

# The Power of Engaging Creative Campus Partners in University Accommodations

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## Abstract

When taking a required cadaver course in her undergraduate studies Teresa, who uses a power wheelchair, found it difficult to participate in this hands-on laboratory course. Through collaboration within several departments at the University of Colorado Boulder, she found surprising partners that would point her toward the solution.

## Background Information

Transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities is a common theme in the current work being done in the maternal and child health field. One important aspect of this process is the transition for students with disabilities into the higher education system. Higher education provides students with the opportunity to pursue education in their career of choice. However, for a successful experience, the appropriate accommodations must be in place for students with disabilities. The accommodation process takes advocacy, leadership, and communication skills to the next level for students and often proves to be a difficult process for all parties involved. Creative solutions are often needed for students to have equal access to quality education.

## Process

- Have student connect with the Office of Disability Services on campus and apply for accommodations.
- Student and faculty should engage and become familiar with the faculty and staff involved in the process.
- Acknowledge the needs and goals of student asking for accommodations. Equal participation is important!
- Reach out to interdisciplinary partners for ideas and solutions.

## Results

Stage lift from **Theatre Department** used to raise Teresa's wheelchair to the correct height for cadaver table. Creative solution allows for equal participation and quality education. The lift is now being used at other universities in Colorado.



Teresa sitting by the stage lift used in the cadaver lab.



Teresa using the stage lift at the cadaver table with faculty.

## Conclusions

Higher education prepares students with disabilities for their future career, in hopes of facilitating a smooth transition to employment. For a successful college experience, accommodations are a necessary tool for students to receive the proper opportunities to participate in the classroom. Lab accommodations can be tricky but with the right collaboration between unique partners in the community, creative solutions can be identified. This not only benefits current students but future students with disabilities, as well.

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