provide medical services to sick and disabled seamen. Before the 1960s, schools were allowed to exclude certain children and often these were children with disabilities. Court decisions and federal and state legislation since 1960 have served to protect the rights of students with disabilities and guarantee that a free and appropriate publicly supported education is available to them (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1993).

Relevant Federal Laws

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA). This Act, commonly known as Public Law 94-142, has become the core for federal funding of special education. The Act mandates a free and appropriate public education, ensures due process, and mandates IEPs and learning in the least restrictive environment for all children with disabilities. The 1983 amendments to EAHCA established services to facilitate school-to-work transition programs.

To draw attention to these amendments and urge their implementation, Madeleine Will, then Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, wrote a position paper in which she emphasized transition from school to work as one of the major federal priorities of special education programs. During this time, the work of career and vocational educators led to significant changes in public schools that included: (a) modified school programs; (b) new teacher training programs; (c) new national and state agencies and organizations; and (d) new curriculum models (Brown & West, 1985).

Despite the amendments, secondary schools were reluctant to carry out these changes (Brown & West, 1985). Some of the reasons included: (a) reluctance to change; (b) lack of administrative commitment; (c) lack of community support; (d) lack of parent involvement; and (e) inadequate training of teachers and support staff. The effort to prioritize transition programs was also hampered by negative attitudes of the general public.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). In 1990, Congress amended EAHCA, renamed it IDEA, and provided the legal mandate for transition services. IDEA provides for transition opportunities to assist students with disabilities and their families to think about the future and consider what they may want to do after high school graduation or until the age of 22. The Act also provides time for students to plan how to make high school experiences relate directly to the student's dreams and desired outcomes (Ohio State Department of Education, 1999). The intent of transition services is to increase the likelihood that students are successful when they exit high school. As the first generation of students with disabilities that experienced the provisions of EAHCA completed secondary education, a growing number of educators began to direct attention to helping them make the transition to higher education.

Further amendments to IDEA in 1997 emphasize the importance of transition services by strengthening the integrity of the original concepts of transition and clarifying activities related to the provision of transition services. Consequently, post-school goals have become an important guiding principle for IEP decisions. The yearly IEP should clearly define a plan that results in graduation and movement to higher education or employment and strengthen the focus of the entire high school course of study. The amendments lower the age for transition planning by mandating that secondary and higher education awareness activities and initial planning for students should start no later than age 14 with a statement of needed transition services incorporated in the student's IEP.

When the student reaches age 16, the Act directs the IEP team to plan jointly with other agencies and service providers to ensure that the student's needs are met both during and after the student completes high school. The amendments also require the involvement of the student in transition planning to the greatest extent possible. The focus should be on the student becoming his/her own self-advocate in a plan that enables the student to transition to independent living and employment or higher education.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This Act is considered to be the "civil rights act" for people with disabilities because it prohibits federal agencies and their grantees and contractors from discriminating against people based on disability (ADA Compliance

Guide, 1994). In 1977, regulations were issued to implement Section 504 of the Act, which required institutions of higher learning that receive federal assistance to make programs and jobs accessible to people with disabilities. After these guidelines were developed, additional focus was placed on the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, as well as on making the adjustment to employment and community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA, whose stated purpose is to remedy discrimination against individuals with disabilities (Tucker, 1996), provides more comprehensive coverage and true equal protection for persons with disabilities. Intended to supplement Section 504, the ADA added additional coverage in the area of safety, increased number of disability categories, and protection in private colleges as well as public colleges for individuals with disabilities in the postsecondary context (ADA Compliance Guide, 1994).

Both Section 504 and the ADA prohibit the exclusion of a person with a disability from participating in programs and activities provided by a public entity or those receiving federal financial assistance. College students with disabilities must meet the academic and technical standards requisite to college admission. These standards are met with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or provision of auxiliary aids and services. Postsecondary institutions may not, on the basis of a disability, exclude any qualified disabled student from a course of study or other educational program or activity (Tucker, 1996).

The conceptualization of a disability under the ADA is one where an individual has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, has a history or record of such an impairment, or is considered to have such an impairment and is treated as though the impairment exists. The presence of a diagnosed physical, medical, or mental impairment does not, however, always signify coverage under these acts. Critical to the determination of a disability under the ADA is not so much that a physical or mental impairment or both exist, have existed, or are presumed to exist, but that it must create an effect, which substantially limits a major life activity. Major life

activities include, but are not limited to, learning, seeing, hearing, walking, sleeping, and concentrating.

Because it is not easy to understand these laws, specifically the IDEA and ADA, students and their parents often find it difficult to access services that colleges offer to students with disabilities or to access information about suitable accommodations. *College Bound*, therefore, provides training on these laws for both students and parents.

Higher Education Environment

Dalke and Schmitt (1987) and Brinckerhoff (1992) recognized that as students with disabilities move into postsecondary education, they are confronted with many changes that may lead to new and unforeseen obstacles. These include: (a) teacher-student contact changes; (b) academic pace changes; (c) support network changes; (d) environmental structure changes; (e) physical environment changes; and (f) role changes. Students need to understand these obstacles to better prepare themselves for the reality of the higher education environment. Educators in secondary schools should, therefore, be implementing programs that encourage independence, foster self-advocacy, and empower students to make their own decisions. However, teacher-directed approaches to educational planning and service provision continue to dominate, which often results in student dependency (Brinckerhoff, 1994; Wilson, 1994). Therefore, although many students realize what they need in order to pursue their goals successfully, they lack the confidence, skills, and support to achieve them (Bassett & Smith, 1996).

There are, then, a variety of reasons that can limit success in the postsecondary setting for students with disabilities. These include: (a) lack of knowledge of one's disability and how it affects learning; (b) tracking into lower level courses or taking academics in a resource room during high school; (c) limited understanding of one's legal rights; (d) lack of self-advocacy skills; (e) lack of knowledge of available college support services or how to access those services; and (f) inadequate services for students with disabilities at the postsecondary level (Aune, 1991; Brinckerhoff, 1994).

Higher Education Services and Accommodations

To provide a student with a disability equal opportunity to participate in courses, activities, and programs, institutions of higher education must make a reasonable effort to accommodate their needs. Academic accommodations may include extended time for test taking, course substitutions, alternate test forms, readers or scribes for tests, tape recording of classes, and extended time to complete assignments. Other accommodations that fall into the category of “auxiliary aids and services” allow students with disabilities the opportunity to gain the same benefit or the ability to reach the same level of achievement as non-disabled students. These accommodations may include taped texts, interpreters, readers, Braille and large print materials, or other effective methods of making orally delivered material available to students with disabilities. Assistive technology, which is also included under the category of auxiliary aids, means any item, piece of equipment, or product system that can be used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities.

Because auxiliary aids can be costly, students have the responsibility to follow established college and university procedures for obtaining these accommodations and to comply with attendance policies in order to continue to receive services (Milani, 1996). Auxiliary aids needed to provide the nondiscriminatory treatment required by the ADA and Section 504 regulations must be made available at no cost to the student. Examples of these auxiliary aids are: interpreters for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, assistive listening devices, tutors, and readers. Colleges and universities may not charge for reasonable accommodations, which should not alter their educational programs or academic requirements. However, an institution is not responsible for providing personal services such as attendants, hearing aids, and glasses.

In order to receive accommodations, students with disabilities must self identify and provide the college or university with documentation of their disability that is recent and relevant, completed by an appropriate expert, and sufficiently comprehensive (Tucker, 1996). The documentation needs to state the disability and its impact on the student in the academic environment. It should also provide clear evidence to support a legitimate educational purpose for making an accommodation (Milani, 1996). Colleges and universities are not required to provide accommodations for a student with a

disability who does not self-disclose or follow the established procedures of the institution.

These accommodations are made on an individual basis that takes into account the strengths and needs of each student as well as the specific demands of the discipline, class format, and evaluation methods of a course. When establishing accommodations, it is also important to focus on the functional impact of the student's disability, not on the diagnostic label (Lissner, 1995). College and university faculty and staff do not have the responsibility of deciding on appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. This responsibility falls to the designated disability service provider employed by the college. However, faculty and staff do have the obligation to provide accommodations in a timely manner.

Students with disabilities need to be aware and knowledgeable of the college environment and the requirements for accommodations. Supplemental transition programs, such as *College Bound*, can play an important role in the dissemination of this information.

Transition in the Secondary Education Environment

Asselin (1987) described educational transition "as the process of moving students successfully from secondary education into postsecondary education or employment" (p. 2). Because transition is a developmental process that continues over time, a critical dimension in transition planning is the recognition of the systematic time line of events that take place in students' lives. Historically, one of the major problems in transition services has been the lateness of the actual planning on the high school level since students with disabilities are often not encouraged to attend college. Brinckerhoff (1996) proposed that students need to begin in eighth grade to develop the skills necessary for college success as well as attend and participate in their IEP meetings. Transition planning should also allow for flexibility and changes as students revisit their plans and goals (Sarkees & Scott, 1986).

Until recently, flexibility has not played an important part in the way policy makers and providers approached transition services. Former Secretary of Education Madeline Will (1984) limited the definition of transition for public schools to an outcome oriented

process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences leading to employment. Others saw the outcomes in terms of community adjustment (Halpern,1985). Halpern (1994) outlined a historical perspective of transition for four decades as:

1. The 1960s were a time of readiness with work/study programs addressing inadequacies of high school programs by preparing students to obtain jobs and enjoy a satisfactory level of community adjustment after leaving school.
2. The 1970s were a time of career education seeking to provide learning opportunities for students in the areas of academic, daily living, personal-social, and occupational knowledge and specific work skills necessary for attaining their highest level of economic, personal, and social fulfillment.
3. The 1980s were a time of transition as an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment.
4. The 1990s were a time of transition as an outcome-oriented process leading to postsecondary education, vocational training, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The reauthorizations of the IDEA in 1990 and 1997 have served to broaden the definition to include this wider range of outcomes.

IDEA 1990 mandated that transition services should begin at age 16 and continue until the student graduates from high school or reaches the age of 22. The reauthorization of the Act in 1997 changed the beginning age to 14. The transition component of the IDEA also recognizes the need for the process to be student centered in order to increase the likelihood that students will achieve success in higher education or employment despite their disability.

The transition component of IDEA also:

1. Assists students and families in their thinking about the future and in considering what directions they want to take after high school.
2. Allows time for students, families, and others to plan together how to make high school experiences relate directly to the students' dreams and desired outcomes.

3. Helps students and families to make connections to services they will need both during and after high school.
4. Describes new ways to help states determine whether they are reaching their goals in educating students with disabilities.

These components highlight the ways to facilitate a student's overall adjustment to adulthood by addressing social, emotional, familial, educational, and daily-living issues, as well as employment issues that are central to a successful transition (Reiff & deFur, 1992).

Although careful transition planning can decrease or eliminate many of the barriers to success after high school, it does not guarantee success. Therefore, programs such as *College Bound* have been developed to continue to support students making the transition from high school to college.

High School Transition Programs

Although the scope and nature of transition programs range from those housed in school systems to those housed in community resources, effective transition programming for students with disabilities usually begins during secondary education. Since the IDEA, of 1990, provided the definition of transition services and the 1997 amendments placed a greater emphasis on these services, research has focused on the criteria for successful transition planning. Transition planning can be broken into two general domains: life and support. The life domain represents how most people organize their lives; work, education, family, leisure time, and community involvement and the support domain represents those areas related to food, shelter, clothing, and health. Secondary curricula and higher educational services should reflect concern for all areas of the two domains as well as concern for the organizational structure and procedures of the specific geographical area (Polloway, Patton, Payne, & Payne, 1989).

Components of Model Transition Programs

Dowdy (1990) suggested that, given the problems experienced by students with disabilities as they make the transition from school to adult life, increased attention must be given to developing and implementing high quality transition programs and services. During the past decade, as transition planning has become a component of special

education programming, educational researchers have proposed key elements for successful transition programming (Halpern, 1994; Levinson & Ohler, 1998; Rojewski, 1992; Siperstein, 1988; Spekmen, Goldberg, & Herman, 1992; Squires, 1996; & Stowitschek, 1996). These researchers suggested the following key elements for successful transition programs:

1. Transition should be individualized, student centered, and have active engagement by the student.
2. School administration and staff should be knowledgeable about transition issues with effective communications between team members and students.
3. Annual goals and completion timelines should be established for the student.
4. Students should receive academic, vocational, and career counseling.
5. Adequate support systems should be established.
6. Students should develop self-awareness skills.
7. Students should be placed in appropriate academic settings in high school.
8. Outside agencies that provide support for students with disabilities should be involved in the transition program.
9. Frequent evaluations should be built into the transition program.

College Bound uses the key elements that are provided by research in the formation of its workshops for students and parents. The research, however, does not reflect a unified vision of transition planning, which would tend to simplify the process for high school personnel and promote a more successful transitioning from high school to higher education.

Only transition planning that represents a thoughtful, unified vision will lead to optimal post-school outcomes for students. However, as Johnson et al. (1993) pointed out, special education programs have traditionally been accredited and evaluated based upon compliance measures. When the guiding principle of transition planning is compliance, program quality is often overlooked and students may not receive the support needed to prepare them for postsecondary education. The 1997 IDEA amendments clearly deliver the message of higher expectations and increased accountability for successful transition for students with disabilities. Effective programming research can guide the development of transition programs but it is

difficult to reach a unified vision with so many options being put forth by researchers. However, the study of the strengths and weaknesses of *College Bound* from the perspective of the participants can help identify elements that can be incorporated into a unified vision of transition planning.

Transition Competencies for Secondary Educators

Special education teachers usually conduct high school transition planning and these teachers may or may not have the skills necessary to provide effective planning critical to increasing the success of students with disabilities after secondary education. Accomplishing this means that special education personnel as well as general education personnel must understand their roles and develop the competencies needed to provide transition services.

Knott and Asselin (1999) sought to clarify the current levels of knowledge, involvement, and importance of transition planning and service delivery by secondary special education teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Two hundred fourteen of 236 secondary special education teachers completed a Transition Compliance Survey yielding a 92% response rate. The survey was developed from a literature review and the requirements of IDEA by the researchers and mailed to each participant. The survey participants were identified by the special education administrators from each of the 130 Virginia school districts and taught four disability groups including students with learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional/behavioral disorders, and a combination of categories of students with mild disabilities. The participants' teaching experience averaged 13 years, and most of them continued to attend workshops and conferences on transition.

The participants were found to have a general knowledge of the problems, issues, concepts, and definitions that provide the foundations for implementing transition planning. They also placed great importance on involving students and their families in the planning. However, although transition mandates require the establishment of links to service agencies and outside resources, the participants had little knowledge of these agencies or knowledge of their roles and eligibility requirements. The participants also reported two additional areas of low involvement:

(a) the development or selection of curricula for transition, and (b) the involvement in the evaluation of the effectiveness of transition programs and follow-up with students.

The results suggested that transition preparation for special education teachers needs to move beyond the basics of transition to address the gaps in the knowledge, involvement in, and importance of transition planning. This survey has helped to identify these gaps for those who play a primary role in transition planning. Knott and Asselin (1999) made three recommendations based on the study data: (a) barriers to interagency involvement in the transition process should be identified and addressed; (b) teachers should address their lack of knowledge of adult services; and (c) teachers should allow all stakeholders in the process to provide input and suggest outcomes and expectations. It is important that any study assessing the success of *College Bound* takes these findings into account.

Unified Efforts

Transition outcomes are based on the student's future goals and objectives with input from parents and teachers. Effective planning during high school needs to match the outcomes for the student after graduation. Thompson, Fulk, and Piercy (2000) interviewed a small population of 22 students with disabilities from three Illinois high schools and their parents to find out how well planning matched the post-graduation outcomes. The high schools, which are part of a special education cooperative serving three counties in Illinois, identified 8 male and 14 female students with learning disabilities and their parents who participated in the face-to-face interviews. Twelve high schools were part of the cooperative, only three agreed to participate. The primary assumption of this investigation was that:

One indicator of the extent to which the transition planning process is facilitating a unified, interagency effort to assist students with disabilities in achieving desired post school outcomes is the degree to which students and parents identify the same outcomes and support needs as those recorded on the transition planning documents. (p. 5)

Assessment data were also collected from the students' cumulative files and IEPs. Thompson et al. (2000) found great disparity between the students and their

parents in regard to the types and duration of supports needed after high school. Agencies and individuals outside of the high school environment identified as needed support services were often not invited to participate in the planning. Both students and parents were passive as to the importance of transition planning.

Although widespread conclusions cannot be made due to the small sample size, Thompson et al. (2000) suggested that those concerned with the lives of students with disabilities should not delude themselves into assuming that transition services delivered in public schools are having a marked effect on the post school outcomes for students. As they suggested, there is a lack of empirical evidence that demonstrates a relationship between public policy, transition services, and post school outcomes. The study did confirm the lack of documentation on transition plans of comprehensive, interagency planning for students' post school outcomes. It is, therefore, not surprising that students making the transition to higher education are not fully aware of the services available to them outside of high school.

State Follow-Up Studies

Arizona and New York are among several states that, within the past 10 years, have conducted surveys to assess the effectiveness of their secondary transition planning. These follow-up assessments highlight the continuing need for transition assessment and for programs such as *College Bound* to review these studies as a part of program planning.

Arizona. Love and Malian (1997) conducted a two-year study for the Arizona Follow-Along Project (AFAP) to assess the impact of special education on the education and post school outcomes for students with disabilities who had exited special education services during high school in the early 1990s. In the first year, 1,285 students, their parents, and teachers, a group representative of the state demographics, participated. Of these students, 1,015 were targeted to graduate from high school and 270 had dropped out of school. In the second year, 528 students, as well as their parents and teachers participated. Computer assisted telephone interviews with students, parents, and teachers were used to gather data.

The survey covered the topics of: (a) student and family characteristics; (b) school services needed and received by the student; (c) school achievement; (d) quality of life in school; (e) post school services needed and received; and (f) quality of life after exiting school. The results showed that economic levels were about the same for all the students. During the second year, more of the students who had graduated were enrolled in four-year colleges than two-year colleges. The majority of students in college still lived at home one year after graduation, as did the majority of the students who dropped out. Perhaps the most pertinent finding centered on the services provided the students. Those who were perceived as probable high school graduates seemed to receive more services from the school system than other students. This finding points to the need for a unified vision of transition planning for all students with disabilities.

New York. Staff from the New York Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (1999) interviewed 1,037 former special education students who had been out of school for one year. These students had attended school in one of five New York cities: Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers. A control group of 217 former general education students was also surveyed. The survey summarized the former student's post-school employment, postsecondary education, and community living status, and identified the secondary program components, including transition planning that contributed to his or her success.

Results show the special education students participated in postsecondary education half as often as did the reference group from general education. Slightly more than one third of the special education students were working in paid competitive jobs in the community. The special education students reported that transition planning had helped them to have more successful outcomes in four areas: (a) completion of high school; (b) transition to postsecondary education, employment, or day program alternatives; (c) connection to adult services; and (d) preparedness for community living.

The authors of both follow-up studies highlight similar findings. First, transition planning is important for all special education students. Secondly, quality planning that contains all the required elements found in the IDEA needs to be provided. Finally,

benchmarks need to be established across state school districts to assure the same quality of planning.

In correlation with the New York State and the Arizona State follow-up studies, the participants stressed the value of secondary transition planning and assigning individuals to be responsible for overseeing different sections of the plan. The participants also placed great emphasis on the partnerships and interactions that need to be developed between secondary and postsecondary education to facilitate the transition process. The intent of *College Bound* fulfills this need by providing workshops and conversations with college disability service providers and agencies representatives that are designed to emphasize the advantages of these partnerships, while also stressing the need for students to become their own self-advocates to access higher education services and accommodations.

Challenges Facing Secondary Education Transition Programs

Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, and Mack (2002) argued that progress in creating comprehensive secondary transition services for students with disabilities has been slow and inconsistent across state school districts nationwide. Their research, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, identified key issues influencing the implementation of the IDEA 1997 transition amendments and the challenges that have broad implements for special education and transition. These five major challenges are:

1. Ensure students with disabilities access to the full range of curricular options and experiences.
2. Ensure high school graduation decisions are based on meaningful indicators of students' learning and skills.
3. Ensure students access to and full participation in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living opportunities.
4. Ensure student support and family participation.
5. Ensure improved collaboration and system linkages at all levels.

Although each challenge has an implication for transition programming for students with disabilities, challenge three focuses on the post school outcomes in the

area of higher education. Johnson, et.al. suggested several strategies including: (a) promoting self-advocacy skills; (b) assuring that students are aware of services provided by postsecondary institutions and how to access these services as well as supports provided by community and state agencies; and (c) ensuring that supports required by students during college transfer to employment settings. *College Bound* is already incorporating these suggestions into its workshops for student and parent participants.

College Support Services

Services provided for students with disabilities in higher education may or may not be the same as they received in high school. When students enter higher education, they lose coverage under the IDEA and are covered under the ADA, which dramatically changes the definition of disability and this legal change may provide one reason for a change in services. Lukose (2000) argued that another reason for this change may be the cultural disconnect between the between high school and higher education. Creating a “level playing field” for postsecondary students with disabilities may assume a variety of local strategies based on the institution and its resources. Yost, Shaw, Cullen, and Bagaj (1994) conducted a study that pointed out certain contradictions between beliefs and practices assumed by college disability services providers. The researchers found that although service providers stress the importance of self-advocacy skills to promote student autonomy, their practices may actually promote dependence.

Lukose (2000), in a study that stress continuing research to measure transition services and outcomes for students with disabilities, posed two research questions to guide his effort to assess the postsecondary service delivery practices to students with disabilities in the state of New York: (a) What types of services are offered to students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions? and (b) How can high schools promote the transition to college? Using a national guide to programs for students with disabilities, Lukose selected 39 institutions that included two-year community colleges, two-year technical colleges, and four-year and graduate universities spread throughout

five geographic regions of New York. The survey was sent to these schools' disability service providers and 30 responded.

The findings indicated that disabilities reported in high school persist through the postsecondary experience, but students need different skills to be successful with the different academic expectations of college. Services provided in the secondary setting may not be available to the same extent in the college setting. In particular, testing accommodations appeared to be offered less frequently in college than in high school and were provided to a greater extent by two-year schools. Extended time and an independent testing location were the most used testing accommodations. Two-year colleges also provided more service oriented testing accommodations than did four-year colleges. These accommodations included simplified directions, readers for tests, and signing of test questions. All of the colleges surveyed provided, though to different degrees, executive skills training, counseling, orientation, and tutors.

The service providers rated self-advocacy and taking charge of one's learning as important tools for postsecondary success. Students who change their learning behaviors were seen as more successful than those who relied on accommodations. However, the survey found that services offered by colleges often promoted dependence instead of independence.

Finn (1998) used student focus groups to identify the skills and accommodations that are beneficial to students with learning disabilities at the postsecondary level. The students, who were chosen from two community colleges, two independent colleges, and one public university in the Midwest, received letters from the disability service office. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents related academic success to grades and 71% related their success to other criteria, including self-esteem, self-confidence, how well they understood the material, and achieving post graduate employment in their field. They identified as the most beneficial accommodations: (a) course work accommodations; (b) testing accommodations; (c) disability service providers; (d) peer support groups; and (e) tutors. They also felt that institutions needed to recognize the importance of the disability service staff as the nucleus of programs for students with disabilities and as an important factor in their success. Students suggested these

individuals had an extraordinary impact on their perceptions, attitudes, and academic success.

Skills Needed for Success

The skills needed to achieve success in postsecondary education are also important to an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of *College Bound*. Stodden, Dowrick, Stodden, and Gilmore (2000) suggested that students need to develop self-advocacy and personal decision-making skills prior to entering college. To identify personal characteristics that contribute to the postsecondary success of students with specific disabilities, Hicks-Coolick and Kurtz (1996) conducted interviews with the disability service providers at two private universities, two state universities, two public four-year colleges, one community college, and two vocational schools.

According to the service providers interviewed, three interrelated factors seemed to differentiate successful from unsuccessful students. The first was motivation that included focusing on success and having clear goals and a willingness to work hard. Preparation was the second factor. Successful students had the academic background, knew and used study skills, knew their learning styles, and practiced good time management. The third factor was self-advocacy, which included self-awareness, self-acceptance, knowledge of relevant laws, knowledge of their disability, and assertiveness and problem solving skills.

Echoing the findings of the New York State and the Arizona State follow-up studies previously discussed, the participants stressed the value of secondary transition planning and assigning individuals to be responsible for overseeing different sections of the plan. They also placed great emphasis on the partnerships and interactions that need to be developed between secondary and postsecondary education institutions to facilitate the transition process. Currently, these are often tentative or non-existent.

Faculty Perceptions. Since faculty attitudes toward making adaptations for students with disabilities are an important factor in student success and degree completion, faculty teaching these students may need additional training. Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Bruelle (1999) sent a survey to 1050 full and part-time teaching faculty at a large public university in the Midwest. The study had three major purposes: (a) to

determine the self-reported attitude, willingness, and practices of faculty to make instructional and exam accommodations for students with disabilities; (b) to assess faculty regarding the fairness of these two types of accommodations and the fairness to students without disabilities; and (c) to find what factors had an impact on faculty attitude toward specific accommodations.

From the 420 faculty members who responded, the authors found that the faculty was slightly more willing to provide instructional accommodations than exam accommodations. Instructional accommodations included: (a) taping lectures; (b) clarifying assignments; and (c) assistance in preparing for exams. Faculty members who were willing to provide exam accommodations such as another location and additional time, preferred the disability services office handle these accommodations. Faculty was least willing to offer an alternate exam format for students with disabilities. The majority of the respondents thought accommodations were fair to students without disabilities and helped to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities. However, they tended to want to provide accommodations that were the least time consuming for them. Factors influencing faculty attitudes included age, academic discipline, experience teaching students with disabilities, years of teaching experience and professional rank. Younger faculty with less teaching time appeared to be more willing to accommodate students.

Although *College Bound* workshops instruct participants on how to approach faculty and discuss accommodations, and the college student leaders share their experiences with faculty, this may not be enough to assure the students will find their instructors willing to meet their special needs. The planned interview of student and parent participants in *College Bound* may indicate that instructors who have these students in their classes may need additional awareness training. The interviews may also provide information to enhance present *College Bound* workshops on interacting with faculty or provide ideas for new workshops in this area.

Assistive Technology (AT). Students in both secondary and postsecondary education use computers as an integral part of their lives. Houchin (2001) stated that with the advancements in computer technology, assistive technology is playing a larger role for students with disabilities. Assistive technology can allow these students to: (a)

have a greater control over their lives; (b) participate in and contribute more fully to activities; and (c) benefit from opportunities that are taken for granted by students without disabilities. Assistive technology is a major emphasis in *College Bound's* workshops for students and parents.

Lahn and Morrissette (1994) suggested that assistive technology could support students with disabilities in the areas of organization, notetaking, writing assistance, reading assistance, access to reference materials, and materials modification. While there appears to be an increase awareness of the role of assistive technology, Houchins (2001) stated that students with disabilities are not receiving adequate access to assistive technology.

Houchins (2001) conducted a Delphi study to develop lists of assistive technology facilitators and barriers to the transition of students with disabilities from high school to higher education and beyond. The participants were the state technology experts as identified by the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). In each state, one expert was identified and the information is updated annually. NICHCY developed the list of experts by contacting state departments of education and asking for the name of the individual primarily representing the AT needs of individuals with disabilities in their state. These experts make the systemic decisions about the AT needs in their respective states. Each expert received the initial survey. Twenty-seven of the 50 AT experts participated in the survey. Most completed the survey independently, while others enlisted the input from colleagues within their state.

The study used a three round modified Delphi technique as a means of identifying group opinion about a specific issue. Rounds involve participants individually completing survey questions, returning the survey, and then completing the next round based on the group responses to the previous survey. After completion of the three rounds, technology barriers included: (a) lack of early transition planning in high school; (b) insufficient assistive technology training in high school; (c) lack of collaboration between high school and college personnel; (d) high school and postsecondary lack of assistive technology knowledge; and (e) limited services in rural areas. Technology facilitators included: (a) teach student self-determination skills; (b) provide systematic

assistive technology evaluation and assessment; (c) develop interagency collaboration; (d) adopt assistive technology early in school; and (e) provide professionals on the college level training to work with assistive technology and students with disabilities. *College Bound* emphasizes the importance of assistive technology for students with disabilities with workshops to provide an overview and hands-on experiences with various technologies.

Changing The Transition Paradigm

Hahn (1988) argued that practitioners preparing students to adapt to new environments need to change the thrust of the transition paradigm. Instead of viewing a disability as a deficit within the individual, practitioners need to view it in terms of the interaction between the individual and society. This approach would require the environment to adapt to the individual at the same time the individual is adapting to the environment. This change would certainly lead to a different view of the student with the disability.

One difficulty for students making the transition from high school to higher education may be the cultural disconnect between the two educational levels (Lukose, 2000). Aune and Friehe (1996) have examined an interactional approach in addressing systemic institutional and individual student issues relevant to transition. These issues, central to successful transition, include: (a) attitudes of educational personnel; (b) collaboration among providers of services; (c) key differences between legal guidelines for secondary and postsecondary education; (d) regular secondary education courses and accommodations; (e) use of postsecondary disability services; (g) flexibility in policies and procedures; and (h) thinking beyond academic survival. Aune and Friehe (1996) suggested that high school and higher education issues cannot be separated and viewed in isolation from each other if the cultural disconnect is to be lessened or eliminated.

Colley (1997) proposed there is a new standard of success for educating students with disabilities that says the goal is no longer that students complete school, but that they are prepared to be productive and independent adults and educators need be held accountable to this standard. Because as Luckner (1992) stated, the overriding

goal of education is to prepare students for productive lives when they leave school, the driving force for change in many states is tied to broader reform efforts in education and workforce development. States have learned that the following strategies are needed: (a) ownership at all levels; (b) leadership opportunities; (c) use of common language and collaboration; (d) focus on youth; (e) parent and student involvement; (f) allowance for time and flexibility for change; and (g) keep the big picture, not the process, in mind. Colley (1997) further stated that clear strategies must be developed to continue the momentum in preparing students with disabilities for success in employment, postsecondary education, and community living.

Preparatory Transition Programs

There are other supplemental transition programs within the Commonwealth of Virginia and on several college campuses around the nation. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities has provided a grant for one transition-based program for middle and high school students with disabilities. The purpose of Project Facilitating Successful Transition (FAST), conducted by the Spotsylvania County School System, was to insure that students with disabilities knew how to access support services at the postsecondary level.

The one year project had four objectives: (a) increase awareness and knowledge of school staff, students, and family members about postsecondary educational opportunities; (b) provide opportunities for students with disabilities to engage in career planning activities; (c) assist students with disabilities in planning their course work to obtain the necessary academic requirements to enter postsecondary education; and (d) provide opportunities to increase students' skills in the area of self-advocacy and decision making. The grant provided activities throughout the school year for students and parents and a roving transition instructor to work with teachers and administration on the transition issues.

The school system also worked in conjunction with Germanna Community College and the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services to provide workshops for the students. Mentoring programs were developed between middle and high school

students with disabilities and lesson plans were developed to facilitate teaching a transition class for students with disabilities.

Limited evaluation information was available on the project. The final project report outlined the activities connected with the project objectives, stated that feedback from the participants had been positive, and stated that teachers will continue to use the transition lesson plans developed by the project staff (Spotsylvania County Schools, 2000).

In 2003, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, through its competitive grant process, provided the funding for the Nottoway County Public Schools to replicate Project FAST. Nottoway County has named their project the Student Transition-Program Achieves Real Success (STARS). The grant will be implemented over the next two years and has the same goals as the original project including: (a) increase the number of high school students with disabilities applying and being admitted into colleges in Virginia; (b) increase awareness of younger-aged students and their teachers with of the importance of early college-related transition planning; and (c) increase the knowledge of transition planning by students, parents, and educators in secondary schools (Ettner, 2003). For the past two years, Nottoway County has sent students to *College Bound* using funds from this grant.

The George Washington HEATH Resource Center, a national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, lists several colleges and universities that offer summer programs for students with disabilities. Unlike *College Bound*, which runs for two and a half days, these programs last from one to six weeks and may include the completion of a college course as well as skills training. The cost may be prohibitive for many students because it may be in the thousand dollars or above range. *College Bound*, on the other hand, cost \$35.00 per student for the 1999 program and by 2004; the fee had increased to \$150.00 per student.

Table 1 (see Appendix A) lists several of these programs, with a description of the programs, the population served, and the cost. Several of the program directors were contacted and asked to provide additional information and evaluation data on their programs. Table 1 also lists those directors that responded and relevant evaluation data collected.

Unlike *College Bound*, these programs may also be preconditions for attending a particular college or part of an orientation for entering freshmen with disabilities already accepted into the college. Campus disability support personnel report that students who receive some preview of the college experience can manage the first year with fewer adjustment problems than others (The HEATH Resource Center, 2001). The evaluation of *College Bound* to assess its strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of student and parent participants should assist in determining whether *College Bound* is providing a preview of the college experience and the information that is needed for success in higher education.

Summary and Conclusions

The research cited in this literature review was chosen for its relevance to transition issues for students with disabilities. The research highlights the needs of these students as they prepare for and then make the transition from a secondary to a postsecondary educational environment. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the important and essential transition ingredients revealed by the studies for successful transition to college.

Needed Research

The research reviewed in this chapter has provided the foundation and structure of *College Bound*. After reviewing this literature and being involved in the program for four years, I believe it is essential to ascertain whether the program is currently meeting the needs of its participants based on the skills research has identified as essential to the successful transition of students with disabilities or whether changes need to be made in the program.

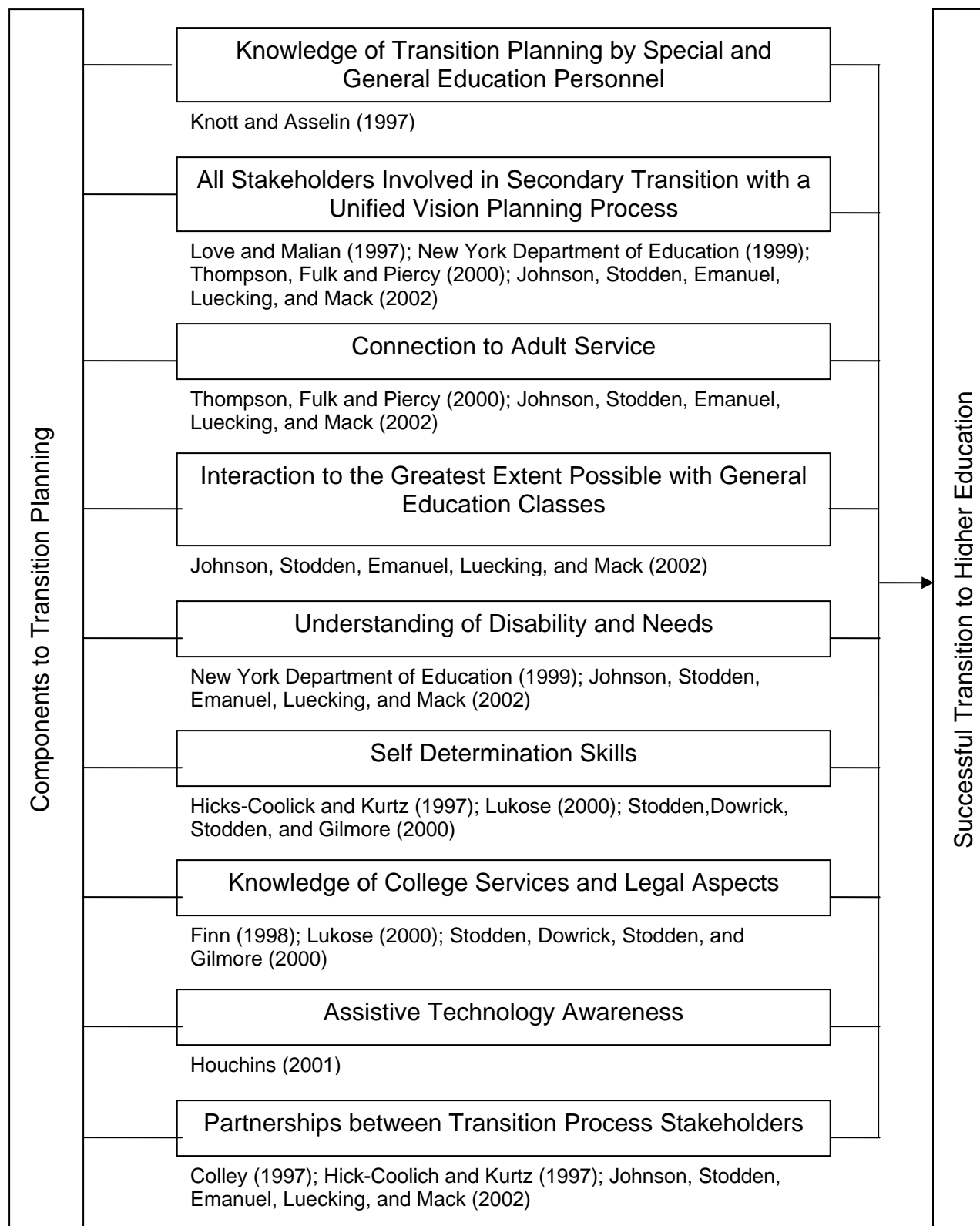


Figure 1. The relationship between the essential transition ingredients for successful transition from high school to higher education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Federal laws provide for the provision of transition services for students with disabilities. These services are delivered by a variety of individuals and methods through high school special education personnel and college disability services providers. The review of literature in Chapter Two revealed that high school and higher education personnel understand the importance of the transition process and have knowledge of the skills and competencies necessary for transition planning. However, despite this knowledge, the transition from high school to college may still be difficult for students with disabilities. *College Bound* was created to assist with this transition and to allow students to experience college life. This chapter discusses the method used for the evaluation of *College Bound* including the purpose for the evaluation, the research questions to be explored, and presents a model for the evaluation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a qualitative, formative, participant evaluation for *College Bound* to assess its strengths and needs. The evaluation drew from interviews conducted with past student and parent participants for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001. Data from the yearly program assessments completed by participants were also compiled and analyzed. The intent of this evaluation study was to guide the further development of the program by identifying the program's strengths and needs and areas for change.

Research Questions

The over-all guiding question for the evaluation was: How is *College Bound* meeting its established goals and objectives for its student and parent participants? Subordinate research questions assess both the performance outcomes for the participants as well as how the participants view the program's quality and value:

1. What were the outcomes of *College Bound* for its individual participants?
2. How do the student and parent participants describe their experience with *College Bound*?

Significance of the Evaluation

Schalock (2001) stated that today's education, health care, and human services programs are faced with two evaluation needs: to demonstrate increased accountability and continuous improvement. Since its inception in 1999, *College Bound*, a fee-based, educational program, has requested evaluations at the end of the program from its participants and leaders. These yearly evaluations addressed how the current participants felt about their experience with the program, but they did not address the observable outcomes of the program.

The informational workshops given by the *College Bound*, which include, study skills, legal requirements, college survival skills, and assistive technology, are planned to enhance the information and skills students with disabilities need to be successful in higher education. The evaluation has helped to assess if the workshops are providing this information.

College Bound must also strive for continuous improvement and effective management. The evaluation completed in this study has provided feedback to: (a) enhance both internal and external program accountability; (b) focus on long-term goals and specific objectives; (c) provide program information to the stakeholders; (d) enhance decision making; and (e) determine effective resource use.

The College Bound Summer Program

College Bound was established in 1999 as a means of addressing transition issues and college success strategies for students with disabilities. The program is one of several projects developed by a 11 year partnership between the college services providers at Virginia Tech, Radford University, New River Community College, state agencies serving students with disabilities, and local public school special education personnel. The mission of *College Bound* is to expose high school students with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth of Virginia and considering postsecondary education to a program that stresses the knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities, self-advocacy, and access to assistive technology that promotes a successful transition to college. The program also provides a two night, on-campus college living experience for the students. *College Bound* invites the parents of these students to attend so they

can learn what is available to assist their child and can, as a result, better help with this transition. Now in its sixth year, *College Bound* was originally funded by a grant from the Virginia Assistive Technology Services (VATS) Creative Initiative Award and the State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center (SOTAC), which is affiliated with the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC). VATS and SOTAC continue to fund the program. Additionally funding is derived from a fee charged to the student participants.

College Bound is held on the Virginia Tech campus for two and a half days during the month of June. A maximum of 45 student participants and their parents have the opportunity to attend the program, to stay in a residence hall, and to attend workshops on assistive technology, leadership and self-advocacy, learning styles, study skills, a mock college class, and teambuilding. Parent workshops include session on the Americans with Disabilities Act versus the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, financial aid, state agencies available to students with disabilities, and their new roles as parents of a college student.

In 1999, 17 students with disabilities, the majority of whom lived in Southwest Virginia, attended along with 11 of their parents and in 2000, the same number of students and parents attended. The year 2001 saw a major change with 46 students, the majority from northern Virginia, and 62 parent participants. This increase can be attributed to greater marketing efforts by the planning committee and past participants telling other students with disabilities and their parents about the program. In 2002, 45 students and 52 parents attended and in 2003, 41 students and 27 parents came to *College Bound*. Thirty-one students and 29 parents attended in 2004. In total, 197 students and 192 parents have attended *College Bound*.

A volunteer committee, consisting of members from Virginia Tech, Radford University, New River Community College, the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), VATS, and transition coordinators from several area school districts plan, organize, and manage *College Bound*. Originally, student leaders were recruited from the Virginia Tech Freshmen Orientation leaders; however, in 2001, a change was made to recruit students with disabilities attending Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College to serve as leaders. These leaders are provided several training sessions prior to participation in the program. The student leaders

exemplify the belief that students with disabilities can succeed in higher education and provide inspiration for the *College Bound* participants. Tables 2-7 (see Appendix B) provide a comparison of *College Bound* for the past six years including number of participants, cost, length of program, funding sources, and workshops conducted.

Evaluation Design

Qualitative methodology was used for this evaluation of *College Bound*. Merriam (1998) described qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us to understand and to explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible” (p.5). Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested that qualitative interviewing is suitable to use when the researcher wants to learn how present situations result from past decisions or incidents. Patton (1985) described qualitative research as “an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there” (p.1).

A qualitative inquiry allowed me to be the instrument for data collection and analysis, while allowing for an understanding of the program from the participants’ perspectives and not the researcher’s (Merriman, 1998). Qualitative research builds concepts and theory rather than testing an existing theory and focuses on process, meaning, and understanding of the phenomenon during studies. Gathering qualitative data from the past student and parents participants in *College Bound* provided the in-depth information necessary to elucidate its strengths and needs.

The evaluation was also based on a formative approach to evaluation described by Patton (1990) as appropriate for developing or changing a program when the focus of the evaluation is on program improvement, facilitating more effective implementation, or exploring a variety of effects of participants. Patton further suggested that this was particularly important in the early life of a program or at major points of transition. Although this evaluation is not being conducted in the early life of the program, after six years, *College Bound* may well be at a point of transition; in particular, it needs to seek new funding sources and to meet the challenge of continuing to attract new participants.

Design Model

“Outcome-based evaluation encompasses the central question of what social services programs ought to achieve for the persons receiving them” (Schalock, 2001, p. 6). Outcome-based evaluation involves description, interpretation, and value judgments and should focus on the structure that produces the program events, not the events themselves. Schalock proposed an evaluation model based on four program outcomes:

1. Organization performance outcomes, which involve the goals and objectives of a program and comparing performance against expectation.
2. Organization value outcomes, which involve the assessment of the value and quality of a program on the basis of customer satisfaction.
3. Individual performance outcomes, which assess the program, based on the real life experiences of the participants.
4. Individual value outcomes, which assess the individual participants’ personal level of satisfaction with a program.

This evaluation design provided a practical, problem-solving approach to gauge the quality and effectiveness of *College Bound* and whether the program has produced its desired outcomes for its participants.

Schalock (2001) stated that using the Program Evaluation Model allows an organization or program to do the following: (a) to develop an appreciation and understanding of the use of outcomes to increase accountability and guide continuous improvement; (b) to anticipate benefits of organizational or program change; (c) to allow organization or program staff to work together on agreed upon outcomes; (d) to provide change strategies based on quality improvement principles; and (e) to guide the change efforts. The adapted program model for this evaluation is depicted in Figure 2 and a detailed description for each cell is provided in Figures 3-6 (see Appendix C).

College Bound Planning Committee’s Role

College Bound was conceived by a group of college disability service providers who interact with students with disabilities on a daily basis. When the program was first established in 1999, the committee set goals and objectives for the program but had never revisited these goals over the life of the program. Prior to starting the evaluation,

		Performance	Value/Quality
Focus	Organizational Outcomes	Mission Statement Program Goals Annual Evaluations Demographic Information "Cell A"	Research Support Annual Debriefings Consumer Satisfaction Community Support Annual Planning Committee Debriefings "Cell B"
	Individual Outcomes	Student Workshop Outcomes Parent Workshop Outcomes Student Campus Environment Living Outcomes "Cell C"	Student Personal Appraisal Parent Personal Appraisal "Cell D"

Figure 2. Outcome-Based Evaluation Model for the *College Bound* Program. Adapted from Schalock (2001) and used with permission.

the committee met with me to review the program mission statement, goals, and the evaluation procedures. Each committee member was asked to submit their own goals and objectives for *College Bound*, their assessment of strengths and needs of the program, and their goals for the purpose of this evaluation. I compiled all of the information from the committee members' statements and though the goals were slightly changed from the original program goals, the content and meaning still reflected the original mission and goals of the program. The committee also approved the evaluation procedures.

Researcher's Role

I have been involved, not only with the *College Bound* yearly program planning, but have actively participated in the program each summer. This participatory role placed me in a unique position to evaluate the program as I am aware of the mission, goals, and objectives for *College Bound*. As my involvement and time commitment continue, I want to make sure that *College Bound* provides quality programming and is accountable to its participants.

I also brought to this evaluation a background as a special education teacher and state auditor for special education programs. These positions have taught me the importance of transition planning from kindergarten to college as well as providing me with the knowledge of disabilities, the legal requirements for transition, and the need of student self-advocacy.

Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) argued that participant-oriented evaluations emphasized the human element in evaluation. Participant-oriented evaluations direct the attention of the evaluator to the needs of those for whom the evaluation is being done. They further stressed the importance of looking at the program being evaluated from different viewpoints and the use of open-ended techniques of data collection. My direct involvement with *College Bound* might pose a limit on my ability to assess *College Bound* from different viewpoints and my ability to remain impartial. Therefore, I sought the assistance of independent interviewers and an independent evaluator to assist in the collection and analysis of the data.

Proponents of participant-oriented evaluation assert that this type of evaluation can cite as its strengths: (a) the potential for gaining new insights for a program; (b) flexibility; (c) the encouragement of multiple data collection techniques; and (d) the ability to demonstrate the inner working and intricacies of a program to audiences (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Critics of the approach have found its subjectivity a limitation. The approach has also been criticized because it can exclude judgment from the evaluator's role, it can be costly, and it is often labor intensive. Consequently, I, as the evaluator, chose the participants carefully and my conclusions did not extend beyond what the data gathered from those participants allowed. I also exhibited caution in making interpretations and drawing conclusions.

Procedures

The following sections describe the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures for the evaluation. Assurances of quality, including credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability are also discussed.

Participants

The individuals selected to participate in the evaluation were the students and the parents who had participated in all *College Bound* program activities between the years 1999-2001. Students included in the evaluation had graduated from high school and had spent at least one year in college. The parents included had attended *College Bound* with their son or daughter. Therefore, the total number of students eligible to participate was 64 and the total number of parents was 44. The majority of these individuals continue to live in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their names and addresses were contained in the *College Bound* database developed for each program year. Several months before data collection begun, a letter was sent to each participant to update this database (see Appendix D).

Selection of the Participants

Initially, all 64 students and 44 parents were selected to participate in the evaluation. The student and parent participants were sent a letter explaining the purpose of the evaluation, assurances of confidentiality, and a return card with another

request to update the *College Bound* database with current contact information (see Appendix E). A self-addressed, stamped return envelope was included with each letter. A reminder card was sent to participants who had not responded after two weeks.

Assurance of Confidentiality

Each individual participant in the evaluation was assured of confidentiality at the outset of the evaluation. Before data collection began, written permission was obtained from all participants. Each individual participant was apprised of the purpose of the evaluation, the procedures to be utilized, and the use of the data collected. A consent form, approved for use by the Institutional Review Board of Virginia Tech, was in place (see Appendix F)

Data Collection Procedures

The data collected for this evaluation consisted of the 1999, 2000, and 2001 yearly program evaluations and two types of telephone interviews. In the following sections, these means of data collection are discussed.

Yearly Program Evaluations

The yearly program evaluations were completed at the end of *College Bound* in 1999, 2000, and 2001 (see Appendix G). These brief assessments included a section in which student and parent participants rated the workshops, registration process, and group activities and several questions that required short answers from the participants. The short answer and comment sections for each year were used for this evaluation and the total number of evaluation responses for each year is shown in Table 8. The yearly program evaluations were separated by year, then by parents and students attending for that year and photocopies were made of the comments and short answers for each evaluation. Each individual response was then cut apart and I made a decision whether the response was a positive or negative comment about College Bound or strength or need comment for the program. These responses were placed in a chart that showed the progression of the responses the identification of themes for the

Table 8

Yearly Evaluation Response Totals

	Students	Parents
1999	14	9
2000	13	10
2001	38	57

yearly evaluations. A chart was constructed for the parent responses and another for the student responses. Themes were listed under the theme section on both charts. The themes were further divided into two categories, the impact of the program on the participants and the structural organization of the program. Table 9 depicts these themes, which were used to assist in the formation of the short and long telephone interviews. The themes were also compared with those that emerged from the two types of telephone interviews for consistency (Mayhut & Morehouse, 1994).

Short Telephone Interviews

The first telephone interviews were brief and semi-structured (see Appendix H). Merriam (1998) described this type of interview as one in which the questions are more flexibly worded unless specific information is desired from all the participants and then there may be a structured section of the interview. The structured portion of the intake gathered common data from the participants including age, the college they are attending, and level of education completed. The semi-structured portion of the intake interview allowed for more flexibility in the interview process, allowed the participants to provide short answers to the questions asked, and provided some flexibility for the interviewer to respond to the situation at hand (Merriam, 1998).

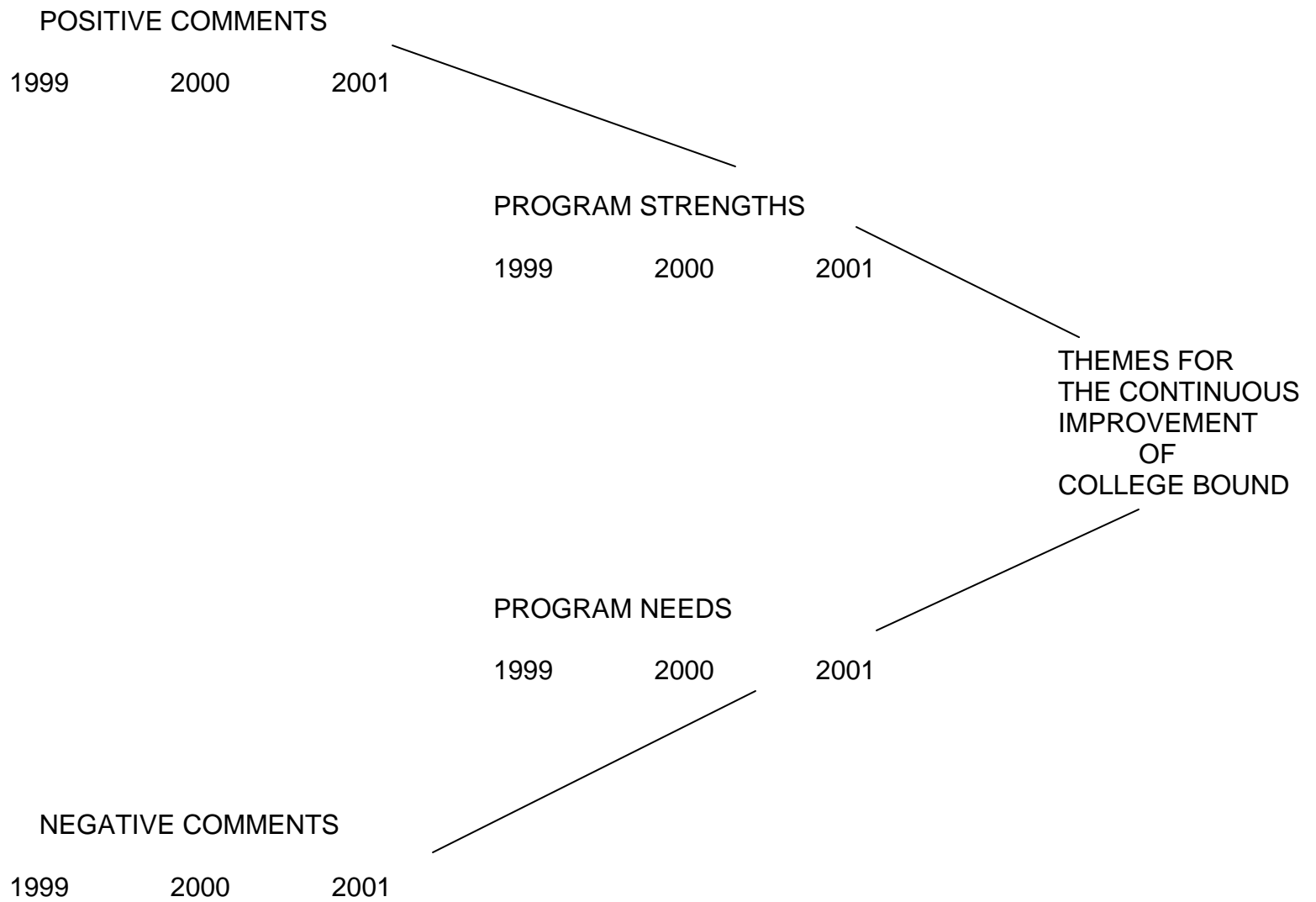


Figure 7. Chart for Comments from the Yearly Program Evaluations.

Although qualitative research designates the researcher as the primary data collector, I did not conduct any interviews, but I did examine all of the interview transcripts, analyzed the data, and reported the result. Since I have been actively involved with *College Bound* since its beginning in 1999, I may have brought a biased view to the interviews and the interview process needed to have unbiased interviewers listening to the respondents' answers.

Due to the number of interviews to be conducted and to add objectivity to the interview process, three individuals were hired and trained to assist in the completion of the intake interviews and one interviewer was hired to complete the second long interview phase of the evaluation. The interviewers consisted of three doctoral students and one master's student at Virginia Tech. A half-day training session was provided for the three short intake interviewers. During this session, I presented an overview of *College Bound* and the evaluation, discussed interviewing techniques, reviewed the interview protocol, provided a timeline for the interviews, and discussed my expectations of the interviews and the interviewers. Two *College Bound* student leaders, two members of the planning committee, and two recent parent participants volunteered for mock interviews. These mock interviews not only provided the interviewers with the opportunity for practice but also provided feedback on the questions. Clarifications and several changes were made to the interview protocol.

The short interviews were conducted in October and November 2003. Student and parent participants were divided equally between the three interviewers with care taken to keep those from each year together as much as possible. Each interviewer made at least three attempts to contact each participant. Interviews were held at the convenience of the participants and were taped. The responses were also recorded on the protocol form. These interviews lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes and the same questions were asked of each respondent. Participants could ask at any time to have the tape recorder turned off. Participants were also asked if they were willing to be a part of the second interview phase. Tables 10 and 11 chart the interviewees from the total number of available participants through the working sample to the final number of students and parents interviewed.

Table 9

Themes generated from the yearly evaluations of College Bound

Theme	Category	Student Generated	Parent Generated
Increase Program Length	Structure	X	X
Additional Networking among Participants	Impact	X	X
Advertising	Structure		X
Program Cost	Structure		X
Additional Interaction with College Students	Impact	X	X
Teachers to Attend	Impact		X
Additional Information about Specific Disabilities	Impact		X
Additional Information about College Disability Services	Impact	X	X
Parking	Structure		X
Workshops were Informative	Impact	X	X
Overall Satisfaction with Program	Impact	X	X

Both the yearly program evaluations and the short telephone interviews are part of the screening process leading to the long interviews and the identification of composite themes for the evaluation. During the short interviews, the interviewers were asked to identify those students and parents they felt would be good candidates for the long interviews. Ten parents and 12 students were identified as potential candidates.

Long Telephone Interviews

The second interview format was based on a standardized, open-ended model designed to ensure complete coverage of the desired outcomes (Patton, 1990). This format allowed for flexibility of response from each participant, while maintaining minimal variation in the interview questions (see Appendix I). Open-ended questions are also desirable to use when the researcher does not know all the possible answers to a question (Schalock, 2001). Patton maintained that a standardized, open-ended interview consists of carefully worded questions that: (a) ensure the same type of information is collected from each participant; (b) reduces the possibility of bias; (c) facilitates data analysis; and (d) minimizes concerns about legitimacy and credibility.

Participants were identified using a “purposeful, strategic sampling strategy that allowed for the maximization of a relatively small sample (Patton, 1990). The suggested interview list of ten parents compiled from the short interviews was assessed to see if their son or daughter had participated in the short interviews. Five parents and their son or daughter met the criteria and were selected for the long interviews. Each of the students was also on the recommendation list from the short interviews. Three additional parents from the list were also included based on the short interview comments that these parents had valuable information to share. One parent was rejected based on her overall focus on a particular college disability service and not on *College Bound*. Six students suggested by the short interviewers were not included due to their very brief responses to the short interview questions.

The long interviews were conducted in April, May, and June 2004. At least three attempts were made to contact each participant. One parent and student family chose not to participate in the long interviews but did not provide the reason to the interviewer. All interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants by the independent interviewer who had previous interview experience and also had knowledge of transition issues for students with disabilities. I met with the interviewer on several occasions to provide an overview of *College Bound*, to discuss the purpose of the evaluation, and to review the interview protocol and discuss the questions.

Table 10

Parent Participants in Short Telephone Interviews

Number	Explanation
44	Total parents for 1999, 2000, 2001 to contact
-1	Parent with unknown phone number
43	Total parents to contact
-2	Parents whose child had not completed one year of college
1	Parent did not attend entire program
40	WORKING SAMPLE
Using the Working Sample of 40 parents to contact:	
6	Parents had disconnected phone numbers
16	Parents had three or more failed contact attempts
3	Parents contacted but were not interested in participating
25	TOTAL NOT PARTICIPATING FROM WORKING SAMPLE
Therefore:	
14	Short interviews were complete by phone
1	Short interview was completed by e-mail
15	TOTAL COMPLETED PARENT SHORT INTERVIEWS

Table 11

Student Participants in Short Telephone Interviews

Number	Explanation
64	Total students for 1999, 2000, 2001 to contact
-4	Students with unknown phone numbers
60	Total student to contact
-2	Students who had not completed one year of college
-1	Student did not complete program
56	WORKING SAMPLE
Using the Working Sample of 56 students to contact:	
13	Students had disconnected phone numbers
23	Students had three or more failed contact attempts
5	Students contacted were not interested in participating
4	Students did not complete the interview by e-mail
45	TOTAL NOT PARTICIPATING FROM WORKING SAMPLE
Therefore:	
10	Short interviews complete by phone
1	Short interview completed by e-mail
11	TOTAL COMPLETE STUDENT SHORT INTERVIEWS

Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and followed identical procedures. Each interview was tape-recorded and participants had the opportunity to have the tape recorder turned off at any point during the interview. Patton (1990) suggested the use of the tape recorder to increase interactions with the respondent and increase the accuracy of the data collected. Notes were also taken during the interview to serve as a back up to the tape recorder.

Full verbatim transcriptions were made of each interview and placed in a folder with the interviewer's notes. Each interview tape and protocol was issued a code number to assure the participant's anonymity and separate listings of the names and numbers were kept. Several copies of the transcripts were made to assure the preservation of the original interview and to provide copies for data analysis. The transcripts, interview tapes, and notes for each interview were kept in separate files. The file contained additional information about the interview including interview date, family unit number, and the year the family participated in *College Bound*.

Profile of the Long Interview Participants

Table 12 provides an overview of the 12 participants in the long telephone interviews. Four of the parents and students were a family unit with one mother and her son while the remaining three were mothers and daughters. With the exception of one family, all the students had been diagnosed with their disability in elementary school or before. Each of these students had a learning disability, attention deficit disorder, or a physical disability. The one student exception was paralyzed as a high school student from a mistake made during surgery. The other three parents were mothers whose son or daughter did not participate in the interviews. The one student interviewed without a parent had returned in 2000 as a student leader for *College Bound* so she had an additional perspective on the program.

Each of the parents was still actively involved in their students' life. The two students attending community colleges lived at home and were the two students that had had the least success in college. Both had stopped attending college after one year but had returned to school at the time of the interview. The one student that was paralyzed in high school seemed to have the greatest self-advocacy skills and her

mother was the one parent reporting teaching these skills from the beginning of her daughter's surgical incident.

With the exception of the two students in community college, the other students reported satisfactory grades and expressed contentment with their college life. They reported having friends and being involved in extracurricular activities. Each had used accommodations in college and several spoke of some resistance by faculty to the accommodations. All of the students expressed a need to be self-advocates and to learn to be independent students.

Parent responses were longer in length and provided more information than the student responses. One difficulty expressed by all the participants was the length of time that had passed from when they attended the program to the present. The majority felt they could not remember details of the workshops and activities but could only give an overview of their recollections.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analyzing qualitative data is the process of systematically organizing the interview transcripts and other material that may have been collected and bringing meaning to this material (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The analysis of the data sources is discussed in this section as well as issues of the quality of the research design.

Short Telephone Interviews

The analysis for these interviews began as the three interviewers provided me with a completed interview protocol and tape. Based on the recommendation of the interviewer, a full verbatim transcript was complete for a tape. For most of the short interviews, the interviewer was able to take complete notes and a transcription was not required for a tape. Photocopies were made of the transcripts completed and the interview protocols with the notes for each of the short interviews and were coded by year, parent or student participant, interviewer initials, and if both the parent and student from a family had participated in the interview process. I then compiled all of the short answers for each interview question by year and by student or parent participants as I received the protocols and notes from an interviewer.

Table 12

Participants in Long Interviews

Participant Code	Year Attended	Disability	Region of Virginia	College Attending	Enrolled/ Graduated	Family Unit
1LP/1LS	1999	Cerebral Palsy	Northern	Longwood	Enrolled	Mother/Daughter
2LP/2LS	2000	Learning Disability	Northern	Lord Fairfax CC	Enrolled	Mother/Daughter
3LP/3LS	2001	Physical	Central	Radford	Enrolled	Mother/Daughter
4LP/4LS	2001	Learning Disability/ Attention Deficit Disorder	Central	Piedmont CC	Enrolled	Mother/ Son
5LP	2001			Northern		Mother
6LP	2001			Northern		Mother
7LP	2001			Tidewater		Mother
5LS	1999	Learning Disability	Southwest	Radford	Graduated	Student

Note. LP – Long Parent Interviewee; LS – Long Student Interviewee

Long Telephone Interviews

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research is an inductive approach to data analysis. This approach allows the researcher to collect data related to the focus of the inquiry. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggested that the constant comparative method of data analysis is one way to conduct an inductive analysis of qualitative data by providing the researcher with a path for engaging in the analysis of large amounts of data. Using the advice of Maykut and Morehouse, the following sections describe the step by step data analysis process for the long interviews.

Coding

Each interview transcript was coded with the page number, whether the interview was conducted with a parent or student, and the anonymous number code given to each interview participant. Several of the previously photocopied transcripts were used for analysis. The original transcripts were filed in the individual participant folders.

Units of Meaning

The process of qualitative data analysis is one of culling for meaning from the words of the participants in the study that is framed by the researcher's focus of inquiry (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As I read through each transcript, I began to identify units of meaning in the data. These units of meaning needed to stand by themselves and be understandable without additional information. If the unit was in direct response to a question, the question was included in the unit. I drew a line across the transcript page to separate each unit of meaning from the next unit. Units were coded in the left hand margin with the coding at the top of the transcript page and with a word or phrase that identified the essence of the unit (i.e. transition, assistive technology workshop, student peer group). Once the units of meaning had been identified in all the transcripts, they were cut apart and taped individually to 5' x 8' cards.

Discovery

The next step in the data analysis process was to identify a large array of categories and themes from the long interviews. Both the interviewer who conducted the long telephone interviews and myself participated in the data analysis process from this point forward. We reread each of the 12 transcripts identifying words, phrases, and topics that recurred in the data. These were recorded on large sheets of paper. At the same time, we discussed and recorded recurring concepts, themes, or other patterns that were occurring in the data including the categories generated from the yearly evaluations and the short interviews combining similar and overlapping ideas. The research questions for this study provided the focus for the identification of these themes, concepts, and patterns and were set next to the large sheet of paper used to capture the initial discovery from the data.

Inductive Category Coding

A large working space is necessary to complete the final steps in the constant comparative method of data analysis. Two large sheets of paper, approximately four yards in length were taped to the wall. One sheet was labeled parent participants and the other student participants. Beginning with the parent participants, one prominent idea was selected from the discovery sheet and written on a 5" x 8" card and taped to the large sheet of paper. This idea was the first provisional category for the analysis. The units of data cards were searched to see if one or more of the cards fit this first provisional category and the cards that fit were taped on the paper under the category. If a card did not fit the first provisional category, the discovery sheet was reviewed to find a new provisional category for the card. If a unit of data card did not fit any of the provisional categories nor was there an idea on the discovery sheet, a new category was named.

The data analysis continued in this manner until six to eight units of data cards had been accumulated in a category. Then a rule for the inclusion of data in the category was written as a "propositional statement" which conveys the meaning that is contained in the data cards placed under a category name (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). These rules for inclusion are based on the properties or characteristics that have

been based on the criterion for initially placing a card under a category. The remaining units of data cards are then placed under categories based on the propositional statement. The last step in this process was to determine if cards not originally placed in categories could now fit into one of the categories based on the propositional statement.

Relationship and Patterns Across Categories

Examining the propositional statements to determine the connections they form to each other was the last step in this constant comparative data analysis. Some propositional statements stood alone and sufficiently described the program under evaluation. Others formed salient relationships and patterns with each other. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) referred to the propositions that are formed by connecting two or more statements as outcome propositions.

Member Checks

Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to member checks as the process of asking the evaluation participants whether the researcher has accurately described their experience. Each of the student and parent participants in this evaluation of *College Bound* were sent a thank you letter (see Appendix I) for their participation along with a copy of Table 13 (see Appendix J) and were asked to respond by mail to this researcher if they did not agree with any of the propositional statements contained in the table. No responses were received.

Addressing Quality

Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's construction and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and how the findings are presented (Merriman, 1998). Lincoln (1985) provided procedures that address the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study. They use of concepts of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability.

Credibility

As a member of the *College Bound* planning committee since the inception of the program, I have had a prolonged and substantial engagement with the program. This engagement has allowed me to establish rapport with the program participants, to understand the program through observations and planning, and to collect the data. By collecting data from several sources, I was able to triangulate the data that helped establish credibility to my findings. Several checks by the planning committee also helped to establish the credibility of the findings. I asked selected members of the committee to read a draft summary of my findings to gain their reactions.

Transferability

By recording my own impressions of the *College Bound* program and those of the planning committee along with the data collected, I was able to provide a thick description of *College Bound* in my final report. This allowed potential readers of the evaluation to make a judgment as to whether transfer is a possibility (Lincoln, 1985).

Confirmability

The data collection and management procedures that are described earlier address confirmability. The transcripts of interviews, participant contact forms, notes from the interviews, file folders for the data analysis provided the “audit” trail recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1985).

Dependability

Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggested that one technique to establish dependability is through the use of an auditor or independent evaluator for the study. An individual, not connected with the *College Bound* program but aware of the transition issues facing students with disabilities, was asked to function as the independent evaluator. This individual performed the data analysis procedure already outlined. The two sets of findings from the evaluator and myself were compared and discussed before the final report was written.

Evaluating the Evaluation

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, as reported in Worthen et al. (1997), provided standards to assist in evaluating a study. The Committee cited four components: (a) utility; (b) feasibility; (c) propriety; and (d) accuracy to determine the quality of a study. This study has been designed to meet each of these components.

The utility standard ensured that an evaluation serves the information needs of the intended user. To meet this component, I identified the persons affected by the evaluation, listed my qualifications as the researcher, described the rationale that was used to interpret the findings, and clearly defined the program being evaluated, and the purpose of the evaluation. Practical evaluation procedures, cost efficiency, and plans to obtain the cooperation of the program participants and to anticipate various opinions from this group met the feasibility standard and insure a realistic, prudent, and frugal evaluation.

The propriety standards ensured the evaluation was conducted legally, ethically, and with regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation. In meeting these standards, I showed the participants, in writing, the conditions of the evaluation, designed the evaluation with respect for the participants, recorded the strengths and weaknesses of *College Bound*, and made the evaluations available to all persons affected by the evaluation. Finally, I ensured the accuracy of the evaluation by describing the program clearly and accurately, and revealed and conveyed technically adequate information to determine the worth or merit of the program. The information-gathering procedures were chosen and implemented to determine that the information obtained was valid and reliable. The qualitative information was appropriately and systematically analyzed to answer the research questions and the evaluation report accurately reflected the findings.

Summary

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine if *College Bound* is producing outcomes that enhanced the performance of participants and provided them with

valuable experiences. An outline of the qualitative approach and the rationale for the approach was included in this chapter as well as a guide for the analysis procedure.

Chapter Four contains the findings of the study, including the identification of predominant and underlying themes that emerge from the analysis of the interview text. Chapter Five summarizes the study, discusses the conclusions, and presents implications for *College Bound* and for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative, formative, participant evaluation of The *College Bound* Summer Program to identify and assess its strengths and needs. The evaluation will guide the future development of the program and identify areas for change necessary to continue the development and improvement of *College Bound*. The evaluation focused on students and parents who attended the program during the years 1999, 2000, and 2001. Data were collected using three sources: (a) the yearly program evaluations; (b) short telephone interviews with all available participants; and (c) long telephone interviews with selected participants.

This chapter begins with an overview of the findings. Following the overview, the detailed presentation of the findings is provided. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Overview of the Findings

The findings of the *College Bound* Summer Program evaluation suggest eight different categories generated from the data sources that address the goals of the program for both student and parent participants. The goals are listed in Appendix C, Figure 3 and consist of three organizational goals for student and two for parents. The student goals are: (1) provide a program designed to assist students with disabilities in a successful transition to college; (b) provide informational workshops the raise awareness of assistive technology, legal responsibilities, college disability services, and college strategies; and (c) provide an on-campus living experience. The two parents goals are (a) provide a program designed to emphasize their role in the transition process and (b) provide parents with the opportunity to interact with college students with disabilities, college service providers, and state disability agency personnel. The eight categories generated from the data are:

1. Learning Outcomes
2. Experiencing On-Campus Living
3. Attending Workshops
4. Facilitating Personal Networks

5. Marketing the Program
6. Assessing Satisfaction
7. Gathering Transition Information
8. Offering Suggestions

Each category is illustrated through the propositional statements derived from the analysis of the evaluation data presented in Chapter 3. At the end of each category, the strengths and needs of each category are synthesized and portrayed in table form. The strengths and needs will then be summarized to facilitate the implications for the benefit of the *College Bound* planning committee in Chapter 5.

Presentation of the Findings

The substantive data for this evaluation were derived from the two types of telephone interviews and combined with the extant data previously collected for each program year. Table 13 (see Appendix J) presents the matrix of the overall findings for the telephone interviews and extant data based on the categories and propositional statements developed in the data analysis. The matrix also shows the type of interview source for the data and whether the student participant data or the parent participant data generated the statement. Each propositional statement from the matrix is discussed in this section along with quotes from the participants to illustrate the statement. Coding is used to indicate the source of the quote. S is used for the short telephone interview and L for the long telephone interview. ST indicates a student participant and P indicates a parent participant. The number given to each participant during the interview process is also used to code the quotations. For example: LST1 stands for the first student participant in the long interview process.

Category #1: Learning Outcomes

The discussion of learning outcomes for participants contains five propositional statements derived from the data about the college success strategies taught through the *College Bound* workshops, activities, and interactions with staff and other participants. These five statements are:

1. Students with disabilities have specific challenges at college.

2. Parents stated that *College Bound* offered information to assist their disabled child in dealing with these college challenges.
3. Students stated that *College Bound* taught them strategies to be successful in college.
4. Parents and students offered a mixture of praise and disappointment in the college support services they experienced and some felt *College Bound* did not provide accurate information about college support services.
5. *College Bound* helped parents to realize they could no longer be their child's advocates at college.

In the sub-sections that follow, each of these five statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #1: Students with disabilities had specific challenges at college.

Students with disabilities still face challenges at college despite transition services and programs such as *College Bound*. Many of these challenges are the same faced by students without disabilities including dealing with roommates, changes in academic environment, and loss of support systems. However, student participants expressed that their individual disabilities, whether they were hidden disabilities such as learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder or visible disabilities such as mobility impairments or vision impairments, created additional challenges for them. Campus accessibility posed a challenge for students with mobility impairments particularly in winter weather. Although these students also spoke about challenges related to faculty accommodations, physical accessibility was their main concern. One student using a wheelchair stated:

I am at a very hilly campus and I am in a wheelchair so getting around campus was a bit difficult. But now that they have leveled parts of the campus, it's slightly easier. (LST2)

Students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and psychological disabilities reported resistance by faculty to provide accommodations despite letters from the campus disability service providers. Other students cited difficulties learning to communicate with faculty and being able to understand international faculty. Several students expressed problems with time management, organization, and having the time

to make up missed work when disability related issues kept them from attending classes. A student with a learning disability expressed his challenges as:

Balancing my school life, juggling multiple roles, going to school and working, keeping balanced. You have to have the right motivation. (LST6)

Other students with specific learning disabilities talked about their struggles in math classes, reading textbooks, and taking tests. One student stated:

I guess the worst thing was having to read through an entire textbook. (LST4)

Although each student spoke of challenges, most were still enrolled at a community college or four year college in the Commonwealth. One student participant, whose father was interviewed during a short telephone interview, had to leave college due to health concerns and has not been able to continue his education. Another student with Asperger's Syndrome left school after his freshman year and has not returned. Two students with learning disabilities attending community colleges had successful semesters and then had to withdraw during other semesters when they became overwhelmed with classes.

The majority of the parent participants echoed the challenges described by their child, although parents tended to offer more detail about the challenges than the students. Parents also expressed the challenges as part of the overall functioning of their child and not just with regard to college. They saw challenges such as time management and organizational skills as life long and affecting their children in other areas as well as college classes. Parents of students with mobility impairments were also more concerned with the differences of their child from other students. For these parents, the challenges also related to employment and life after college. Parents of mobility impaired students also struggled with finding assistance to provide the medical care often required by these students. One parent of a wheelchair user stated:

Social issues in a wheelchair and acceptance with visible disability and having accommodations met are great concerns. Medicaid and other resources do not provide the needed care. We have to hire private care providers around the clock. (SP5)

Another parent of a child with a mobility impairment said:

ADA is so new that schools have not successfully dealt with it. There are no model programs. When it snowed when he was in college he could not get out and he could not get food and school would forget about him. We would come to give assistance. (SP3)

The majority of the parent participants noted that time had helped their child adjust to college. One parent of a student with a learning disability stated:

Initially, there was an adjustment period because our child had difficulty following through with the strategies. Our child felt that there weren't others who were encountering the same difficulties, and she felt that help was not always available. (SP4)

Parents of the students who had chosen to attend a community college rather than a four-year college in the beginning perceived their children had learned to be successful in a more nurturing environment. These students had the opportunity for more tutoring assistance, smaller classes, and more faculty interaction, assisting them to become self advocates and more assertive students.

Parents expressed concerns that their child had to learn to be assertive and that being assertive was hard for many of the students. Parents also had concerns about their children taking on too many classes and then not being successful. One parent expressed:

He just gets overwhelmed when he has too many classes. He is a sweetheart and he tries so hard and he just needs a lot of help. If he has time, he can do it, but he tries to do too much, he can't do it successfully. (LP7)

Most of the parents did not see their child's failures in some classes as negative, but as challenges to overcome. They noted their child was still enjoying college and needed to continue to work hard and seek support for his or her disabilities. One parent expressed this feeling in these words:

He loved it, he just loved it, and it's been a great opportunity for him just to learn life and a lot of things. I told him, I said even if you fail you learn. So he tried and he still enjoyed it, even though he was struggling. (LP7)

The parent of the student with Asperger's Syndrome expressed negative feeling about her son's college experiences. She felt her son was treated very differently due to the disability and despite taking the college's first year freshmen experience class and working with the disability service provider, her son was not successful. She stated her frustration by saying:

He was treated differently in class; he got depressed and was afraid and suicidal. College made the depression worse. (SP2)

In sum, parents and students both expressed challenges faced in college due to a disability. Some of these challenges would be lifelong and would affect the student in employment and daily living. Most parents and students said they could meet these challenges and be successful in college.

Propositional Statement #2: Parents stated College Bound offered information to assist their disabled child in dealing with these college challenges.

The majority of the parents interviewed believed that *College Bound* had provided valuable information to assist students in dealing with their challenges. Parents focused on the success stories from other students attending the program as well as from the student leaders particularly in the summers after the 1999 program, in which the leaders did not have disabilities. One parent of a student who was blind had come to *College Bound* not believing that her daughter could attend college. She left the program feeling not only that her daughter could attend college, but was prepared to ask for the assistance she needed. This parent stated:

My child is blind. She saw success stories. This was reassuring. It inspired her and helped to show her she could be successful in college. (SP4)

For some parents, *College Bound* helped to relieve the fear that the child's disability was not a deterrent to college success. The program provided hope that their child could succeed, as expressed by the parent of a student with a severe medical condition:

It kind of put it in perspective for me that this is not the worst disability in the world. So it took away a lot of real fear on my part and replaced it with the thought that this is doable. It's just maybe going to take an extra couple of years or it's going to be a long hard process. It just gave me hope, which is the biggest thing you all could have done. (LP3)

Other parents pointed to the strategies taught at *College Bound* as helpful information to deal with challenges. These strategies included understanding legal rights, accessing services, and self-advocating. Parents reported that they came to *College Bound* often unaware of services that were available to assist students with disabilities at college. This awareness helped to ease the fears some parents had about their child going away to school. The parent of a student with a learning disability stated:

The big thing was knowing what you might be offered and could ask for. I think for parents and kids you sort of go to college and think well, you are not really sure where to find help. . .I think many of us just don't realize what is offered and what is there for your child if he needs it. So knowing that we could put in for tutoring and the extra test time and those kinds of things. . .that he had those options to ask for. . .Because otherwise you don't know what is available to your child. I think that was a big thing for us. . .okay this is by law available to your child. . .we learned about our rights. (LP7)

Often in high school, students with disabilities feel they are labeled and everyone knows they have a disability. Parents believed a disability stigma would follow their child to college. Parents were pleased to learn that confidentiality would allow their child to access services to assist with the challenges while preserving the child's anonymity. One parent stated:

I think a lot of kids in high school are so busy not wanting to stand out and not wanting to be different and not wanting to acknowledge that they have learning disabilities. It is nice to know this can change in college. (LP2)

From the parent's perspective, *College Bound* did provide information designed to meet the challenges faced by their child in college. Propositional Statement #3 addresses the student's point of view.

Propositional Statement #3: Students stated that College Bound had taught them strategies to be successful in college.

Students were taught strategies for college success throughout the *College Bound* program. Student interview participants spoke about those strategies and the importance of using them. The majority told the interviewers that until they attended *College Bound* they did not know these services were available. Among the strategies students learned were: (a) the importance of contacting the disability office; (b) getting to know their professors; (c) knowing their rights; and (d) being their own advocate.

One student with a physical disability spoke of contacting the disability service provider at her school:

Well, I was able to go to the disability resources office and let them know who I was, and they would make sure I had everything that I needed in the classroom and out of the classroom. (LST5)

A student with a learning disability also felt she had learned the importance of getting to know professors.

Ask questions in class and let them know who you are so they know you are trying and interested in learning. (LST4)

The one student interviewed who had graduated from college summed up her feelings about the strategies she had learned in a simple phrase:

Being my own advocate. (LST6)

A student who is deaf told the interviewer that without *College Bound* she might not have learned about C-print, a speech to text captioning program she now uses in her college classes.

In sum, the majority of the students interviewed had positive feelings about the college success strategies they had learned and used. Each of the students interviewed had used at least one of the strategies in their college setting

Propositional Statement #4: Parents and students offered a mixture of praise and disappointment in the college support services they experienced.

The service providers available at *College Bound* spent time with parents and students explaining the different support services available and how to access these services at college. These providers explained the documentation requirements, the

accommodation process, and the rights of students. The interview protocol did not contain a question concerning the satisfaction with college services but parents in the short and long interviews offered their opinions and their views were included in the evaluation.

The majority of the 15 parent participants interviewed (12 of 15) said their child received positive support from the information received at *College Bound* and from the student's college disability service provider. One parent stated:

So I think it was very positive for her to hear about different programs for support. For them [college service providers] to describe the support that was going to the students and what was available was really very helpful. That gave us tremendous guidelines in terms of what to look for when we looked at schools.
(LP2)

Three of the parents interviewed praised the support available at community colleges for their child but were afraid this support would not be as available at a four-year school. One parent of a student with a learning disability expressed her views in this manner:

I think one thing I would say to parents of children with dyslexia is not to put them in a big four-year school where they will get lost in the woodwork, but to aim for a small college or, better yet, a community college. They have remedial work to do before they can even get into college. The whole focus of a community college is helping people from where they are to be the best they can be. (LP5)

Parents also praised the efforts made by some college service providers their child had worked with to look ahead and to plan proactively for their child's needs.

One parent however, was very critical of *College Bound* and the information her family received concerning college support services as well as the support her son had received at the college he attended. This parent expressed her concern that *College Bound* did not provide accurate information about college support services and the information provided seemed to be saying that any student with a disability could attend a four-year college and be successful. She stated:

I think if the *College Bound* people had not been as naïve, the recommendations would have been more practical. I felt I was hearing that any student with a disability could fit into any four-year college. The service providers needed to talk more about community colleges and the services offered in this college setting. *College Bound* people were too optimistic. (SP9)

Both parents and students related that the accommodations established by the disability service provider for their child were not consistently met by college faculty. One parent talked about the lack of cooperation by college faculty.

I think some of the biggest problems were either getting notetakers in class or sometimes having some teachers cooperate. I mean she either does extremely well in her classes or she doesn't. (LP3)

In sum, students were critical of college faculty not providing accommodations or listening to the student's explanation of the need for the accommodation. One student with a written language disorder said she was continually penalized for spelling errors that, as part of her accommodations, were not to be counted as errors. Students also did not feel they had any recourse if a professor did not accommodate based on the information the student provided from the college service provider.

Propositional Statement #5: College Bound helped parents to realize they could no longer be their child's advocate at college.

College Bound has as one of its major objectives to promote self-advocacy to its student and parent participants. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 also stresses the importance of students with disabilities learning to be their own self-advocates. Several of the workshops and activities that *College Bound* provided for parents stressed a different role for parents than they may have had when their child was in high school. One parent expressed her new role in this manner.

I found out sometimes it is best to bite your tongue because they are now young adults and they have to make the decision. And as much as you would like to make their choices for them or you would like to protect them from all the bad things in the world, you cannot do that. (LP5)

A parent of a student with a physical disability said:

I think *College Bound* is really necessary for anybody who has a child with a disability that is anticipating going to college because we (parents) need to know our role. We, as parents, have been so active and have been many times the push, but once they graduate from high school, we have no control. It is a very difficult thing to accept as a parent. (LP5)

Another parent said that the student advocacy promoted at *College Bound* was what she appreciated most about the program. Parent participants interviewed appeared to be struggling with their new role of being less of an advocate for their child. The majority of these parents had been actively involved in their child's life throughout grades K-12. Often their advocacy meant the difference between appropriate or inappropriate services for their child.

Learning Outcomes: Strengths and Needs

Table 14 shows the strengths and needs for the Learning Outcomes Category based on the propositional statements derived from the responses of the participants in the short and long telephone interviews.

Category #2: Experiencing On-Campus Living

The discussion of the on-campus living experience contains one propositional statement derived from the data and related to the goal set by the planning committee of providing an on-campus living experience to its student participants. The goal is based on the rationale that this living experience provides for a short preview of campus life. The propositional statement for the category is:

1. Students liked the on-campus living experience but did not find it helpful at college.

In the sub-section that follows, this statement is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants

Propositional Statement #6: Student liked the on campus living experience but did not find it helpful at college.

One of *College Bound's* three goals for students (see Appendix C, Figure 3) is to provide an on-campus living experience for the students who attend the program.

Students live in a residence hall on the Virginia Tech campus for two nights. The objective is to allow students the opportunity to experience living with another student who is usually a new acquaintance and to experience other fascists of college live such as eating in a college dining hall.

Table 14

Learning Outcomes: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

1. Providing participants with disability related collegiate information, which includes accessing college support services and college success strategies.
2. Providing participants with role models by showcasing success stories of college students with disabilities.
3. Preparing parents to be a source of support for their child while allowing the student to become a self-advocate.

Needs:

1. Participants need to be provided workshops and activities to meet their different disability related needs.
 2. Participants need to be provided with accurate information.
 3. Participants need to be provided with information on different types of college options.
 4. Participants need to be provided with information on self-disclosure of a disability.
 5. Participants need to be provided with strategies to face college challenges, especially dealing with accommodation issues.
-

of college life such as eating in a campus dining hall. Several students had attended other types of programs and stayed in residence halls so they felt they had had this experience prior to attending *College Bound*. Others offered some memories of the experience, but only one student of the 14 students who completed the short and long telephone interview reported the experience was beneficial. Those students who were

attending community college had not had the opportunity to live in a residence hall while attending college. The other student responses ranged from “It was not helpful” to “I don’t remember”. The one student in the short interviews who reported the experience was helpful stated:

The size of the rooms was nice and accommodating and so were the dining rooms. *College Bound* gave me the college experience so I would know what to expect. (SST7)

Other students liked the accessibility of living on campus, while others enjoyed making new friends but did not remember the residence hall. One student who had attended another overnight program at Virginia Tech commented that *College Bound* participants stayed in one of the nicest residence halls on campus but she did not believe freshmen would be housed there. Therefore she felt the experience was not a true reflection of living on-campus at Virginia Tech. In sum, student participants enjoyed the on-campus living experience but did not find the experience particularly helpful during their own college experience.

Experiencing On-Campus Living: Strengths and Needs

Table 15 shows the strengths and needs for the Experiencing On-Campus Living Category based on the propositional statement derived from the responses of the participants in the short and long telephone interviews.

Table 15

Experiencing On-Campus Living: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

There were no strengths assessed for this category.

Needs:

1. The goal and the function of the on-campus living experience needs to be reconsidered and participants need to see the relevance of the experience.
-

Category #3: Attending Workshops

The discussion of the workshops for participants contains two propositional statements derived from the data about the workshops offered by *College Bound* during the short and long telephone interviews. These two statements are:

1. Students and parents had some difficulty remembering the workshops due to the length of time since they had attended *College Bound*, but regarded what they did remember as useful.
2. Students and parents used the information from the workshops in the high school transition process and in college.

In the sub-sections that follow, each of these two statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #7: Students and parents had some difficulty remembering the workshops due to the length of time since they had attended College Bound but regarded what they did remember as useful.

The students and parents attending *College Bound* each had a series of workshops and activities planned specifically for each participant group. Several of the workshops offered were the same for students and parents, such as Assistive Technology; others were only offered to one group, such as Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role. When reminded of the workshop titles, the majority of the parent participants were able to remember general information about the workshops but they were not able to remember details.

I remember the experience of the workshops in general, but to say this workshop and that workshop, I couldn't remember. You know we are being asked three years after the fact. (LP6)

Another reason given by both the parents and students for not remembering details of the workshops was their impression that *College Bound* was too short a program. During the three years, 1999, 2000, and 2001, the program was only one and a half days long. In order to provide every workshop and activity, there was little time to digest the information given. One student summed up his impression when he told the interviewer:

The days were too short. Everything seemed too rushed. There needed to be more days for the program. I would have gotten a lot more out of it had it been longer. (SST10)

Other parents summed up the workshops as an opportunity to attend various sessions applicable to student and family needs. They remarked that the sessions added to their knowledge of information for the transition process and for their child to use in college. The majority of the parents stated that this was the first time they had heard most of the information provided at the workshops. One parent stated:

The workshops were really well structured . . . they gave you the information, they helped you know what you were talking about, not ever having had applied for all of these different things before, I had no idea what we were doing. (LP4)

Because the interviewers also asked each participant what information they remembered about specific workshops, each one will be discussed for both parents and students.

Parent Workshops

During its 1999, 2000, and 2001 sessions, *College Bound* offered six workshops designed for parents. These were: (a) Assistive Technology; (b) ADA v. IDEA; (c) Financial Aid; (d) Cutting the Cord: New Parent Roles; (e) Student Leaders' Conversation with Parents; (f) Agency Roles; and (g) College Service Providers' Conversation with Parents.

Assistive Technology. This workshop provided an overview of assistive technology, including text to speech reading programs, voice to text programs, writing assistance programs, and hardware for various mobility impairments plus a hands-on demonstration time. Parents could remember the different types of technology they saw in general terms including (a) desks that can be placed at different heights; (b) a voice to text computer program; and (c) a text to speech program for reading assistance. Parents indicated the workshop was informative and interesting, however, there was not any indication that the parents ever pursued the use of these technologies for their child. Two parents did not believe the technology would meet the disability-related needs of their child. One parent stated:

It seemed that most students had learning disabilities rather than medical disabilities. We just didn't relate to what was being shown. (SP7)

Another parent felt this workshop had breadth but not depth and just provided a short overview with not enough information to help them pursue using assistive technology when they returned home.

I really thought that it was fine, but more time would have been better to talk about pricing, how to find it, how to use it, and how to train the kids to use it. (LP3)

ADA v. IDEA. Parents need to understand the legal changes that will affect their children in the transition from high school to college. This workshop provided a discussion of the changes in laws governing disabilities, the need for disability documentation, and how to obtain accommodations in college. Some parents stated they were already familiar with the legal changes from high school to college before attending the workshop. Others were hearing the information for the first time and found it helpful. One parent expressed her impressions in this manner:

I didn't know the names of all the laws. The high school did not tell us about the laws and their differences. This is something we need to know. Then there are no surprises at college. The workshop explained the differences between public schools and college. (SP2)

Financial Aid. This workshop provided an overview of the financial aid process and specific information about aid related to students with disabilities. Several of the parents chose not to attend this workshop because they had other children in college and were familiar with the process. According to the interview data, one other parent did not attend because she and her son were not going to apply for aid. The remaining parents reported the workshop opened an understanding of the range of help that might be available for their child and the steps they needed to take to apply for aid.

Cutting the Cord: New Parent Roles. Focusing on humor and examples, this workshop provided parents with a chance to discuss their new role as parents of a college student and the changes that would occur with their child. One parent of a student with a mobility impairment stated she had already started the process of letting go. She knew her daughter needed to learn independence and to practice making

choices for herself. Other parents found the information useful but remarked it would still be hard to let go and allow the student to be his/her own advocate because they had been the advocates for so many years.

Several parents expressed their surprise that students in college had so much independence. Most parents were very ill at ease about their child going to college but were reassured when the workshop addressed ways to stay in touch with their child.

Student Leaders' Conversation with Parents. In this workshop, the student leaders were college students with disabilities from Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College who shared their experiences with college life. The parents interviewed found this workshop to be the most helpful and informative because they were hearing the information from successful college students.

One of the most informative messages was this: "It's OK to accept accommodations." This was an excellent workshop, with different kids from three colleges talking about how they managed, what they had overcome, impressive success stories and experiences. (SP1)

Another parent summed up the workshop by saying:

The student leaders were great. They helped my son to see what people can accomplish even with disabilities. (LP2)

Agency Roles. This workshop was designed to provide parents time to interact with representatives from Virginia disability agencies and to learn about their services and the requirements to use these services. The agencies included: (a) the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services; (b) the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; and (c) the Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Parents told the interviewers that this workshop provided them with new areas to explore for services to assist their child. Several parents had not heard of the agencies before attending *College Bound*. Two of the parents had heard of the agencies from high school personnel but felt that schools were not following through with connecting students to agencies. Another parent stated that her son's high schools were not implementing agencies' recommendations even when the students were already agency clients.

College Service Providers' Conversation with Parents. The disability service providers from Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College interacted with parents throughout *College Bound*. In 1999, these conversations were more individual and occurred informally during the program rather than during a planned workshop. In 2000 and 2001, a specific time was provided for parents and service providers to discuss college policies and procedures and to have a chance to ask individual questions. Parent responses to this workshop were favorable. One parent gave this assessment.

Excellent program. It provided lots of food for thought as well as strategies. It had helpful information about documentation and new updated information on testing needs and procedures. (SP1)

In sum, when I first started reading the transcripts of the interviews, I was concerned the parents did not remember the workshops or any of the information they had received. The first responses were "I don't remember" or "I can't remember anything about that workshop" Several years had passed before this evaluation took place and parents did note that time had decreased their memories of the workshops. However, as I continued to read the transcripts and notes, once the interviewers named each workshop, it became evident parents did remember some details of the workshops but did not find all of the workshops helpful.

The majority of the parents remembered the Assistive Technology workshop but, while interesting, obtaining any of the technology demonstrated was not pursued by parents. The ADA v. IDEA workshop did provide legal information to some of the parents that they had not heard from high school personnel. The parents also found the Cutting the Cord, the Financial Aid, the College Service Providers, and the Agency Roles useful if they needed to learn the information. The parents found the Student Leaders workshop the most beneficial because they were hearing about college life first hand from the students with disabilities.

Student Workshops

Students attended five workshops during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 *College Bound* programs including: (a) Assistive Technology; (b) Leadership and Self-Advocacy

Skills; (c) College Survival Skills; (d) Student Leaders' Conversation with Students; and (e) College Service Providers' Conversation with Students. Three of the workshops were similar to those offered the parents and two, Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills and College Survival Skills, were only presented to the students. Overall, the student comments were short and several answered that they did not remember any of the workshops. Those students who remembered the various workshops did have positive comments about the information they had learned.

Assistive Technology. Students who attended *College Bound* in 1999 and 2001 commented that this workshop provided helpful and new information about different computer programs and equipment to address their disability related needs, and that they did not know about the technology before attending the workshop. According to one student:

The workshop was most helpful to inform people of what was available for the needs that they may have. It showed us different types of technologies that were out there that you wouldn't necessarily know about because it's not on the mainstream market. (SST5)

Other students found learning about the information interesting but not helpful and they did not see a use for the assistive technology for themselves. This was particularly true for students with learning disabilities who saw assistive technology as relating more to students with physical disabilities or visual impairments.

Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills. This workshop was designed to teach students about self-advocacy and the reasons why they needed to develop this skill. The majority of the students found the workshop tedious and boring stating they had learned information on self-advocacy in high school. One student thought the workshop was too much like a lecture and told the interviewer:

The workshop was like a lecture and was information I was already familiar with but some of the information was new. (LST1)

Only two students stated the workshop offered new and useful information. One of these students commented:

The workshop talked about how to be an advocate for yourself. . .how to contact the disability office, how to approach professors, how to request accommodations. College is not like high school; you are an adult. (SST9)

College Survival Skills. The workshop focused on the executive skills student would need to be successful in college including: (a) notetaking; (b) organization; (c) time management; and (d) test taking. One student said he had learned all of these skills in high school. The other students could only name the skills taught in the workshop and were not able to add any comments. Only one student interviewed stated the workshop was helpful.

That was helpful. . .How to manage your time and schedule everything and keep a record of what you do during the day so you can refer back to it. (SST12)

Student Leaders' Conversation with Students. Although students interacted with the leaders assigned to their groups throughout the *College Bound* program, time was provided in this workshop for them to ask specific questions of the student leaders. However, few of the students remembered this workshop. One student stated that her interaction with a leader with a math disability helped her by discussing the leader's problems and how she had used accommodations. Another student remembered the leaders had stressed communication as the key to college success. He stated:

Communication with professors, open communication, people are willing to help but you have to let them know. How to be an advocate was the biggest impact the leaders had on me (SST4).

College Service Providers' Conversation with Students. This workshop provided the students with time to discuss college services and to ask individual questions of the three college service providers present at *College Bound*. Only one student remembered this workshop and said it was helpful when he was applying to college in providing information about what colleges offered.

In sum, the students interviewed did not provide detailed responses about the workshops they attended if they provided a response at all. Similar to the parent responses, several students stated that too much time had passed since they had attended *College Bound* to remember specific details about the workshops. Students may have found the workshop more interesting than useful such as the Assistive

Technology workshop. The data support the other four workshops offered during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 sessions did not provide useful information to the student participants. The format of the workshops may also have been lecture oriented and needed to be more interactive.

Propositional Statement #8: Students and parents did use the information from the workshops in transition process and in college.

Students and parents reported using the information from the workshops in transition process both in high school and college despite their lack of responses to direct questions about the workshops. Parents thought the workshops helped them learn (a) what questions to ask colleges in the search process;(b) the documentation was needed by colleges; and (c) how to help their child to become a good self-advocate. Parents also stated they took the information back to high school special education teachers. One parent interviewed joined the parent disability advisory board at her daughter's college and reported that she continued to use the information from the workshops in this position.

College Bound provides each student and parent with a notebook that contains not only the program schedule of events but contains information and handouts from the workshops. Only one parent commented on the notebook during her interview.

Yes, she still has her (*College Bound*) notebook, and as she prepared for college, we referred to the document. (LP3)

In sum, although the parent and student participants did not find all of the workshops useful and informative, a portion of the information was remembered and used in the transition process and in college. One result of the interviews regarding the workshop with college service providers reinforced the yearly evaluations category that stated there was too much "Tech" in the program. Several parents and students felt they were encouraged to apply to Virginia Tech or Radford University when, in reality, they probably would not be admitted. These participants suggested *College Bound* gave their children false hopes concerning the colleges they might quality to attend.

Attending Workshops: Strengths and Needs

Table 16 shows the strengths and needs for the Attending Workshops Category based on the propositional statements derived from the data collected in the short and long telephone interviews.

Category #4: Facilitating Personal Networks

The discussion of facilitating personal networks for participants contains two propositional statements derived from the data and related to the networking between the participants attending *College Bound* and the leaders and staff of the program. These two statements are:

1. Spending more time networking with other parents was important to the parent participants.
2. Student leaders were valuable role models for the students and parents and gave parents hope their child could succeed in college.

In the sub-section that follows, each of these two statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #9: Spending more time networking with other parents was important to parents.

Parents attending the *College Bound* sessions in 1999 and 2000 stated they did not have the opportunity to meet and spend time with the other parent participants. In 2001, the schedule changed to allow more time for parents to

Table 16

Attending Workshops: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

1. Providing a program for Virginia high school students with disabilities and their parents.
2. Providing information the students and parents could use in high school and in college.
3. Providing information from successful college student with disabilities.

Needs:

1. Program length needs to be extended in order to provide more time for workshops.
 2. Additional handouts and take home information from the workshops needs to be provided.
 3. Allow participants their choice of workshop attendance based on their needs.
-

meet at the beginning of the program and to have time to network during the program.

As one parent stated:

I just felt at times it was hard to get the group as a whole to open up. I think the parents did not mingle as well as the kids did. (LP3)

Parents stated that students had a great deal of time to get to know each other and share experiences and to learn from each other. Parents expressed the need to have the same opportunity. The parents also indicated that it would have been a good idea to subgroup the parents perhaps by the disability of their child so they could discuss the disability needs in greater detail. One parent also thought the subgroups would be helpful during the assistive technology workshop to allow each group more time with the technology specifically for the disability.

Propositional Statement #10: Student leaders were valuable role models for the students and parents and gave the parents hope that their child could succeed in college.

Parents believed the student peer program was essential to their child's knowledge acquisition at *College Bound* and that networking with these students was important for all the participants. The student leaders provided hope to parents that their child could succeed in college. One parent told the interviewer:

I think the student peer program is essential. They learn probably more from that than anything you all had to say. (LP5)

Parents stated the student leaders were able to portray an accurate picture of college life for the student participants. The student leaders expressed times when failure was possible often helping parents understand the fluctuations with their child's successes and failures. These leaders were seen as teachers for both the parents and students and parents pointed out that the students would probably remember the information from the leaders more than the workshops and activities. One parent expressed that thought in this manner:

Some of the ones he was hanging out with were cool. He respected them and they weren't like what people typically think of as a disabled person. They had a life, they were popular, they were self confident, and he really related to them. (LP5)

However, the remaining quote from this parent is cause for concern and consideration by the *College Bound* planning committee. The parent continues by saying her son who has a learning disability stayed as far as he could from the leaders and students that were in wheelchairs or had a severe disability. Her son felt these individuals were threatening. I was taken a back by this information from the interview transcript.

The statement gave me a chance to think that even though *College Bound* is a program for students with disabilities, students with mild disabilities may have difficulty communicating with persons who may be severely disabled. Another parent offered another side to this revelation. She noted that the leaders and students at the program with significant disabilities provided a humbling experience for her son with attention deficit disorder, while she stated that the other leaders with less severe disabilities gave her hope her son could be successful in college.

In sum, student leaders play an important role in the *College Bound* program. They serve as role models and provide real life experiences for the participants.

Facilitating Personal Networks: Strengths and Needs

Table 17 shows the strengths and needs for the Facilitating Personal Networks Category based on the propositional statements derived from the data collected in the short and long telephone interviews.

Table 17

Facilitating Personal Networks: *Strengths and Needs*

Strengths:

1. Providing time for parents to network, get to know each other, and share experiences.
2. Providing time for participants to network with college students with disabilities.
3. Providing an accurate picture of college life by the college students with disabilities.
4. Having students with disabilities serve as leaders for *College Bound*.
5. Providing information on college disability services and college success strategies by the student leaders.

Needs:

1. Additional time needs to be provided for parents to network with each other.
 2. Participants need to learn about different disabilities through the eyes of student participants and student leaders.
-

Category #5: Marketing the Program

The discussion of marketing the program for the participants contains two propositional statements derived from the data and related to the advertising techniques used by the planning committee and the fee charged for student participation in the

program. Parents are not charged a fee to attend because they must secure housing accommodations from area hotels or pay to stay in a campus residence hall. These two statements are:

1. Past advertising techniques have not met with success because *College Bound* was difficult to find out about.
2. Parents stated the fee for *College Bound* was reasonable.

In the sub-sections that follow, each of these two statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #11: Past advertising techniques have not met with success.

Parents reported that it was difficult to find out about *College Bound*. They told the interviewers that finding out about *College Bound* often happened by chance and even if someone gave them a brochure, no one could answer questions about the program. Parents would simply find the program interesting and decide to go. As one parent explained:

Yes, we sort of pursued it ourselves after we were given the information that *College Bound* was available. When we did decide to go we found we were the first ones from our school. (LP7)

Another parent offered a comment on the same theme:

I think that somewhere I found a flyer in the Fairfax County Administrative Building. We did not find out through our school. We felt it needed to be much more broadly advertised and we heard about it at the last minute and decided to go. (LP2)

The wording of the brochure was a concern to another parent who stated:

I did not know from the wording of the information in the brochure whether the program was for kids with severe disabilities, such as those in a wheelchair, or just for students with mild disabilities. (LP2)

Parents also stated that perhaps one reason they did not find out easily about *College Bound* was that teachers and counselors were overwhelmed by their jobs and did not have time to let parents know about every program about which they receive information. Marketing strategies suggested by the parents included: (a) presentations on *College Bound* in various school systems around the state; (b) making sure agencies

had the information; (c) talking with high school counselors to explain the program; (d) helping past participants to do presentations; and (e) making sure parents understood that part of the program was planned for them and it was not just for students.

In sum, the *College Bound* planning committee has wrestled with the advertisement of the program since its inception in 1999. Large mailing lists have been maintained and continually updated with general education and special education personnel, guidance counselors, parent resource centers, agency personnel, and transition coordinators. Each year, the planning committee struggles with advertising *College Bound* and according to the parent participants in the telephone surveys, the committee is still not using successful marketing strategies.

Propositional Statement #12: Parents stated the fee for College Bound was reasonable.

Because *College Bound* is a fee based program, it was important to ask how parents felt about the cost of the program. Throughout both the short and long telephone interviews, parents considered the fee for *College Bound* reasonable and that their money was well spent. Several parents stated they would have paid more to attend. One parent commented that there should be a scholarship fund available for those who could not afford to come since some disabilities were very costly for families. This parent stated:

It was okay for us. I do not know about kids who are not in the middle class; you know every penny is precious. But there should be a scholarship fund for those who can not afford it. (LP5)

None of the interviewed parents had any negative comments about the cost. Students were not asked to comment on advertising and program cost because their parents usually handled these issues.

Marketing the Program: Strengths and Needs

Table 18 shows the strengths and needs for the Marketing the Program Category based on the propositional statements derived from the responses of the participants in the short and long telephone interviews.

Table 18

Marketing the Program: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

1. Charging a reasonable fee for the student participants keeps the program affordable for most families.

Needs:

1. Scholarships need to be provided for student to attend the program.
 2. New methods to market and advertise *College Bound* need to be explored.
 3. New funding sources need to be explored in order to keep the fees reasonable and affordable.
-

Category #6: Assessing Satisfaction

The discussion of assessing satisfaction for participants contains five propositional statements derived from the data and related to the interview questions that asked the participants why they attended *College Bound* and were they satisfied with the program. These five statements are:

1. Most student participants were motivated to attend due to parent pressure.
2. Parents attended *College Bound* searching for additional information on transition and college success strategies for their child.
3. The student participants stated their needs were met and they gained valuable information to assist with college success.
4. Parents, with few exceptions, were satisfied with *College Bound* and stated it met its advertised goals.
5. Parents and students would recommend *College Bound* to other high school students with disabilities and their parents.

In the sub-sections that follow, each of these five statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #13: Most student participants were motivated to attend due to parent pressure.

The students might not have decided to attend *College Bound* without some prodding from parents. When asked why they decided to attend *College Bound* the student participants reported their parents registered them for the program and made them attend. The interviews reflect these comments from students:

Honestly, my mom signed me up for it and said you are going. (LST4)

I suppose my parents had something to do with that. They thought it would be a good idea. I don't know that I was influential in the decision. (LST2)

Other students did not remember why they attended or whose idea it was to attend. Only one student reported that she made the decision to attend.

I decided to attend because. . .adjusting to college life, I thought it was important to find out the resources available to me at college. . .It was important to find out. (LST5)

Although parents were the motivating factor for the majority of the students to attend *College Bound*, the yearly evaluations and the interviews showed the students were glad they did attend the program.

Propositional Statement #14: Parents attended College Bound searching for additional information on transition and college success for their child.

Parents were motivated to attend the program because they did not believe high school personnel were meeting the transition needs of their child, nor were they listening to the student goals and providing information to meet those goals. Other parents attended because they hoped the program would be able to provide the information and knowledge they needed to assist their child in college. One parent stated:

The high school special education teachers did not think she could go to college. They were not steering her towards college or anything else. That is why we went to the program. . .which we thought was wonderful. We found out about it by happenstance the first year it was held. (LP2)

Although several of the parents had had other children in college, this was their first child with a disability to attend college. These parents said they needed to learn more about college services for students with disabilities and *College Bound* provided that opportunity.

Well, we received the information. . .I am not sure where we got it. . .it just sounded like something that would be helpful to her and to my husband and myself because we had children in college but no one that had a disability and we wanted to be sure that we were going about it the right way and hopefully we could learn something. . .That was why we participated in the program. (LP6)

It was interesting to note in the interviews and yearly evaluations, the number of parents who had no idea what *College Bound* had to offer but came because they believed it might provide information they were not receiving from their high schools. Parents also noted that the sponsorship of Virginia Tech drew them to the program. One parent, who had graduated from Virginia Tech but who had not been back to campus in many years, thought it would be fun to visit and attend the program. She also left the program believing that *College Bound* had given her the knowledge that there was help in college for her daughter and there were college students with disabilities who were successful.

Propositional Statement #15: The student participants stated their needs were met and they gained valuable information to assist with college success.

Despite being forced to come by their parents, the majority of the students interviewed stated *College Bound* had provided them with valuable information to assist with their college success. These students commented that *College Bound* was too short a program, that it had too many rules, and that it did not allow them to have free time. Yet, at the end of the program in the yearly evaluation, and at the time of this evaluation, they did remember what they learned at *College Bound* and they reported having used the information. One student said:

It was a good eye opener for what was out there when I left high school. (LST4)
Another student said that she did not know what to expect of the program but came away with a more positive attitude concerning the program.

Yes, going in I did not know what to expect at all, but I would say by the end I came out with a more positive attitude and it had met my expectations. I think it can guide you in the right direction if you know its out there. . .it was not a negative experience. It was helpful. (LST2)

Another student said *College Bound* provided an eye opening experience.

I think if you are planning on going to college that it is definitely an eye opener because it is nothing like high school is or was. It helps you to know where your resources are and what you need to do when you get there. It is beneficial for anyone thinking of attending college. (LS4)

Students also stated the program allowed them to be with other students like themselves. Being able to share information openly about their disability and knowing they would be understood was an important part of the experience. They did not have to feel ashamed of who they were, which was a feeling several disabled students voiced about high school.

Propositional Statement #16: Parents, with a few exceptions, were satisfied with College Bound and stated it met its advertised goals.

The majority of the parent participants were satisfied with *College Bound* and the information they received. They stated the program had provided them with new information in the areas of assistive technology, legal requirements, financial aid, and the changing roles of parents as their children enter college. However, there was little indication from the interviews that parents had increased their knowledge about state agencies that served students with disabilities. One parent said she had attended *College Bound* without any expectations of the program because she did not really know what the program had to offer until the program was over. Because *College Bound* was a new program, this was a common theme among the participants interviewed. One parent said:

I think it exceeded them [expectations] because we really didn't have any expectations, we didn't know what to expect. We were just sort of expecting to go to something that had information about going to college. . .I think it helped her. . .because students talked about the problems they had and how they persevered and the support they had from the school. It really gave you the idea that there was help out there. (LP7)

Another parent was more exuberant with her comments.

I think *College Bound* was very informative and very helpful. You got more information than just kind of jumping into it and not knowing anything. This is a wonderful program. This was a wonderful chance for us. We plan to share this

information with our school. Thanks for all your efforts! The program deserves a community or national award. (LP2)

Although the majority of parents did feel the program had met its goals, several parents were not satisfied with the experience they had at *College Bound* and did not recall a satisfying experience. In 2000 and 2001, the majority of students attending had hidden disabilities including learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. Students with physical disabilities and mobility issues were a small segment of the participants. The parents of these physically challenged students indicated the program did not have enough information that pertained to their child's disability and they felt out of place at *College Bound*. One of these parents said:

We were disappointed in the program. There were only four students totally in wheelchairs so it was a very different experience than if she had been with a larger group struggling with the same issues. She enjoyed being there, the college experience you know, but it was not what we thought. We did not really get much information from *College Bound* that we did not already know. (LP3)

Another parent, while expressing some compliments about the program, thought the program offered too much information in too short a time. She stated the presenters spoke for too long and were going over and over the same information. She told the interviewer:

If anything, it was sort of an overage of information especially for people like us who did not really know much about any of it before. There were some things that I just thought were too much and unnecessary. Several people just went on and on about what they did. (LP5)

In sum, throughout both the short and long interviews, parents had praise for *College Bound* and stated it met the goals and objectives established for parent participants. There were some criticisms of the program that the planning committee may not be able to change such as the mix of disabilities among the students attending the program.

Propositional Statement #17: Parents and students would recommend College Bound to other high school students with disabilities and their parents.

Throughout the data collected for this evaluation of *College Bound* including the yearly program evaluations, the short telephone interviews, and the long telephone interviews, the overwhelming majority of the participants said they would recommend *College Bound* to others. Some parents stated they already had recommended the program to other parents in their high school. However, there were several students and parents who had reservations and were undecided on making a program recommendation.

Two students were concerned that it would depend on the high school student. One stated:

It depends, it would depend on how much trouble they were having in high school. I would say if high school went really well then maybe they don't need to go. But if they were struggling in high school it would certainly seem logical to go to the *College Bound* program. Yeah, it would depend on the individual. (ST6)

Two parents had reservations based on the unsuccessful college experiences of their children. These parents seemed to feel that the information offered at *College Bound* should have helped to assure success in college and they were disillusioned by the experience. The statements from each of these parents were:

Yes, with reservations, depends, my daughter had a crushing college experience. (PL1)

Yes, with reservations. When we first went, I was really high on the program but after son's college experience, I'm not sure about program. (PL2)

Several parents encouraged the interviewer to discuss with *College Bound* planning committee how they, as parents, could help advertise the program. The planning committee has addressed these suggestions several times but has not formulated a plan to use former participants to advertise the program except in one instance. In 2002, a student and her parents were so enthusiastic after attending the program, as a family they have made presentations to high schools and have attended college fairs to promote the program. The student also participated as a junior *College Bound* leader in 2003.

Assessing Satisfaction: Strengths and Needs

Table 19 shows the strengths and needs for the Assessing Satisfaction Category based on the propositional statements derived from the responses of the participants in the short and long telephone interviews.

Table 19

Assessing Satisfaction: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

1. Providing parent and student participants information they can use to succeed in college.
2. Providing participants with a satisfactory program that they can recommend to others.

Needs:

1. Participants need to know the program does not guarantee college success but only provides information that can lead to success.
 2. Student participants need to be involved actively from the beginning of the program because students may not have wanted to attend.
-

Category #7: Gathering Transition Information

The discussion of gathering transition information from the participants contains two propositional statements derived from the data and related to the high school transition services received by the participants and the information *College Bound* provided to enhance these services. These statements are:

1. Parents expressed both positive and negative feelings about high school transition services provided their child and stated *College Bound* offered information to enhance these services.
2. Students did not remember a great deal about their high school transition services but most stated they were adequate.

In the sub-sections that follow, each of these two statements is described in detail and illustrated with quotations from the multiple conversations with participants.

Propositional Statement #18: Parents expressed both positive and negative feelings about high school transition services provided their child and stated College Bound offered information to enhance these services.

College Bound was established as a program to assist with the transition from high school to college based on a review of literature that suggested students with disabilities might not have adequate transition services in high school. As a college disability service provider, I have also experienced the lack of transition services when parents and students do not have knowledge of the differences between high school and college disability issues. Therefore, this evaluation seemed an appropriate forum to ask the participants questions about their high school transition planning.

High school transition data was also collected during this evaluation to assist with future program planning. *College Bound* needs to know how high schools are providing transition planning for student with disabilities because high schools can offer pieces of transition planning that *College Bound* can not. For example, high schools can assist students with their course selections for college entrance requirements, college applications, and information on colleges. *College Bound* can offer contact with college students with disabilities and information on college disability services.

Parent Transition Reflections

The parents participating in the long telephone interviews were asked to reflect on their high school transition experiences for their children. All seven parents provided different insights into their experiences. One of the parents lived in a small community and was friends with her daughter's special education teacher. This parent believed that her daughter could go to that teacher and get the help she needed and her questions answered. This parent trusted that the special education teacher knew her daughter's goals and provided information to assist the transition to college. However, the guidance counselor in the high school, in this parent's opinion, did not provide any assistance:

So when my daughter had a problem at school, she would go to Liz
[the special education teacher] and Liz would help with the problem. (LP2)

The parent of a student, who was paralyzed due to a mistake during surgery, stated that because her daughter had a visible disability and had been home schooled

for several years due to the disability, the school system may have been more eager to provide the needed transition services.

We were very happy with her high school experience. They did everything possible they could do. (LP6)

Another parent of a student with congenital mobility impairment had to continue to advocate for her daughter throughout high school but she stated the school system had provided the assertive technology her daughter needed, as well as adequate transition services. This parent did state that she had to make the effort to enlist the aid of the guidance counselor and had to educate herself in order to assist her daughter. This parent had older children in college so she already knew some of the things her daughter needed to do to prepare for college.

The mother of a student with a learning disability reported very negative transition experiences for her son. She stated that her son's IEP contained goals and objectives that were not realistic. She remembers a teacher informing her that learning disabilities did not exist and these students were inept and lazy. Even the special education teachers were not sure how to serve her son who was a gifted student with a learning disability. As a result, her son did not receive adequate transition services.

His special education counselor, she basically indicated to us that she did not believe that there were learning disabilities in gifted children. I caught her meaning that they were inept and lazy kids who did not want to put their nose to the grind stone. Most of the students in special education classes were limited and I do not think they knew what to do with a child that was bright and yet dyslexic. (LP5)

This parent did report the high school held a college night that provided a few sessions on what to expect at college and what a typical student without a disability needed to do to prepare for college.

Another parent and her child experienced special education teachers steering students with learning disabilities into non-college courses. This parent stated that if she had not been proactive, her child, whose goal was to attend college, might not have taken the college prep courses in high school.

They actually really tried to steer some kids with learning disabilities into a non-college approach, which we found rather appalling. It was very disappointing. We were just shocked I mean you know we felt the kid should be able to try to go to college. (LP4)

None of the parents interviewed talked about agency services, having students involved with the IEP process, or getting assistance with the college admission process. The parents, for the most part, were satisfied with high school special education services but not with the transition services.

Propositional Statement #19: Students did not remember a great deal about their transition services but most stated they were adequate.

The majority of the students in the telephone interviews could not recall a great deal about their transition services. However, they felt they were prepared for college by their high school, but they could not explain how this was accomplished. One student did report a college seminar at her high school with topics on what colleges are looking for with regard to grades and test scores, how to interact with professors, and how to manage and organize time.

Only one student responded with a negative reaction to his high school services confirming his mothers concerns for the gifted student with a learning disability. He stated that student with disabilities were discouraged from attending college.

My high school actually discouraged a lot of kids from trying to go to college so they weren't exactly helpful directing us in that direction. (LST5)

Transition Assistance Provided by College Bound

Two parents told their interviewer they had used the information from *College Bound* to assist in the transition from high school to college for their child. One parent stated she took the information she had learned at *College Bound* to the special education teachers in her school system. The program offered another parent the guidance needed to ask the right questions of colleges. *College Bound* provided another parent the information on the guidelines for current disability documentation. Colleges and universities use this documentation to provide appropriate

accommodations. This parent used the information to insure her daughter's high school transition plan included updating her disability documentation.

It really guided us in the right direction to ask, all types of things that we really did not know to ask or to expect, it gave us very good guidelines for the transition process. (LP4)

Another parent stated that learning about different disabilities of the students at *College Bound* was helpful and the workshops provided helped her son be more comfortable in college classes.

Gathering Transition Information: Strengths and Needs

Table 20 shows the strengths and needs for the Gathering Transition Information Category based on the propositional statements derived from the participants in the short and long telephone interviews.

Table 20

Gathering Transition Information: Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

1. Providing information participants can use to complete the high school transition process successful.
2. Providing information participants need to know how to access college disability services.

Needs:

1. Listen to the high school transition experiences of participants to strengthen workshops and activities to supplement high school transition experiences.
-

Category #8: Offering Recommendations

The discussion of offering suggestions by the participants contains one propositional statement derived from the data and related to the recommendations the participants offered to improve *College Bound*. This statement is:

1. Parents and students had a number of recommendations to improve *College Bound*.

In the sub-section that follows, this one statement is described by listing the various recommendations from the multiple conversations with participants and from the analysis of the yearly program evaluations.

Propositional Statement #20: Parent and student participants had a number of recommendations to improve College Bound.

The student and parent participants were asked in both the short and long telephone interviews and in the yearly program evaluations to offer recommendations to improve the program. These recommendations are clustered in three categories: (a) scheduling; (b) programming; and (c) program fundamentals. The strengths and needs for this category are not analyzed at the end of this section because they are listed as recommendations. The recommendations are:

Scheduling:

1. Extend the length of the program to 3 or 4 days so there will be more time to provide the workshops and activities, and allow time to rest and to network.
2. Offer the program to high school freshmen and sophomores as well as juniors and seniors. Senior year is too late to start planning for college.

Programming:

1. Show alternatives to college for those students that may have difficulty being admitted in the future.
2. Offer more specific information related to a wider range of disability about careers and employment.
3. Provide more programming on all aspects of college life not just academics. Students should learn how to balance their college experience.

4. Develop ways to get special education teachers and general education teachers to attend the program.
5. Provide more time for parents to network and get to know each other
6. Provide a session on career planning.
7. Provide additional information on the assistive technology demonstrated at *College Bound* including pricing and ordering information.

Program Fundamentals:

1. Provide parking closer to the program and if not possible, provide shuttles.
2. Provide more signage and directions to the program.
3. Provide student leaders with a variety of disabilities and try to have all participants' disabilities represented by the leaders.
4. Explore news way to market the *College Bound* because it is hard to find out about.

Compilation Summary of Strengths and Needs

Table 21 shows the compilation summary of the program strengths and Table 22 shows the compilation summary of the program needs derived from the interview and yearly evaluation data presented as the findings of the evaluation in Chapter 4. The strengths and needs are divided into two categories, program structure and program impact on participants.

Discussion

The conceptual framework of *College Bound* is based on the transition from high school to college for students with disabilities. Figure 1 (Chapter 2) listed nine components of transition planning that serve as a bridge to successful transition from high school to college. The evaluation results, while assessing the strengths and weaknesses of *College Bound*, also show a degree of symmetry with several of these transition components, which are discussed in this section.

Knowledge of Transition Planning

The interviews with the *College Bound* participants suggested the survey results and conclusions by Knott and Asselin (1999) still prevail within the Commonwealth.

Knott and Asselin, after surveying special education personnel in Virginia, found that transition preparation needed to move beyond the basics and address the gaps of knowledge, the importance of transition planning, and the involvement of special education personnel in the process.

Table 21

Compilation Summary of the Strengths

1. Providing participants with disability related collegiate information.
2. Informing participants with disabilities about college success strategies.
3. Providing information for students about college support services and how to access those services.
4. Providing role models by showcasing success stories of college students with disabilities.
5. Preparing parents to be a source of support for their child while allowing the student to become a self-advocate.
6. Staying on-campus and getting to know other students was enjoyable for the participants.
7. Staying on-campus during the program allows participants to have easy access to the workshops and activities.
8. Providing workshops for student and parents participants that met the established goals of the program.
9. Remembering information from the workshops more important than the workshop names.
10. Providing information the students and parents can use in high school and in college.
11. Impacting the participants was the information provided by the student leaders with disabilities.
12. Providing time for parents to network and get to know each other.
13. Providing time for participants to network with college students with disabilities.
14. Providing an accurate picture of college life by the college students with disabilities.

15. Having students with disabilities serve as leaders for *College Bound*.
 16. Providing information on college disability services and college success strategies by the student leaders.
 17. Charging a reasonable fee for the student participants keeps the program affordable for most families.
 18. Planning committee is cognizant of the lack of marketing success for the program.
 19. Providing parent and student participants with information they can use to succeed in college.
 20. Providing a satisfactory program that participants can recommend to others.
 21. Completing program leaves participants with feeling they can succeed in college.
 22. Providing information participants can use to complete the high school transition process successful.
 23. Providing information participants need to know how to access college disability services.
-

Table 22

Compilation Summary of the Needs

1. Target programs to disability related needs of participants.
2. Provide accurate information to parents
3. Provide information on a range of postsecondary options for students.
4. Incorporate information on self-disclosure of a disability.
5. Provide students with strategies to face college challenges such as dealing with faculty members who will not provide appropriate accommodations.
6. Assess the on-campus living experience to determine if it should remain a goal of the program.
7. Consider a workshop or activity to enhance the on-campus living experience.
8. Extend program length in order to provide more time for workshops
9. Provide more handouts and take home information from the workshops.
10. Make the workshops more interactive and less lecture.
11. Allow participants their choice of workshops to attend based on their needs.
12. Offer only general information in the workshops and not specific information that focuses on one college or university.
13. Provide more time for parents to network with each other.
14. Continue to have student leaders with a variety of disabilities, both hidden and visible.
15. Provide time for learning about different disabilities through the eyes of student participants and student leaders.
16. Fund scholarships for student to attend program.
17. Explore new methods to market *College Bound*.
18. Explore new funding sources in order to keep the fees reasonable.
19. Acknowledge program does not guarantee college success but only provides information for success.
20. Involve student participants actively from the beginning of the program because students may not have wanted to attend.

21. Reevaluate the information provided by *College Bound* to assure relevance for participants.
 22. Listen to the high school transition experiences of participants to strengthen workshops and activities to supplement high school transition experiences.
-

Although most of the parents and students spoke in very general terms about the transition planning they had received, several stated that school personnel had not listened to student's goals and did not promote higher education for those students that were qualified. The parents were often the catalyst for planning and had to seek out assistance from teachers and counselors as well as provide them with information rather than the reverse. Parents noted that without their intervention, their children would have graduated from high school with little information on what skills were needed for college success.

IDEA mandates that transition planning starts at age 14 and should assist students and families in making decisions about the future with ample time to plan for these directions. The participant interviews did not suggest that this planning time was being utilized to the fullest extent possible and there was not the assistance being given from high school teachers and staff. Often the best transition services were received through teachers who were family friends or because older siblings had already been to college and parents were more aware of issues and needs.

The severity of the disability was also a factor in the extent of the transition planning for a student. Students with learning disabilities were often perceived as able to learn the college success skills on their own whereas special education personnel provided the students with the more severe disabilities more assistance, as suggested by Reiff and deFur (1992). The importance of transition planning becomes even more evident when the national statistics for college success for students with disabilities is compared with students without disabilities (Grigal, et. al., 1997, Henderson, 2001). The literature emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of transition planning and so do the findings of this study.

Stakeholders Involvement

Thompson, Fulk, and Piercy (2000) suggested that transition-planning outcomes often reflect the unified effort to match the student's and parent's goals with those written into transition plans. Transition planning should be based on the student's goals with input from parents and teachers. Though most of the interview participants had unified goals between parent and child, high school personnel did not seem to have knowledge of these goals or take them into consideration.

Teachers should also allow all the stakeholders in the process the ability to provide input and suggest outcomes for the transition process (Knot & Asselin, 1999). Studies by Thompson, et.al. (2000), Love and Malian (1997), and the New York State Department of Education (1999) reflected the need for unified transition planning. Based on these studies, insufficient planning and lack of participation by all the stakeholders often lead to a student's unsuccessful attempts at college or employment. Though the goal for the student participants interviewed for this evaluation was higher education and their parents agreed with this goal, secondary school personnel may not have supported the goal, and therefore, adequate planning for the student may not have occurred.

These studies also indicated that more individual planning and services seemed to have been provided to students with disabilities that teachers perceived as potential college students. Several students and parents commented on the perception that the disability would prevent the student from attending college and, based on parent comments, without their intervention their son or daughter might not have been placed in college preparatory classes. The literature emphasizes the rights of stakeholder's involvement in the transition process and so do the findings of this study.

Self Determination and Understanding the Disability

The prevailing theme from all of the *College Bound* interviews was the need for students to develop self-advocacy skills and personal decision-making skills prior to and during college. *College Bound* parents realized that they would not have the same role when their child entered college as they had during high school and that colleges would expect students with disabilities to be their own advocates. Students learned that

parents and high school teachers would no longer be available to serve as their main support system and they would need to form new support systems. Hicks-Coolick and Kurtz (1996) in their interviews with college service providers found several factors related to student success. One of these factors was self-advocacy or self-determination, skills that included self-awareness, self acceptance, knowledge of laws and of their disability, assertiveness, and problem solving skills.

Understanding of the disability and how the disability may affect a student in the postsecondary academic environment is a transition component linked to self-advocacy. The student participants in the interviews all knew what their disability was and could articulate their accommodation needs and where they had experienced difficulties in the college environment. Only two of the students were able to express ways in which they had taken charge of their learning and had changed their learning behaviors based on their disability. Lukose (2000) suggested from a study of disability service providers that taking charge of one's own learning is an important factor in college success. The literature emphasizes the importance of self-determination and understanding one's disability and so do the findings of this study.

Assistive Technology Awareness

Lahn and Morrison (1994) and Houchins (2001) stated that students with disabilities might not be receiving adequate access to these technologies. *College Bound* provides parents and students the chance to have a hands on experience with various types of assistive technology including voice to text software, scan and read software, writing programs, and equipment for mobility impairments. Often the participants are not familiar with the different types of technology that can assist persons with disabilities in having a greater control over their lives and benefit from opportunities that other students take for granted.

During the student and parent interviews, the participants did not seem to remember a great deal about the technologies they were shown at *College Bound* nor did they express use of any of the technologies in college. Parents and students offered short phrases such as "a machine that reads to you" or "the technologies just seemed usable for more severe disabilities but not for me" as comments during these interviews.

These comments and lack of follow through with the use of assistive technologies suggests that *College Bound* may need to provide a better connection with the technologies and how they benefit a college student with a disability.

Knowledge of College Services and Legal Status

College Bound workshops offered both parents and students information on the changing legal status for college students with disabilities and the support services that are available at colleges and universities. During the interviews, some parents and students reported their disappointment in the lack of services they had received and the lack of faculty acceptance regarding the provision of appropriated accommodations. These reports coincide with the research conducted by Finn (1998) that suggested students need a competent disability service provider at their college. Students view these individuals as having an impact on their perceptions, attitudes, and academic success. An example from the long interviews, involved a student who, when visiting different colleges around the state, believed she found the college she wished to attend and thought the disability service provider understood her disability and her needs. After the student enrolled, the disability service provider left and a new individual was hired. The student eventually left that college and enrolled at another college because she stated the new service provider did not understand her disability nor accommodated her needs especially in the area of campus accessibility.

Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Bruelle (1999) conducted a study of college faculty to assess their attitudes toward making adaptations for students with disabilities in the classroom. The findings echo reports from the interviewed students in the evaluation that they had difficulty with some of their faculty providing accommodations and listening to the students need for the accommodation. The students also stated this lack of communication and accommodation might have meant the difference in passing or failing a class.

Partnerships between Transition Process Stakeholders

Lukose (2000) suggested there is a cultural disconnect between high school and college. Aune and Friehe (1998) further suggested that high school and college issues cannot be separated and viewed in isolation if the cultural disconnect is to be lessened.

They provided several relevant issues central to successful transition for students with disabilities including the partnerships between all the stakeholders.

In a recent issue of *Virginia Issues and Answers*, a magazine published by Virginia Tech as a public policy forum, Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, the current superintendent of public instruction for the Commonwealth of Virginia, emphasized the importance of these partnerships. She wrote that meeting the educational needs of the children of Virginia will require fresh approaches and new thinking by both K-12 and postsecondary education. *College Bound* provides one small step in this direction.

Summary

The findings of the evaluation of *College Bound* have been presented in this chapter and the transition components from the literature review have been discussed from the perspective of their symmetry with the evaluation findings. Chapter Five will provide the conclusions for the evaluation as well as the implications and recommendations for the future of the program.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides conclusions based upon the findings of the evaluation of *College Bound*, a discussion of the implications for the program, and recommendations for future evaluations. The challenges posed by the identified strengths and needs of College Bound are offered to help the planning committee direct future programs and seek new funding sources.

Conclusions

The conclusions are discussed in relation to the research questions guiding this inquiry. The two subordinate questions addressing the outcomes of the program for its participants and the descriptions of student and parent experiences are discussed before addressing the main question for the evaluation so that readers might determine how College Bound is meeting its established mission and goals for its student and parent participants. The second subordinate question is addressed first.

How do the student and parent participants describe their experience with College Bound?

The data from the 26 participant interviews and from the yearly evaluations suggest that *College Bound* was a good experience and one the participants would recommend to other high school students and their parents. The program was also viewed as well organized and affordable for each of the three years, 1999, 2000, and 2001, although there were fee increases over the three-year time span (see Appendix B, Tables 2-4).

Parents provided more information about their *College Bound* experiences than did the students, which suggests that parents are, in reality, the main consumers of the program. Parents were most often the catalyst for their child to attend the program. Parents came to *College Bound* out of the expressed need to find information to assist their child in college, which they were not receiving from their high schools. The major impact on the parents' experiences was the networking with other parents, student leaders, and college service providers who provided not only collegiate information, but hope their child could succeed in college. Parents, who were struggling with the future

impact of their child's disability in the college environment experienced real life stories from college students with disabilities and received information on college support services. For parents, the evaluation suggests these interactions were the strength of the program.

Although the majority of the parents reported having a good experience at *College Bound*, there were those parents who were disappointed in the program. The data suggest that these parents were searching for information and assistance beyond the scope of *College Bound*. They were the parents of the more severely disabled students attending and appear to have taken the information as promises of college success. *College Bound* should be challenged by these parents to assess the needs of participants to determine how to best provide them information.

Students were less likely to speak in great detail about their experiences at *College Bound*, as did the parents. Similar to the parents' experiences, the main impact on their experience was the college student leaders and their stories and information. The data suggest the students did not find the on-campus living experience useful in their own college experience, which appears to be the purpose of the experience. The *College Bound* planners may need to reassess the emphasis placed on this on-campus experience and consider either enhancing the experience or discontinuing the emphasis placed on it.

The majority of the 15 parents interviewed noted that the experience of accessing the program was difficult. Advertising brochures were not reaching the parents through the sources used by *College Bound*. As parents appear to be the primary program consumer, it is tantamount for the program to provide parents with information or the future of the program might be jeopardized. The challenge to the *College Bound* planners should be the reevaluation of marketing and advertising efforts to identify new avenues to reach the actual consumers of the program.

Parent and student experiences with the factual workshops provided by *College Bound* were not favorable. The data suggest the participants did not find the information presented in the majority of the workshops useful. The information remembered and used by the participants came from workshops led by college students with disabilities and from networking with other participants and college services providers.

Both students and parents suggested in the evaluation data that their experiences would have been enhanced by increasing the length of the program, which would allow for more time to absorb information and to network with other participants. Several challenges for the program arise with this information including budget concerns, staffing concerns, program cost to participants, and time constraints on the planning committee. If, as the data suggest, the factual workshops are not the primary information source for the participants, *College Bound* should be challenged to consider redirecting the program to provide the intended program content.

The evaluation data suggest students and parents used their experiences from *College Bound* more in college than in high school, which continues to emphasize the reason parents choose to bring their child to *College Bound*. Parents are concerned about what effect their child's disability will have on college success. The data suggest that parents are concerned about their role as their child enters college and how to continue to offer support. Although *College Bound* planners need to continue to collect data on high school transition services, they need to continue to assess how participants use their experiences from the program and to provide the information to support the participants needs.

What are the outcomes of College Bound for its individual participants?

The outcomes of *College Bound* for its participants fell into four categories: (a) self-advocacy skills; (b) college support services; (c) opportunity to network with other participants; and (d) interaction with college students with disabilities. These outcomes are based more in the emotional realm than in factual concerns and support the needs the participants have to prepare for the emotional challenges their disability will pose in college. The data suggest that both parents and students were anxious about attending college and the changes that would occur in the academic and social environments and the draw for *College Bound* is meeting these anxiety-related concerns of the participants. Furney, Haszi, and DeStefano (1997) suggested that as students with disabilities prepare to enter the adult world, which includes college, they often have feelings of anxiety because they are uncertain about the future and lack information regarding opportunities and resources. Often students with disabilities are confused

about their own abilities, afraid of failure, and still depend on their parents to be their advocates (Ness, 1989). Parents, who have served as their child's advocate throughout high school now, may face a difficult decision as they allow their child to attend college.

The evaluation data suggest the four outcomes are woven together to cultivate the confidence and efficacy of the parents and students towards college success. The need for self-advocacy skills was a continuing theme in the 26 interviews and the yearly evaluations. In the college environment, parents relinquish their role as advocate for their child and students become their own advocate. Students need to address the services they need in college and parents need to serve in a supportive role in the process. The data suggest that the participants considered the college students with disabilities, who served as program leaders, to be the role models of the program. The data also suggest that the student leaders combined with networking with other participants were the main information sources for *College Bound*. Figure 8 denotes the relationship between these information sources and the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants of *College Bound* during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 sessions.

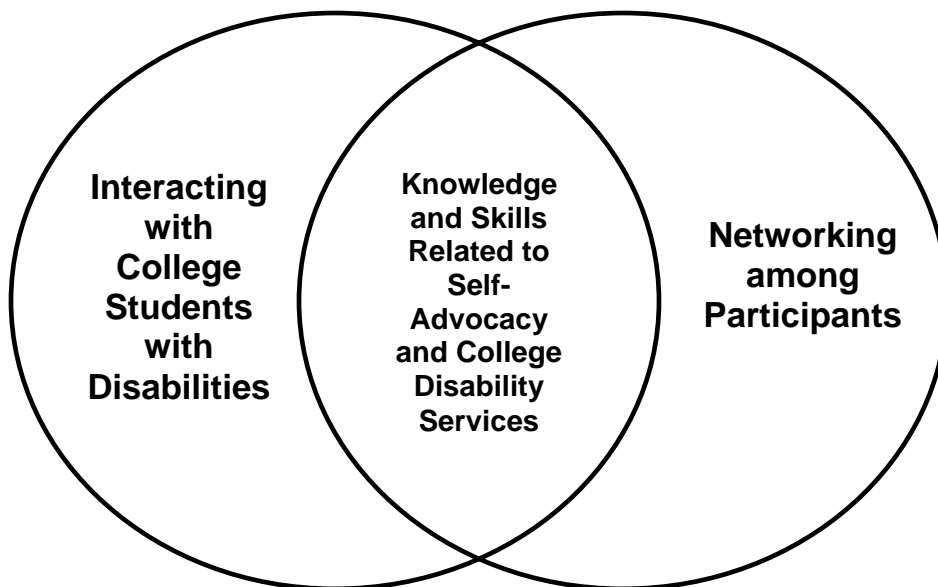


Figure 8. The figure illustrates how the interaction by the college students with disabilities and the networking among participants contributed to the knowledge and skills related to self-advocacy and college disability services for the *College Bound* participants in 1999, 2000, and 2001.

How is College Bound meeting its established mission and goals for its student and parent participants?

The mission for *College Bound* is to expose high school students with disabilities considering postsecondary education and their parents, to experiences, strategies, and activities that promote a successful transition to college. The data collected in the evaluation suggest that *College Bound* is meeting this mission through the program it provides for high school students with disabilities and their parents. The program is exposing students and parents to information and strategies that can assist with a successful transition to college. From that perspective, *College Bound* is meeting its promises to its participants; however, the assessment of its goals for participants is compromised by imprecise wording of the goals and the lack of ways to measure “assist in a successful transition” and “increased awareness” of the information presented at the program. *College Bound* also did not provide any measurement instruments such as a pre-test and a post-test to assess the knowledge the participants had gained from attending the program.

Weiss (1972) suggested that the “purpose of evaluation research is to measure the effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish” (p. 4). Weiss further stated that for evaluators to study the effects of a program, its goals must be clear, specific, and measurable. Patton (1982) argued that goals that are clear, specific, and measurable might limit an evaluation based on the available means to measure goals. He suggested that programs work backwards by taking the measures available and working backwards to decide what goals and objectives could be written from those measures. Whichever process the *College Bound* planning committee uses to rewrite its goals and to provide objectives for those goals, it needs to go through the process before the question can be answered of how effectively *College Bound* is meeting its goals for its participants.

In sum, the mission of *College Bound* is to expose high school students with disabilities considering postsecondary education, and their parents, to experiences, strategies, and activities that promote a successful transition to college. The data suggest that *College Bound* is meeting its mission for students and parents in regard to

how the program is organized around workshops, activities, and interaction time among the participants, student leaders, college personnel, and agency personnel.

The question if College Bound is meeting its goals is harder to address because the goals may not be measurable and may use imprecise wording.

Student Goals

The first student goal states that College Bound will provide a program for a maximum of 45 Virginia high school students and rising college freshmen with disabilities designed to assist in a successful transition from high school to college. *College Bound* is meeting the first part of the goal. The participant databases for the 1999, 2000, and 2001 sessions show the number of students enrolled in the program increased over the 3-year period to almost 45 students in 2001. *College Bound* is designed to assist with the transition from high school to college, but the findings of this evaluation cannot answer if, in fact, *College Bound* participants were assisted in a successful transition.

The second student goal to provide students with informational workshop and activities that raises awareness of assistive technology, legal responsibilities, college disability services, and college strategies is not a measurable goal. Although *College Bound* did provide informational workshops, assessment instruments were not used to provide information that the program raised awareness of the denoted goal topics.

The third student goal states that *College Bound* would provide student participants with an on-campus living experience that includes interaction with successful college students with disabilities. The findings of the evaluation suggest that this goal and its function need to be reevaluated by the *College Bound* to provide a need and relevance for student participants. The second part of the goal, interaction with college students, was a main outcome of the evaluation and might need to be considered a separate program goal.

Parent Goals

The first parent goal states that *College Bound* would provide a two and a half day program for parents of students with disabilities designed to emphasize their roles in the transition process, legal responsibilities and requirements, financial aid, assistive

technology, and how to connect with needed services. The data suggest that College Bound is meeting this goal with the provision of workshops based on the topics defined in the goal. However, the goal is not worded in a way that allows the program to measure the knowledge parents might receive from the workshops.

The second parent goal provides parents with the opportunity to interact with successful college students with disabilities, college disability service providers, and state disability agency representatives to learn ways to assist their child with a successful transition from high school to college. As with the first parent goal, *College Bound* is meeting this goal because the program provides parent participants the opportunity to meet and speak with the individuals mentioned in the goal. The same difficulty arises with this goal as with the first. There are no means to measure if *College Bound* did teach parents ways to assist their child in the transition process.

College Bound, with regard to the institutional performance, appears to be meeting its mission of exposing high school students with disabilities considering postsecondary education, and their parents, to experiences, strategies, and activities that promote a successful transition to college. From a quality perspective, *College Bound* comports with the research literature suggesting useful transition practices. It was more difficult to assess the performance outcomes for student and parent participants. However, it was easier to assess the quality of the program from the perspective of individual participants who saw value in the opportunities to interact and network throughout the summer sessions.

Implications for the College Bound Planning Committee

The findings raise a number of implications that have to do with the program's structure and the program's impact on its participants. The model supporting this evaluation and its outcomes looked at the performance and quality for both student and parent participants (Schalock, 2001). These implications are phrased as challenges for conceptualization by the planning committee.

Challenges for Strengthening Program Structure

1. Re-state program goals to be clear, specific, and measurable.
2. Develop assessment instruments.

3. Reassess the workshops for relevance and accuracy of information.
4. Reassess the on-campus living experience for relevance.
5. Evaluate the program length.
6. Explore new marketing and advertising avenues.
7. Explore new funding sources.
8. Conduct both annual and long-term program evaluations.

Challenges for Strengthening Program Impact on its Participants

1. Address the concept that parents appear to be the main consumers of the program.
2. Allow additional networking time.
3. Utilize college students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.
4. Assess the disability-related needs of the participants to determine the information they should receive from *College Bound*.
5. Listen to high school transition experiences to strengthen the information provided at *College Bound*.
6. Actively involve the student participants from the beginning of the program.

Recommendations for Future Evaluations

College Bound was established as a program within the Commonwealth of Virginia to serve high school students with disabilities who are planning to attend college. As a fee based educational program, there is a need to evaluate the effects of the program to assess its continuing need and to guide its future directions. Table 1, Appendix A lists other programs that are similar to *College Bound* for which there was not evaluation information available. Continuing evaluations of *College Bound* and these other programs would offer the opportunity for program planning personnel to address their mission and goals with sound data.

With regard to future evaluations, College Bound should continue to base its accountability on the outcomes for its participants involving all of the program stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and use of the evaluation. Multiple-evaluations such as pre-tests and post-tests should be developed to assess the various workshops and activities of the program. Multiple-evaluations would provide the

planning committee with different ways to integrate the values and practices of *College Bound*. Six to nine months after each program is completed, *College Bound* needs to consider sending those participants a survey as a follow-up to assess how those participants are using the information gained during the session. These assessments could be used to plan the upcoming year's program.

Every three years, *College Bound* might need to consider a large outcome-based evaluation of the program. As part of this larger evaluation, *College Bound* might assemble a group of past student participants several years before the evaluation would take place. These students would collect data on their college experiences and the part the program might have played in their success. This step would add a consumer-oriented approach to the large evaluation.

Postscript

College Bound completed its sixth program year in June 2004. On the yearly program evaluations, parents and students praised the program for the information they learned and the interactions they had with each other, agency representatives, and college service providers. The evaluations continue to contain comments that the information provided was too often new information that secondary educators had not provided the participants in IEP meetings or through other means.

The planning committee is again wrestling with funding sources, selection of the student leaders, and planning the program for 2005. The program will continue due, in part, to the belief of the planning committee in the necessity of the program and the hard work and dedication of this committee. I am glad to be a part of this dedicated group and I thank them for the opportunities *College Bound* has provided for students with disabilities.

I would like to close this evaluation with a poem written in 2003 by a *College Bound* student leader.

Advocate

What makes you think
That a person can't succeed
If they're faced with disability
And have a few special needs

Whether it's problems with timed test
Or a student with A.D.D.
No one can predict
how successful a person can be

If they will be their own advocate
Informing teachers of their case
Holding tight to technology
So each class can be faced

Knowing that Dana is there
To organize hectic life
Keeping track of the due dates
Bringing panic to the knife

So you can go to class on test day
Having already reflected
On the material that is on the exam
Feeling calm, cool, and collected

There is no excuse not to succeed
A student should not yield
To tackle college with goals in mind
On a level playing field

If you have the will to win
Then you will find a way
Assistive Technology can be the path
To climb the mountain and stay

"When desire overcomes your circumstances, you will be successful."

-Chip Clark
NRCC Student
College Bound 2003 Leader

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APPENDIX A

Table 1

Summer Pre-College Programs for Students with Disabilities

Name	College	Population Served	Sessions	Cost	Description	Contacted	Program Evaluation
College Study Skills Institute	Florida A&M University	11th and 12th grade LD students	1 - 10 day	\$1,050.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on technology, and study skills Mandatory for A&M students applying for admission to Learning and Development Center at A&M 	yes	no evaluation
Summer Transition Program	St. Ambrose	11th and 12th grade LD or AD/HD students	4 weeks	\$2,300.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take Intro. to Psych. for credit Study skills, reading strategies, testing taking skills class Students stay on campus 	yes	no evaluation
The Learning Academy	Curry College	11th and 12th grade LD or AD/HD students	2 - 1 week residential and day	\$1,100.00 on campus, residential \$550.00 off campus, day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop academic strengths in the classroom using strategies to improve speaking, writing, reading, study skills Time management, test taking, and research methods 	yes	anecdotal responses to program are positive from students & parents
Summer Transition Program	Boston University	LD or AD/HD students: serves those enrolled at BU	5 weeks	\$3,946.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares students for academic and person challenges of college 4 credit college courses 	yes	no reply
The Path to College Success	Brown University	11th and 12th grade LD or AD/HD students	2 - 1 week	\$1,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare students for transition and challenges of college Study skills, self-advocacy, choose the right college 	yes	no evaluation
Higher Education for Learning Problems	Marshall University	Undergraduates with LD or AD/HD	1 - 5 week	\$1,000.00 in state or \$2,000.00 out of state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to improve reading, writing, math skills Time management, test taking, study skills 	yes	no reply

APPENDIX B

Table 2

The 1999 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
17	11	1 ½ days	Students - \$35.00 Parents – no fee	\$4,932.00
<p>GENDER: 9 males; 9 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: *4 Deaf, 1 Hard of Hearing, 1 Cerebral Palsy, 1 Vision, 1 Attention Deficit Disorder, 5 Learning Disability, 1 Aphasia, 2 Multiple Disabilities</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 4 Northern Virginia, 0 Southeast Virginia, 3 Central Virginia, 9 Southwest Virginia, *1 Out of State</p> <p>*New River Community College used <i>College Bound</i> as an Orientation for their entering Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> local hotel accommodations</p>	<p>Included: Interpreters*, t-shirts, supplies, leaders, food, student lodging, space rental, advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>	

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services	6 Student Leaders recruited from the 1999-2000 Virginia Tech Freshman Orientation Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities - College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel - Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers
Postsecondary Education Consortium			
Student Fees	Pay: \$250.00		

Table 3

The 2000 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
17	11	1 ½ days	Students - \$50.00	\$6550.00
<p>GENDER: 10 males; 7 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: 3 Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 2 Mobility, 4 Vision, 3 Attention Deficit Disorder, 4 Learning Disability, 1 Psychological Disorder</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 2 Northern Virginia, 0 Southeast Virginia, 6 Central Virginia, 9 Southwest Virginia 2 Registered Students did not attend 1 Entering Virginia Tech freshmen came only for the workshops</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> Housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Local hotel accommodations</p>	Parents – no fee	<p>Included: Interpreters*, T-shirts, Supplies, Leaders, Food, Student lodging, Space rental, Advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services	7 Student Leaders with Disabilities recruited from Virginia Tech, Radford, and New River Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities - College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel - Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers
Student Fees	1 paid student assistant 1 night monitor Pay: \$300.00		

Table 4

The 2001 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
46	62	1 ½ days	Students - \$50.00	\$10,000.00
<p>GENDER: 29 males; 17 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: 12 Learning Disability/Attention Deficit Disorder, 3 Mobility, 4 Vision, 7 Attention Deficit Disorder, 15 Learning Disability, 1 Psychological Disorder, 1 Autistic, 2 Multiple Disabilities</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 26 Northern Virginia, 7 Southeast Virginia, 10 Central Virginia, 3 Southwest Virginia 1 Registered Students did not attend</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> Housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Local hotel accommodations</p>	Parents – no fee	<p>Included: Interpreters*, T-shirts, Supplies, Leaders, Food, Student lodging, Space rental, Advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services Postsecondary Education Consortium Student Fees	8 Student Leaders with Disabilities recruited from Virginia Tech, Radford, and New River Community College 1 paid student assistant 1 night monitor Pay: \$300.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities - College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel - Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers

Table 5

The 2002 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
45	60	2 ½ days	Students - \$100.00	\$18,875.00
<p>GENDER: 19 males; 26 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: 7 Learning Disability/Attention Deficit Disorder, 7 Mobility, 3 Vision, 6 Attention Deficit Disorder, 15 Learning Disability, 3 Autistic, 3 Speech Disorder, 1 Deaf/Hard of Hearing,</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 21 Northern Virginia, 3 Southeast Virginia, 12 Central Virginia, 9 Southwest Virginia</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> Housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Local hotel accommodations or could stay in Residence Hall for \$100.00</p>	<p>Parents – no fee</p>	<p>Included: Interpreters*, T-shirts, Supplies, Leaders, Food, Student lodging, Space rental, Advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Assistive Technology Services	14 Student Leaders with Disabilities recruited from Virginia Tech,	- Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities	- Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel
Postsecondary Education Consortium	Radford, and New River Community College	- College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers	- Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers - Agency Personnel
Student Fees	7 Leaders returned from 2001	- Mock Class and Notetaking	
Minority Academic Opportunities Program, Virginia Tech	2 night monitor Pay: \$300.00		

Table 6

The 2003 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
41	27	2 ½ days	Students - \$150.00	\$19,000.00
<p>GENDER: 19 males; 22 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: 6 Mobility, 1 Vision, 12 Attention Deficit Disorder, 22 Learning Disability, 2 Autistic, 1 Speech Disorder, 3 Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 2 Psychological Disorder</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 19 Northern Virginia, 3 Southeast Virginia, 11 Central Virginia, 9 Southwest Virginia</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> Housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Local hotel accommodations or could stay in Residence Hall for \$100.00</p>	Parents – no fee	<p>Included: Interpreters*, T-shirts, Supplies, Leaders, Food, Student lodging, Space rental, Advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Assistive Technology Services	14 Student Leaders with Disabilities recruited from Virginia Tech, Radford, and New River Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities - College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers - Mock Class and Notetaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel - Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers - Agency Personnel
Virginia State Outreach and Technical Assistance	6 Leaders returned from 2002		
Student Fees	2 night monitor		
Minority Academic Opportunities Program, Virginia Tech	Pay: \$300.00		

Table 7

The 2004 College Bound Summer Program

PARTICIPANTS		PROGRAM LENGTH	PROGRAM FEES	PROGRAM COST
STUDENTS	PARENTS			
31	29	2 ½ days	Students - \$150.00	\$20,000.00
<p>GENDER: 19 males; 14 females</p> <p>DISABILITY: 3 Medical, 1 Vision, 9 Attention Deficit Disorder, 23 Learning Disability, 3 Autistic, 1 Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 3 Psychological Disorder</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: 16 Northern Virginia, 3 Southeast Virginia, 8 Central Virginia, 6 Southwest Virginia</p>		<p><u>Students:</u> Housed in residence hall at Virginia Tech</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Local hotel accommodations or could stay in Residence Hall for \$100.00</p>	<p>Parents – no fee</p>	<p>Included: Interpreters*, T-shirts, Supplies, Leaders, Food, Student lodging, Space rental, Advertising</p> <p>*Program costs vary with the number of needed interpreters.</p>

FUNDING SOURCES	STUDENT LEADERS	STUDENTS WORKSHOPS	PARENT WORKSHOPS
Virginia Assistive Technology Services	8 Student Leaders with Disabilities recruited from Virginia Tech, Radford, and New River Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and Self Advocacy - Assistive Technology - Team Building Activities - College Success Skills - Conversation with Student Leaders - Conversation with College Service Providers - Mock Class and Notetaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Aid 101 - Cutting the Cord: New Parent Role - Students with Disabilities Panel - Changing Laws - Assistive Technology - Conversation with College Service Providers - Agency Personnel
Virginia State Outreach and Technical Assistance	4 Leaders returned from 2003		
Student Fees	2 night monitor		
Virginia Department of Education	Pay: \$350.00		

APPENDIX C

Organizational Outcome Performance Assessment

Organizational Outcomes	Question: How is <i>College Bound</i> meeting its established mission and goals for its student and parent participants?	
	MISSION: The <i>College Bound</i> Summer Program is designed to expose high school students with disabilities considering postsecondary education, and their parents, to experiences, strategies, and activities that promote a successful transition to college.	
	Students	Parents
	<u>Goals:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a program for a maximum of 45 Virginia high school students and rising college freshmen with disabilities designed to assist in a successful transition from high school to college. 2. Provide students with informational workshops and activities that raises awareness of assistive technology (AT), legal responsibilities, college disability services, and college strategies. 3. Provide students with an on-campus living experience that includes interaction with successful college students with disabilities. 	<u>Goals:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a two and a half day program for parents of students with disabilities designed to emphasize their roles in the transition process, legal responsibilities and requirements, financial aid, assistive technology, and how to connect with needed services. 2. Provide parents with the opportunity to interact with successful college students with disabilities, college disability service providers, and state disability agency representatives to learn ways to assist their child with a successful transition from high school to college.

Figure 3. Cell “A” of the Outcome-Based Evaluation Model for the *College Bound* Program and used with permission.

Organizational Outcomes Quality Assessment

Organizational Outcomes	<p>Question:</p> <p>1. What value do other consumers place on the <i>College Bound</i> Summer program?</p> <p>Chapter Two Review of Literature establishes “other consumers” as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local and State Agencies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Department of Rehabilitative Services○ Department of the Blind and Visually Handicapped○ Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing• High School Transition Counselors• Special Education Teachers• College Services Providers <p>2. What value does the <i>College Bound</i> Planning Committee place on the program?</p> <p>3. How is the quality of <i>College Bound</i> supported by research literature on transition from high school to college?</p>
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Figure 4. Cell “B” of the Outcome-Based Evaluation Model for the *College Bound* Program and used with permission.

Individual Outcomes Performance Assessment

Individual Outcomes	Question: What are the outcomes of <i>College Bound</i> for its participants?	
	Students	Parents
	<p>How were the student participants effected by their participation in the workshops and activities of <i>College Bound</i>?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assistive technology b) self-advocacy skills needed for college c) skills needed for college success i.e. executive order functioning skills, talking to professors, studying, test taking skills d) differences between high school and college e) need to establish new support base in college f) residence hall environment h) strategies students with disabilities use to be successful college students i) services available on the college level and how to access services j) campus resources k) campus housing 	<p>How are the parent participants effected by their participation in the workshops and activities of <i>College Bound</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) assistive technology b) changing legal issue c) financial aid requirements d) changing role e) assistance for their students f) disability agency support g) student with a disability can be successful in college h) strategies students with disabilities use to be successful college students i) services available on the college level and how to access services

Figure 5. Cell “C” of the Outcome-Based Evaluation Model for the *College Bound* Program used with permission.

Individual Outcome Quality Assessment

Individual Outcomes	Question: How do the student and parent participants describe their experience with <i>College Bound</i> ?	
	Students	Parents
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did <i>College Bound</i> provide a satisfactory experience for students? 2. Were students satisfied with the information and workshops <i>College Bound</i> provided? 3. Was the on-campus living experience satisfactory? 4. Was the program well planned and organized? 5. Did <i>College Bound</i> provide new/usable information on the college transition process? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did <i>College Bound</i> provide a satisfactory experience for parents? 2. Were parents satisfied with the information and workshops <i>College Bound</i> provided? 3. Was the program cost reasonable? 4. Was the program well planned and organized? 5. Did <i>College Bound</i> provide new/usable information on the college transition process?

Figure 6. Cell “D” of the Outcome-Based Evaluation Model for the *College Bound* Program used with permission.

APPENDIX D

College Bound Program

Dean of Students Office, Virginia Tech
152 Henderson Hall, Blacksburg VA 24061
Telephone: (540) 231-3787 (V) - (540) 231-8718 (TTY)
E-mail: collegebound@vt.edu

March 24, 2003

Dear Past *College Bound* Participant:

The *College Bound* Program is now in its fifth year. Over the last four years, the program has grown in length from a day and a half to two and a half days. In 1999, 17 students and 11 parents attended the program. Last year, 46 students and 62 parents attended.

The planning committee would like to update our records of past participants. Please take a few minutes and fill in the bottom portion of this letter. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience. We are anxious to get an update and find out what has happened since you attended the program.

Jane M. Warner
College Bound Planning Committee

Name: _____

Address: (home) _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-Mail _____

College Attending: _____

College Address: (if different from above) _____

College Phone Number: _____

Year in College: _____ Major: _____

Did your parent(s) attend *College Bound*? Yes No

APPENDIX E

College Bound Program

Dean of Students Office, Virginia Tech
152 Henderson Hall, Blacksburg VA 24061
Telephone: (540) 231-3787 (V) - (540) 231-8718 (TTY)
E-mail: collegebound@vt.edu

August 3, 2003

Dear *College Bound* Participant:

Several years ago, you attended the *College Bound* Summer Program held at Virginia Tech. The program is now in its sixth year and the planning committee has requested an evaluation of the program. I have been asked to conduct the evaluation for the committee and the evaluation will also be used as my doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of the evaluation is to identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses of *College Bound*. The evaluation will guide the future development of the program and identify areas for change necessary to continue and improve the program.

Two types of telephone interviews will be used to gather information for the evaluation. The first interviews will be short interviews, 10 to 15 minutes in length. Based on these interviews, some of you will be asked to participate in a longer interview, 45 to 60 minutes in length. All participation in the interviews is voluntary and will take place at your convenience.

All interviews will be tape recorded unless you request otherwise. You will be assigned a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview process so confidentiality can be maintained. All interview tapes and transcripts will remain in my hands and tapes will be destroyed six months after the final report and my dissertation are submitted and approved.

Enclosed is a copy of the informed consent required by Virginia Tech for research involving human subjects. Please review the consent form. You will be asked to state an oral agreement to the form before your interview begins.

Thank you, in advance, for your participation in this evaluation. Your input will be invaluable to the program and its continuation.

Very truly yours,

Jane M. Warner

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent for Participants

Project Title: The *College Bound* Summer Program: A Program Evaluation

Principal Investigator: Jane M. Warner, Doctoral Candidate, Special Education Administration

1. I agree to participate in interview(s) in connection with the program evaluation for the project known as *The College Bound Summer Program: A Program Education*. I understand the purpose and nature of this evaluation is to examine the outcomes of *College Bound* for its student and parent participants in the years 1999-2001.

2. I understand that I will be asked to participate in at least one telephone interview, which should take no longer than 15 minutes. I understand that I could be asked to participate in a second telephone interview, which should take no longer than 60 minutes. The interviews will take place at the convenience of the participant and that any possible risks to me as a participant will be minimal.

3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the evaluation at any time. In the event that I withdraw from the interview or evaluation, any tape and transcripts made will be either destroyed or given to me.

4. I understand there is no compensation for my participation in the evaluation. I may receive a summary of the evaluation when completed by providing Jane Warner with a self-addressed envelope.

5. I understand that the interview(s) will be audio taped. In the interview, I will be identified by a pseudonym so that I may remain anonymous in any transcript, tape, and final report for the evaluation. I also understand the tapes will be erased one year from the completion of the evaluation.

6. This project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

7. If I feel that I have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that my rights as a participant in this research have been violated during the course of the project, I know I can contact Dr. David Moore, Chair, IRB, Research Division, Virginia Tech, or Dr. Jean Crockett, Associate Professor, Educational and Leadership & Policy Studies, Virginia Tech, at the phone number listed below.

8. I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this evaluation. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Participant	Date	Phone
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Should I have any pertinent questions about this evaluation or its conduct, and the evaluation subject's rights, I may contact:

Jane M. Warner Principal Investigator 540-231-3788 <u>jwarner@vt.edu</u>	Dr. Jean B. Crockett Associate Professor 540-231-4546 <u>crocketj@vt.edu</u>	Dr. David Moore Chair, IRB 540-231-4991 <u>moored@vt.edu</u>
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Participants will be given a copy or duplicate original of this consent form.

APPENDIX G

College Bound Parent Evaluation Form

Please rate your experiences of *College Bound*. Please add any comments after each item.

Excellent Good Average Poor

1. The registration Process on the first morning at Residence Hall East

Excellent Good Average Poor

The Workshops (Day 1 and Day 2)

2. Financial Aid.

Excellent Good Average Poor

3. ADA and IDEA.

Excellent Good Average Poor

4. New Parent: Cutting the Cord.

Excellent Good Average Poor

5. Student Panel Discussion (time with college students with disabilities).

Excellent Good Average Poor

6. Assistive Technology.

Excellent Good Average Poor

7. Discussion with College Service Providers/Self-Advocacy Video.

Excellent Good Average Poor

8. Faculty Panel discussion.

Excellent Good Average Poor

9. AT Open House.

Excellent Good Average Poor

10. Open House with Agencies.

Excellent Good Average Poor

General Information

11. For our information, have you and your student participated in a transition team meeting at your student's school (Sp.Ed., DRS Counselor, and other support agencies)?

12. Comments or suggestions for future *College Bound* Programs.

College Bound Student Evaluation Form

Please circle your rating of your experience at *College Bound*. Add any comments under each item:

1. Registration Process at Residence Hall East.
Excellent Good Average Poor

The Workshops:

2. Assistive Technology
Excellent Good Average Poor

3. Leadership and Self-Advocacy
Excellent Good Average Poor

4. College Survival Skills
Excellent Good Average Poor

5. Student Leaders' Conversation with Students
Excellent Good Average Poor

6. College Service Providers' Conversation with Students
Excellent Good Average Poor

General Information:

7. Your experience with the Residence Hall.
Excellent Good Average Poor

8. Your experience with Campus Dining (Owen's Food Court).
Excellent Good Average Poor

9. The evening social activities: films, games, free time.
Excellent Good Average Poor

10. Comments or suggestions for future *College Bound* Programs.

APPENDIX H

Parent Short Intake Interview Protocol

Hello. My name is _____. Recently, you received a letter from the *College Bound* Program explaining that Jane Warner is conducting an evaluation of the program and asking for your participation.

1. Is this a good time for you to spend about 10 to 15 minutes with me answering some questions about *College Bound*?
If yes, continue to number 2.
If no, ask what would be a convenient day anytime to call back, record the time, thank the student, and end the call.

Good date and time to call again:

2. The purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change. This interview is being taped. Do you have an objection to taping the interview?
If yes, continue to number 3.
If no, tell the participant you are turning off the recorder. (Be ready to take notes.)
3. You received an informed consent with your letter about the evaluation.

Have you read the consent form? _____Yes _____No

If yes, ask if they agree to the consent form, mark the consent on the form in student's folder, and go to Question 1.

If no, go over the form and ask for consent and mark on form in folder.

If participant does not consent, thank him/her and end the interview.

Questions:

1. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. ADA V. IDEA
 - c. Financial Aid
 - d. Cutting the Cord: New Parent Roles
 - e. Student Leaders speaking with Parents
 - f. Agency Roles
 - g. College Service Providers speaking with Parents

What do you remember most about each of these workshops?

Do you use this information to assist your child as he/she finished high school? If so, how?

Did you use this information to assist your child in college? If so, how?

2. What are some of the challenges your child has faced in college?

Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you assist your child with these challenges? If so, how?

3. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound*?

4. Would you recommend *College Bound* to other parents of students with disabilities planning to attend college?

_____Yes

_____No

For Interviewers:

1. Is the completed protocol consistent with the tape of the interview or does the tape need to be transcribed?

_____Yes

_____No

2. Would this parent make a good candidate for a longer interview?

_____Yes

_____No

Why?

Parent Short E-Mail Intake Interview Protocol

Thank for you agreeing to participant in the *College Bound* evaluation. I am happy to send you the intake protocol by e-mail attachment. I hoped you have received the letter from me explaining that I am conducting an evaluation of the program and asking for your participation.

1. The purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change. Your name will not be used in the evaluation.
2. You received an informed consent with your letter about the evaluation. Please acknowledge agreement with the consent form by checking yes.
_____Yes

Questions:

1. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. ADA V. IDEA
 - c. Financial Aid
 - d. Cutting the Cord: New Parent Roles
 - e. Student Leaders speaking with Parents
 - f. Agency Roles
 - g. College Service Providers speaking with Parents

What do you remember most about each of these workshops?

Did you use this information to assist your child as he/she finished high school? If so, how?

Did you use this information to assist your child in college? If so, how?

2. What are some of the challenges your child has faced in college?
3. Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you assist your child with these challenges? If so, how?
4. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound*?
5. Would you recommend *College Bound* to other parents of students with disabilities planning to attend college?
_____Yes _____No

Student Short Intake Interview Protocol

Hello. My name is _____. Recently, you received a letter from the *College Bound* Program explaining that Jane Warner is conducting an evaluation of the program and asking for your participation.

1. To participate in the evaluation, you will need to have attended at least one year of college, 2 year, 4 year, or technical school.
Have you attended at least one year of college? ____Yes ____No
If yes, continue to number 2.
If no, ask,
Did attending *College Bound* influence your decision not to attend college?
____Yes ____No
If yes, how?

The interview will end at this point, if the student has not attended college for a year. Please thank the student and end the conversation.

2. Is this a good time for you to spend about 10 to 15 minutes with me answering some questions about *College Bound*?
If yes, continue to number 3.
If no, ask
 - what would be a convenient day anytime to call back
 - record the time
 - thank the student
 - end the call.

Good date and time to call again: _____

3. The purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change. This interview is being taped. Do you have an objection to taping the interview?
If yes, continue to number 4.
If no, tell the participant you are turning off the recorder. (Be ready to take notes.)
4. You received an informed consent with your letter about the evaluation.
Have you read the consent form? ____Yes ____No
If yes,
 - ask if they agree to the consent form
 - mark the consent on the form in student's folder
 - go to question 1.

If no, go over the form and ask for consent and mark on form in folder.
If participant does not consent, thank him/her and end the interview.

Questions:

1. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills
 - c. Study Skills
 - d. College Survival Skills
 - e. Conversations with *College Bound* Student Leaders
 - f. Conversations with College Service Providers

What do you remember most about each of these workshops?

Did you use this information as a high school student planning on attending college? If so, how?

Did you use this information as a college student? If so, how?

2. During *College Bound*, you stayed in a residence hall and ate in a dining hall.

What things do you remember most about your stay on campus?

Did this information help you in college? If so, how?

3. What are some of the challenges you have had in college?
4. Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you with these challenges? If so, how?
5. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound*?
6. Would you recommend *College Bound* to other high school student with disabilities planning to attend college?
_____Yes _____No

For Interviewers:

1. Is the completed protocol consistent with the tape of the interview or does the tape need to be transcribed?
_____Yes _____No
2. Would this student make a good candidate for a longer interview?
_____Yes _____No
Why?

Student Short E-mail Interview Protocol

Recently, you should have received a letter from of the *College Bound* Program, which you attended in 1999 explaining that Jane Warner is conducting an evaluation of the program and asking for your participation. (If you do not receive the letter, a copy is attached to this email.) The purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change.

1. To participate in the evaluation, you will need to have attended at least one year of college, 2 year, 4 year, or technical school.
Have you attended at least one year of college? Yes No
If yes, continue to number 2.
If no, please answer:
Did attending *College Bound* influence your decision to attend college?
 Yes No
If yes, how?

If you have not attended college for at least one year, please stop here and send this form back to Jane Warner at jwarner@vt.edu.

2. You should received an informed consent with your letter about the evaluation. A copy is also attached to this e-mail.
Have you read the consent form and do you agree to participate?
 Yes No

If you agree, please continue to the questions below. If you do not agree, please stop here and send the form back to Jane Warner at jwarner@vt.edu.

Questions:

Please answer these questions

1. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills
 - c. Study Skills
 - d. College Survival Skills
 - e. Conversations with *College Bound* Student Leaders
 - f. Conversations with College Service Providers

What do you remember most about each of these workshops?

Did you use this information as a high school student planning on attending college? If so, how?

Did you use this information as a college student? If so, how?

2. During *College Bound*, you stayed in a residence hall and ate in a dining hall.

What things do you remember most about your stay on campus?

Did this information help you in college? If so, how?

3. What are some of the challenges you have had in college?
4. Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you with these challenges? If so, how?
5. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound*?
6. Would you recommend *College Bound* to other high school student with disabilities planning to attend college?
_____Yes _____No

APPENDIX I

Parent Long Interview Protocol

Hello. My name is TRENT DAVIS. Recently, you participated in a short interview for the *College Bound* program. During that interview, you were asked if you would be willing to participate in a longer interview. I hope you are still willing to do that.

1. Is this a good time for you to spend about 45 minutes with me answering some additional questions about *College Bound* and possibly adding to your answers from the short interview?
If yes, continue to number 2.
If no, ask what would be a convenient day and time to call back, record the time, thank the student, and end the call.
Good date and time to call again: _____
2. As with the short interview, the purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change. This interview is being taped. Do you have an objection to taping the interview? If yes, continue to number 3. If no, tell the participant you are turning off the recorder. (Be ready to take notes.)
3. You received an informed consent before the short interview.
Do you still agree to the consent form? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, please make sure the yes is also recorded.
If no, go over the form and ask for consent.
If participant does not consent, thank him/her and end the interview.

Questions:

1. Before addressing the *College Bound* program, I want to explore what your child's high school did to address his/her transition to college. What did the high school offer?

What more do you feel the high school could or should have done?
Examples: Programs, IEP, Guidance, and College Fairs
2. Did the information you learned at *College Bound* prove useful in the transition process? How?
3. What made you decide to attend *College Bound*?

4. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. ADA v. IDEA
 - c. Financial Aid
 - d. Cutting the Cord: New Parent Roles
 - e. Student Leaders speaking with Parents
 - f. Agency Roles
 - g. College Service Providers speaking with Parents

Go briefly over what she said before and ask if she has anything to add about the workshops or the two questions below.

Did you use this information to assist your child as he/she finished high school? If so, how?

Did you use this information to assist your child in college? If so, how?

5. What are some of the challenges your child has faced in college?
Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you assist your child with these challenges? If so, how?
Go over briefly what she said before and ask if she has anything to add.
6. Did *College Bound* meet its advertised promises?
7. Were you satisfied with the program and with the cost? Feelings about the program pro and con.
8. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound* other than those you made in the short interview? May want to review what was said in short interview.

Student Long Interview Protocol

Hello. My name is TRENT DAVIS. Recently, you participated in a short interview for the *College Bound* program. You have been selected to participate in a longer interview about the program and I hope you will be willing to speak with me.

1. Is this a good time for you to spend about 30 to 45 minutes with me answering some additional questions about *College Bound* and possibly adding to your answers from the short interview?
If yes, continue to number 2.
If no, ask what would be a convenient day and time to call back, record the time, thank the student, and end the call.
2. As with the short interview, the purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future development of *College Bound* by identifying its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing change.
This interview is being taped. Do you have an objection to taping the interview?
If yes, continue to number 3.
If no, tell the participant you are turning off the recorder. (Be ready to take notes.)
3. You received an informed consent before the short interview.
Do you still agree to the consent form? _____Yes _____No
If yes, make sure the yes is recorded.
If no, go over the form and ask for consent and mark on form in folder.
If participant does not consent, thank him/her and end the interview.

Questions:

1. Before addressing the *College Bound* program, I want to explore what your high school did to address your transition to college. What did your high school offer?

What more do you feel the high school could or should have done?
Examples: Programs, IEP, Guidance, and College Fairs
2. What made you decide to attend *College Bound*?
3. Did the information you learned at *College Bound* prove useful in the transition process? How?
4. Did attending *College Bound* influence your decision to attend college? Why?
5. When you came to *College Bound*, you participated in workshops on:
 - a. Assistive Technology
 - b. Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills
 - c. Study Skills

- d. College Survival Skills
- e. Conversations with *College Bound* Student Leaders
- f. Conversations with College Service Providers

Go briefly over what he/she said before and ask if he/she has anything to add about the workshops or to the questions below.

Did you use this information as a high school student planning on attending college? If so, how?

Did you use this information as a college student? If so, how?

- 6. What are some of the challenges you have had in college?
Did the information you learned at *College Bound* help you with these challenges? If so, how?
Go over briefly what he/she said before and ask if he/she has anything to add.
- 7. Did *College Bound* meet its advertised goals and objectives?
- 8. Were you satisfied with *College Bound*? Feelings pro and con
- 9. What suggestions would you make to improve *College Bound*?
Go over briefly what he/she said in short interview and see what he/she has to add.

APPENDIX J

Table 13

Matrix of overall findings and sources for the data

Source of data	S	L	ST	P	B
Category 1: College Success Skills Taught at <i>College Bound</i>					
1. Students had specific challenges at college due to their disability.	x	x			x
2. Parents felt that attending <i>College Bound</i> offered information to assist in dealing with these challenges.		x	x		x
3. Parents had a mixture of praise and disappointment in college support services experienced by their child and felt the <i>College Bound</i> did not provide enough information about college support services.		x	x		x
4. Students felt that <i>College Bound</i> had taught them strategies to assist them with college success.		x	x	x	
Category 2: Student On Campus Living Experience					
1. Student did not believe this experience was an important part of <i>College Bound</i> .	x		x		
Category 3: College Bound Workshops					
1. Students and parents had some difficulty remembering the workshops due to the length of time since they had attended <i>College Bound</i> , felt what they did remember was useful.	x	x			x
2. Students and parents did use the information from the workshops in the transition process.		x	x		x
Category 4: Networking/Student Leaders/Peer Groups					
1. Spending more time networking with other parents was important to parents.		x	x		x
2. Student leaders were valuable role models for the students and parents and gave parents hope their child could succeed in college		x	x		x
Category 5: Advertising and Program Cost					
1. Past advertising techniques did not meet with success because <i>College Bound</i> was hard to find out about.	x	x		x	
2. Cost could be an issue in attending the program.		x	x		x

Category 6: Motivation to Attend/Satisfaction with *College Bound*

1. Most student participants were motivated to attend due to parent pressure.	x	x	x	
2. Parents were searching for additional information on transition and college skills.	x	x		x
3. The student participants felt that their needs were met and they gain valuable information to assist in college.	x	x	x	
4. Parents were satisfied with <i>College Bound</i> and felt it met its advertised goals and objectives with a few exceptions.	x	x		x
5. Parents and students would recommend the program to other high school students with disabilities and their parents.	x	x		x

Category 7: High School Transition Services

1. Parents expressed both positive and negative feelings about high school transition services provided their child.		x		x
2. Students did not remember a great deal about their transition services but most felt they were adequate.		x		x

Note. S=Short interviews, L-Long interviews, ST=Students, P= Parents, B=Both