Georgia State University

Why? Each year there are approximately 2000 high school graduates with intellectual disabilities in Georgia who might qualify for a participation in postsecondary education, but there currently are only 30-35 annual openings in the state’s inclusive postsecondary programs (at Georgia Tech, Kennesaw State, Columbus State and East Georgia State).

What? The Inclusive Digital Expression and Literacy (IDEAL) Program offers a 2-year course of study where the students with mild intellectual disabilities

- Audit courses offered by GSU colleges and academic departments;
  - Six required core courses focused on technology use, digital/media literacy, communication skills, success in the college environment, self-determination and career development
  - Four elective courses focused on students’ area of interest (e.g. film/TV, music production, art & design)
  - Weekly program seminar focused on a variety of topics including (a) identifying learning strategies and supports, (b) career development and job-related “soft skills,” (c) awareness of and involvement with existing campus activities, organizations and resources, and (d) development and promotion of the self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- Complete work-study and internship experiences related to media, communications, and/or the arts; and
  - During first 12 months – students will participate in an on-campus, part-time work experience
  - During the fall and spring on their second year, each IDEAL student will take a capstone experience that will include two components: (a) participation in an internship in a local business or arts organization related to his/her identified career goals and (b) develop a digital portfolio of his/her work
- Participate in a variety of extracurricular activities on campus.

IDEAL Supports: GSU staff will include at least three members (a Program Coordinator, an Academic Transition Teacher, and a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor). For every two IDEAL students, the program will recruit an undergraduate peer mentor who (as needed) will attend the audited classes by the IDEAL student and help integrate IDEAL students in the campus community (campus activities, organizations, sporting events, etc.) The IDEAL program will also have a graduate assistants who will assist in admissions, recruiting and supervising peer mentors, program evaluation and other necessary functions.

IDEAL Mission: The mission of IDEAL is to prepare students with intellectual disabilities with educational opportunities and job-focused training while providing access to resources and supports that lead to meaningful employment, greater independence, and a higher quality of life.