Employment for College Graduates with Disabilities

Employment in America

80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

68.3%
21%
7.6%
3.7%

Labor Force Participation   Unemployment Rate

■ People with Disabilities   ■ People without Disabilities
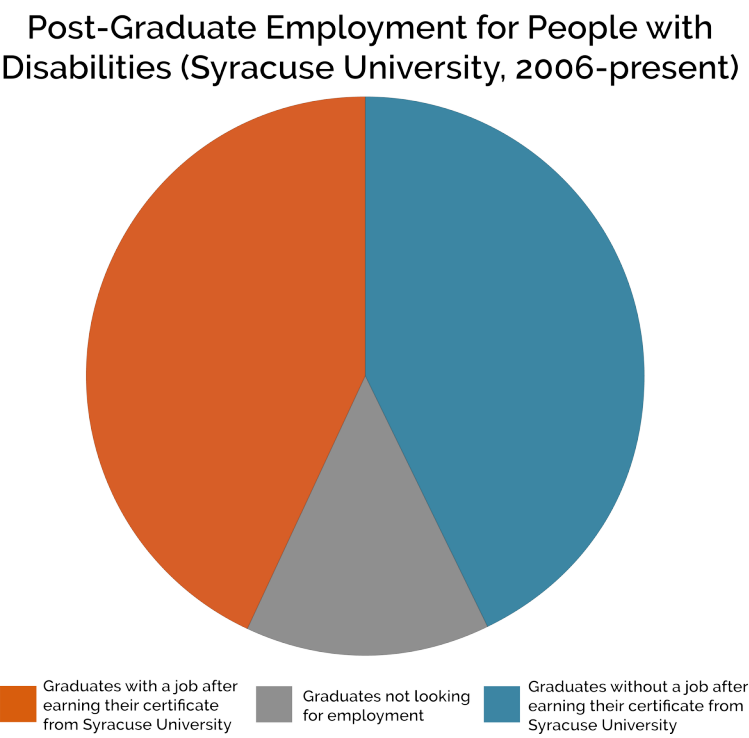
Source: United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy

RESEARCH QUESTION
What programs do universities have in place for students with disabilities?
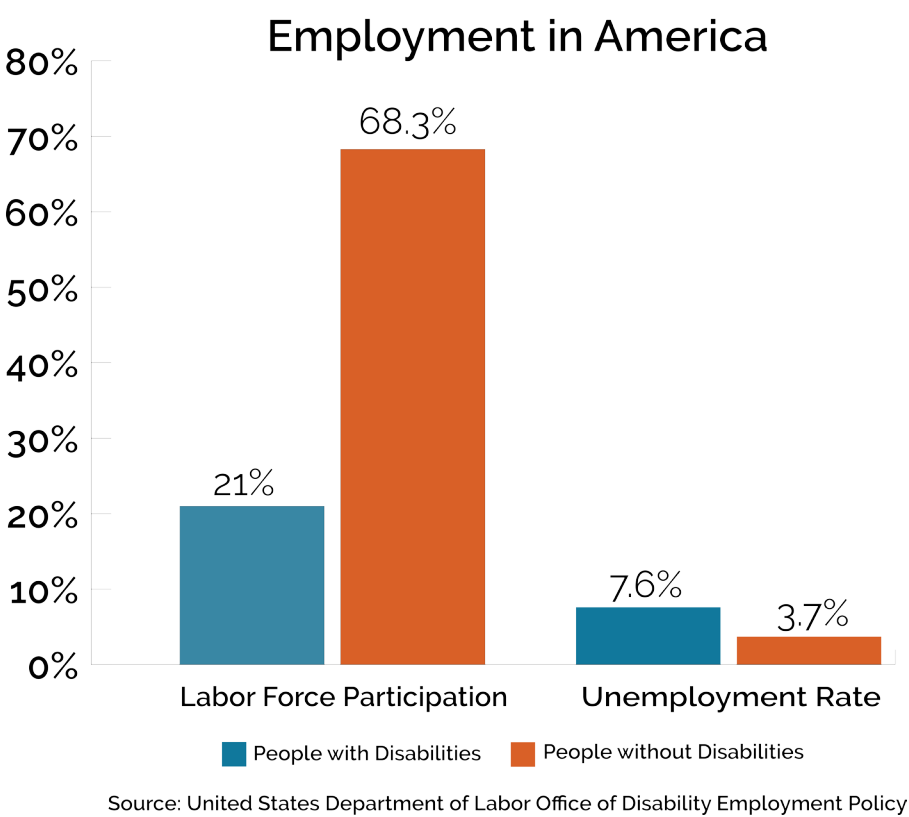
BACKGROUND
Unemployment rates for people with disabilities (PWD) are too high. Employers are hesitant to hire PWD and those PWD who do get jobs are generally subject to pay gaps. Aside from government agencies, organizations like InclusiveU at Syracuse University and Jon Robinson's Our Ability in Albany, NY have intervened to help PWD have a better chance of finding employment. However, there is a huge bottleneck because now there are PWD ready for jobs, but a lack of employers willing to hire them.

RESEARCH FINDINGS
Through my research of access to higher education for PWD, I have found two primary findings - a gap in the research and programs not being available. The programs at post-secondary institutions are inaccessible making the network almost invisible. I spent the last few months learning about the InclusiveU program and how it operates within Syracuse University. Since the certificate program at Syracuse was offered to students with intellectual disabilities in 2006, only 7 students have received their certificate and graduated. Of those seven students, four are still unemployed.

Post-Graduate Employment for People with Disabilities (Syracuse University, 2006-present)

■ Graduates with a job after earning their certificate from Syracuse University   ■ Graduates not looking for employment   ■ Graduates without a job after earning their certificate from Syracuse University

KEY WORDS: Non-matriculated vs. matriculated • Certificate • Intellectual Disabilities • Living Wage

ACTION PLAN IDEAS
1. Job fair inviting employers who are interested in hiring people with disabilities (build a database of employers who see this as an oppurtunity).
2. Syracuse University recruitment plan to recruit applicants who have intellectual disabilities for the InclusiveU program.

KEY SOURCES
- Interviews with leadership of InclusiveU about the program
- Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2017
- Introduction to special issue on people with disabilities in the workplace, The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Lisa Schur et al., 2016

Amanda Caffey • Broadcast and Digital Journalism and Citizenship and Civic Engagement • MAX 302 : Research Seminar in Civic Engagement • Fall 2017