Mission of CCU LIFE™

The mission of the CCU LIFE™ program is to provide a diverse, student-centered environment where young adults with intellectual disabilities can learn alongside peers as they prepare to become productive, responsible citizens in their communities.

Overview

The Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ program is a four-year, tuition-based, post-secondary education and transition program for young adults who have mild to moderate *intellectual disabilities as defined by the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The program is in its third year of operation. This cohort-structured program currently has eight students enrolled and accepts six to eight students each year during Fall semester. LIFE™ facilitates and supports each student’s full inclusion within the campus community, both academically and socially, by utilizing natural campus supports and academic and social mentors. Successful completion of the program will provide students with the skills to pursue and obtain meaningful employment, as well as develop social skills necessary for success in the workplace.

Students in the LIFE™ program participate in person-centered planning to determine a focus for academic coursework that will support their career goals. They access the Office of Career Services to schedule a vocational evaluation that includes a variety of assessments and activities to help students identify the types of jobs they are most interested in pursuing. Students enroll in academic coursework that supports their interests, skills, and abilities and subsequently participate in a range of related work experiences including on- and off-campus internships, as well as courses that support communication, healthy living, and recreation and leisure.

Students are given the choice of living at home and commuting to campus daily (recommended during first year) or living on campus in a residence hall. A Residence Life assistant is available to provide direct support to students living on campus. All LIFE™ students receive academic and social support through a structured mentoring program. LIFE™ students may participate in any campus activity, group, or event that is open to other students on campus. Participation in a wide variety of extracurricular activities is encouraged; social mentors assist students in identifying activities and groups that match their interests and often accompany them to the events.

*Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18 (AAIDD).
The LIFE™ Admissions Committee reviews completed applications and recommends students for admission, which is based, in part, on the following criteria:

- Completed program application packet
- Required documentation of an intellectual disability as defined by AAIDD
- Age; must be between 18 and 24 years old
- Secondary exit document (certificate of attendance, occupational diploma, or in certain cases a state-issued high school diploma)
- Ability to read at a functional level
- Basic math skills and ability to use a calculator
- Ability to function independently for a sustainable period of time
- Neither has nor exhibits history of difficult, challenging behavior
- Independently exhibits desire and motivation to participate in and complete a post-secondary program
- A writing sample, with appropriate accommodations as needed, that describes the candidate's future aspirations and career goals
- A personal Interview
- Desire to become an independent adult
- Potential and desire to be successfully employed
- Emotional stability and independent desire to participate in all aspects of Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ Program and adhere to program and university policies regarding attendance and participation in the program
- Agree to actively participate in assessments and interviews for the purpose of personal goal setting and program improvement
- Willingness to participate in research and promotional activities of the Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ Program and Coastal Carolina University

Opportunities for “LIFE™ Support”

- Establish LIFE™ scholarships to offset tuition costs
- Sponsor a student to live on campus
- Support academic enrichment by purchasing a student’s textbooks
- Request a LIFE™ intern at your place of business
- Provide opportunities for employment interviews and/or part-time employment
- Designate the LIFE™ program at CCU as the recipient of your University contributions
- Be an advocate throughout our community

**LIFE™ Contact information**

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