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MARYLAND INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

MIHEC Brief
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Inclusive Postsecondary Education Mentor Outcomes Survey

Pilot Findings and Early Instrument Evidence

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About the Project

The Maryland Inclusive Higher Education Consortium (MIHEC) is a five-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) program. MIHEC is expanding inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) for students with intellectual disability across Maryland in three main ways: by growing TerpsEXCEED, the University of Maryland's IPSE program; supporting two partner programs at Towson University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and leading statewide capacity-building efforts.

Peer mentoring is central to the TerpsEXCEED approach to IPSE. Students are mentored by matriculating UMD students, and those mentors often describe the role as personally and professionally meaningful. To capture those outcomes systematically, MIHEC's evaluation team developed the **IPSE Mentor Outcomes Survey (IPSE MOS)**. This brief details results from the survey's first pilot and what they mean for MIHEC programs and the instrument itself.

At a Glance

128	100%	6 in 10	97–100%
current (90) and former (38) mentors took part in the pilot	of responding mentors would recommend mentoring	former mentors said mentoring influenced their career interests	rated the survey clear, relevant, and useful

About the Survey

- Separate versions for current mentors (29 items) and former mentors (34 items)
- 4-point agreement scale, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree
- Covers mentor background, skill development, inclusion, personal growth, ongoing and long-term impact, and feedback on the survey itself, with space for open-ended comments

In spring and summer 2026, the **IPSE MOS** was piloted with current and former TerpsEXCEED mentors. The pilot had two purposes: to describe the outcomes that mentors report and to gather early evidence on whether the instrument is ready for wider use. Of 152 survey records, 128 were retained for analysis after excluding responses that were incomplete, lacked consent, or did not reach the question asking whether the respondent was a current or former mentor.

Pilot Findings

Mentor Background

Survey item	Current mentors (n=90)	Former mentors (n=38)
Weekly time commitment	88% at 2–4 hrs/week	55% at 2–4 hrs/week; 32% at 5–7 hrs/week
Semesters as a mentor	59% one; 26% two	40% one; 37% three or more
Prior experience with people with disabilities (see note)	48% moderate; 17% extensive	53% moderate; 16% extensive

Note. Response options were none, limited, moderate, and extensive. Two current mentors skipped this item, so percentages for current mentors are based on 88 respondents.

Percentage of Mentors Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed

Survey item	Current mentors (n=90)	Former mentors (n=38)
Skill Development		
Improved communication skills	100%	100%
Helped solve real-world problems	98.9%	97.4%
Strengthened ability to work with others	98.9%	100%
Developed leadership skills	98.9%	97.4%
Inclusion		
Improved respectful interaction with disability	100%	97.3%
Positive difference in thinking about disability	100%	97.3%
Built relationships with peers with disabilities	100%	100%
Increased commitment to inclusion	100%	100%
Personal Growth		
Increased confidence	96.7%	86.5%
Personal growth	100%	100%
New perspectives	100%	100%
Influenced values/priorities	100%	97.3%
Ongoing Impact		
Relevant to academic/professional work	**80.0%**	92.1%
Relevant to future goals	87.8%	86.8%
Influenced engagement with others	100%	94.7%
Would recommend mentoring	100%	100%
Long-Term Impact (former mentors only)		
Influenced career interests	Not asked	**60.5%**
Influenced career choices	Not asked	**57.9%**
Continues to use skills developed as mentor	Not asked	100%
Continues to shape thinking about inclusion	Not asked	97.4%
Lasting positive impact	Not asked	97.4%
Survey Feedback		
Easy to understand	100%	100%

Survey item	Current mentors (n=90)	Former mentors (n=38)
Captures mentoring's impact	100%	97.1%
Relevant to my experience	100%	100%

Note. Items used a 4-point agreement scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree); current and former versions differ only in verb tense. Respondents per item ranged from 86 to 90 current and 35 to 38 former mentors.

Interpreting the Findings

These findings describe mentors' self-reported experiences from the first pilot of the IPSE MOS with TerpsEXCEED mentors. They are descriptive and should not be read as evidence that mentoring caused the outcomes reported. Current and former mentors are different groups surveyed once, so differences between them may not reflect change over time. Agreement was very high on many items, so future administrations will test whether revised items and response options better distinguish mentors' experiences.

Key Takeaways

Mentors reported gains in skills, confidence, and commitment to inclusion. At least 96.7% of current and 86.5% of former mentors agreed with every skill development, inclusion, and personal growth item, and every mentor who answered would recommend mentoring.

Former mentors reported that mentoring's impact continued beyond the role. All former mentors still use skills developed as mentors, and 97.4% said mentoring continues to shape their thinking about inclusion.

Career-related outcomes were reported less consistently than other outcomes. About 6 in 10 former mentors said mentoring influenced their career interests (60.5%) or choices (57.9%).

Current mentors were less likely to see the experience as relevant to their academic and professional work. Agreement was 80.0% among current mentors and 92.1% among former mentors. Most current mentors (62%) had mentored for one semester or less, so this may reflect time in the role.

Mentors rated the survey as clear and relevant. 97.1% to 100% of respondents agreed the survey was easy to understand, relevant to their experience, and able to capture mentoring's impact.

What This Means for MIHEC

For mentor programming, MIHEC programs may consider

1. **Continuing to build communication, leadership, collaboration, and inclusion into mentor roles,** the most consistently reported outcomes.
2. **Connecting mentoring to mentors' academic and career goals,** for example through reflection or career-exploration activities.
3. **Helping newer mentors link the role to their studies and professional plans,** where current mentors reported less connection.

For the MIHEC evaluation, next steps are to

1. **Refine and validate the instrument** so it can be used with confidence in future administrations and across programs, with attention to career-related items and response options.
2. **Readminister the survey with TerpsEXCEED mentors in spring 2027** and annually thereafter.
3. **Extend the survey to MIHEC partner programs** to examine how outcomes vary across IPSE settings.
4. **Share the validated instrument more broadly,** making it available to IPSE programs nationally.

Recommended Citation

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