

The WCU University Participant (UP) Program

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

What is the UP Program?

- The UP program has been developed to provide typical college experiences for young people with developmental disabilities.
- The UP program began in the Fall, 2007 semester as a pilot project and has served two students completing requirements for a UP Certificate of Accomplishment.

What are developmental disabilities?

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

Why WCU has a UP program?

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

What do UP participants do at WCU?

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

How is the UP program supported?

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

What are the accomplishments of the UP program thus far

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

Notable Reactions to the UP Program

- UP Participant was nominated for homecoming court by his peers during fall 2007 semester
- Peers as well as professors have provided natural supports on their own time
- UP Participants have participated in many groups, activities, and sporting events on campus
- Campus internships have been positive

Reading Schedules

- Be sure to have contact numbers for person's responsible before and after your times
- Be professional- volunteer badges need to be worn when volunteering.
- See if you can seek out several activities to do during the times you are scheduled and offer choices to UP Participants

FAQ for Volunteers

- Professionalism/confidentiality
- Logging volunteer hours
- Parties, drugs, and alcohol
- Cell phone use and ways to treat UP Participants
- Substitute list
- Schedules emailed by Sunday
- Can my friends also be around? Yes!
- Can I take them off campus?

Who are the UP Participants?

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