



College of
Adaptive Arts
Inclusive Collegiate Partnerships



Empowering Students to
*Creatively Transform
Perceptions of Ability*



Higher Learning for All

Though the pursuit of higher education has not always been available to everyone in America, societal changes brought by the Women's and Civil Rights Movement eventually opened the doors of equitable higher learning to many who historically had been denied access. Unfortunately, adults with intellectual disabilities and developmental abilities (IDD), including those with Down syndrome and autism, have yet to be fully welcomed.

Today, over 6.5 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live in the United States. The lack of higher education options is a major factor contributing to the 90% unemployment rate experienced by this population. Even though there are approximately 6,000 colleges and universities in America, a negligible percentage offer adaptive classes for adults with IDD.

The College of Adaptive Arts (CAA) was opened in 2009 to provide an equitable and lifelong collegiate experience to adults with disabilities **who historically have not had access to higher education.** The college offers 10 schools of study through which students can earn diplomas based on a revolutionary, private accreditation model, as well as participate in college wide social activities and workforce development opportunities. CAA embodies the employment world it envisions with over 50% of its staff having a declared disability. Its hybrid in-person and virtual delivery model has reached over 500 students of all differing abilities and ages in 17 states and in 2 countries.

Over the next three years, CAA seeks \$2.5 million annually to enhance its programming, codify its higher education model for lifelong learners, and to launch a geographic expansion of its model to ensure students of all intellectual abilities seeking knowledge and fulfillment through higher education have the ability to obtain it.



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Opening Doors to Learning

Though “all men are created equal” is inscribed in America’s Declaration of Independence, it has not always been a universally held experience, especially for women, minorities, and those with disabilities.

From the nation’s birth through the early 20th century, people with intellectual disabilities were marked by societal fear and prejudice—and often violence. For centuries, Americans born with intellectual and developmental disabilities spent their entire lives in bleak filthy insane asylums or at home in isolation, hidden away from their communities and families. The peak of aberrant treatment against the intellectually disabled was the eugenics movement, which forced mass sterilizations on the population.

Fortunately, the medical field and American culture eventually changed and sought to include those with intellectual abilities into society. In 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (originally named the Education of Handicapped Children Act) opened the nation’s kindergarten through 12th grade free public school system to those with physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. By the 1990s, a multitude of inclusive laws had been passed. Finally, in 2009, Rosa’s Law was signed by President Barack Obama, and replaced the term “mental retardation” with “intellectual disability” in the nation’s nomenclature.

Today, over 6.5 million people with intellectual or developmental disabilities live in the United States, as reported by the CDC. Children and young adults (defined as ages 18 to 22) are better integrated into and supported by society.

However, those past the age of maturity find the lion’s share of federal and state funding goes to vocational training or day programs, which function more like adult daycare centers.

Though vocational training and day programs are important, state and federal funding for higher education—like what is available to their nondisabled peers—is virtually nonexistent. The lack of higher education options is also a major factor contributing to the 90 percent unemployment rate experienced by the intellectually and developmentally disabled population. And even though institutions of higher learning could implement their own programming outside federal or state government support, only a negligible percentage of the over 5,000 American college campuses offer adaptive classes for adults with intellectual disabilities.

Even the nation’s most populous state, California, which has approximately 650,000 residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, **provides little to no funding toward educational support for those beyond the age of 22.**

It is long past time to provide adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunities and experiences available through higher education so long denied them. In so doing, they are able to pursue their own passions and paths of personal advancement, like everyone else. Also, they become empowered to fully contribute to the futures of themselves, their families, their communities, and the nation.





ORIGIN

Dr. Pamela Lindsay and DeAnna Pursai crossed paths in the community of friends and family involved with a local theater which was dedicated to working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). While grateful for the social and entertainment outlet available to Dr. Pamela's daughter and DeAnna's sister, they jointly lamented the absence of lifelong educational options for their loved ones and others like them. Marshaling their own passions and the interest of those across the community, they launched a musical theater class in Pamela's living room for 12 adult students aged 18 to 50. This class quickly blossomed to fill a creative studio space, and eventually grew into the College of Adaptive Arts with Dr. Lindsay as its first Dean and Ms. Pursai as its first Executive Director.

"CAA has been a phenomenal help with my self-esteem and self-confidence as a young adult with special needs"

- Rowan Timmerman
student

The College of Adaptive Arts

College of Adaptive Arts (CAA) started in 2009 (with 12 students in a living room and) with the simple goal of fulfilling the lifelong learning needs of adults with IDD. Across the next 15 years as word spread throughout the close knit Silicon Valley disability community, CAA continued expanding its educational offering and its locations to meet increasing demand. The college achieved several significant milestones along the way. In 2012, its revolutionary educational model to effectively instruct adults with intellectual disabilities, ARTS (Attention, Response, Transfer, Sustain) was copyrighted in 2015, it succeeded in meeting California's funding code requirements for adult training, enabling students to utilize state program dollars (a mere \$27.24) to pay for equitable and ongoing special higher education. In 2021, CAA established a landmark partnership with West Valley College in San Jose to bring CAA and its students to an established campus of higher learning.

Today, College of Adaptive Arts is a privately accredited institution of higher learning, anchored in the Bay Area's West Valley College, offering private and non-transferable undergraduate and graduate diplomas meeting each student's **individual learning needs and goals**. Local students are able to attend in person, while students in ten additional states and one international location attend online.

All students are encouraged to take as many classes as often as their schedules and abilities allow.



Schools of Study

Each school of study is overseen by The Director of Programs, School of Study Directors, and a staff of instructors including professionals and subject matter experts, all of whom are dedicated and committed to the mission of offering lifelong learning to students historically excluded from opportunities in higher education. CAA also strives to model inclusivity by hiring individuals at all levels of its organization who historically have been marginalized in traditional workforce settings.



Visual Arts

Enables students to study and practice traditional art techniques such as watercolor, still life painting, and sketching. Students also can explore more modern art techniques such as digital media arts, ceramics and clay animation. Many students earn the ability to showcase their art at local businesses, conferences, and museums - such as San Francisco's DeYoung Museum.



Business

Teaches business and entrepreneurial skills geared toward the workplace by teaching core subjects such as market research, micro-enterprising, and basic business concepts. The program also presents much needed soft skills such as interviewing and resume writing. Focus is also put on specific position training from which its students have found successful employment in areas like class instruction and marketing.

Communications

Teaches students to communicate confidently, comfortably, and creatively by offering classes in written communications such as poetry and writing, and in oral communications such as speaking with confidence. In addition, students are exposed to new methods of communication like studying sign language and various foreign languages.



Dance

Enables undergraduate students to explore their love of dance through instruction in techniques of classical and contemporary styles, from ballet and jazz to contemporary dance and cultural styles including hip hop. Graduate level courses expand upon learned ballet, jazz and choreography skills in a course of study that culminates in a community performance project.



Digital Media Studies

Develops students to share their life experience with the world through digital media production. Classes include on-camera production and acting, photography, and scriptwriting. Students can also produce social media projects such as podcasts and vlogs, as well as contributing to CAA's international film festivals.



Health and Wellness

Provides instruction on the benefits and enjoyment of physical activity and personal health. Health classes like mindfulness, yoga and cheerleading help students to strengthen their bodies and spirit, while nutrition and cooking classes teach enthusiasm and skills for maintaining healthful lifestyles.



School of Music

Teaches students to define their own rhythm, voice, and styles of emotional expression through music. Students are able to study performance through vocal and instrumental studies, as well as music production through songwriting and digital music classes.



Theatre

Builds experience and knowledge in students exploring creativity, imagination, and compassionate connection to human experience through on-stage auditions, improvisation and performances. Students also engage in technical theater 'back of the house' training in set design, costuming, and prop production.



School of Science and Technology

Works to develop excitement about lifelong investigation of and skills in natural science, technology, and mathematics. Students build their understanding of and comfort level with core sciences in classes like astronomy, earth science, and chemistry. For technology and math, students take classes like computer studies, gaming, and social media use and safety.



School of Leadership and Civic Engagement

Advances students' personal journeys toward personal advocacy and awareness, community connections and contributions, and involved participation in campus life. Learning activities fuse work from CAA's other schools of study to create a truly cross-curricular experience.

COLLEGE WIDE ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular social clubs and sports teams at institutions of higher learning, are opportunities for camaraderie and friendly competition, and contribute to a robust college and university experience. Registration options for these social recreation activities include the walking, golf, gaming and bowling teams which regularly meet, practice, and participate in CAA events and tournaments.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

CAA not only strives to enrich the educational landscape for its students, but also to contribute to building a workforce that reflects the strength and resilience of their larger community through two paid apprenticeship programs.



Cardinal Apprenticeship Program (CAP)

Students at CAA can gain valuable workplace skills by shadowing and assisting CAA staff gaining on-the-job training, as they work toward certifications for assistant roles in areas such as instructional, office administration, and marketing support.

Empower Inclusion Apprenticeship Program (EIAP)

West Valley College's relationship with CAA enables its students to gain essential skills to participate in CAA's Empower inclusion Apprenticeship Program with the goal of a U.S. Department of Labor traveling certificate in office management administration. Through CAA's program, West Valley students also are able to obtain a vendor apprenticeship certificate through the US Department of Labor's Apprenticeship programs. CAA is committed to offering a unique pathway to those in its community from underserved and marginalized populations, such as people navigating disabilities, re-entering the workforce after a long absence or facing economic disadvantages.



Thank you for the invite to the CAA Gala event yesterday. I was able to learn some more about the students you serve and got to sit beside Jonathan and Natalie. I liked the ice breaker questions for the table. I really enjoyed Natalie's sign language performance to the music. Well done on an outstanding event.

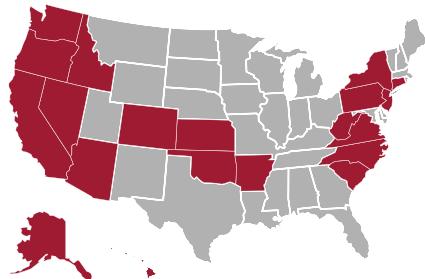
My wife, Cristal, works for the San Andreas Regional center as a psychologist and her area of focus overlaps with the students that CAA serves, so I shared your pamphlet with her and told her about the program. She asked, doesn't every Community College have this type of program and although they should, they don't. **Keep up the great work you're doing!**

Terrance S. DeGray, PE, CCM, LEED AP
Vice Chancellor, Facilities Development & Operations
West Valley-Mission Community College District

Our Impact

Word of mouth has enabled CAA to reach close to 1,000 learners of all differing abilities and ages in 17 states and in 2 countries.

Each student takes an average of 4 classes at CAA.



CAA embodies the employment world it wants to see - over 50% of staff have declared disabilities including cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism, emotional trauma, depression, OCD, anxiety, cancer survivors, dyslexia, and other learning and hidden disabilities.

Classes Offered

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
6	12	16	20	22	26	30	32	35	50	54	62	62	66	75	72

Total Students Enrolled

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
73	118	127	150	172	213	231	268	256

Cumulative Learning Seats Filled

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
200	650	900	1100	1400	1600	1800	2600	3000	4000	5475	6959

Workforce Development Program

News Coverage Highlights

Students with disabilities gain leadership skills

KRON ON | Apr 5, 2024 / 11:24 AM PDT

KRON4's Philippe Djegal reports

<https://www.kron4.com/video/students-with-disabilities-gain-leadership-skills/9580832/>



Expanding Educational Access

College of Adaptive Arts is seeking **\$2.5 million annually, over the next three years** to realize its vision of a world where life-long higher education learning opportunities are available for every student at every intellectual level.

Enhance Programming - \$2,175,000 annually

It is critical for CAA to keep up with students' unique lives and experiences in their ever-changing world, by continually evolving and growing the stimulating, challenging, and enriching education it offers.

Establish core classes in each schools of study

CAA strives to be at the forefront of education for lifelong learning, by systematically updating and enhancing the courses, curriculum, and experiences it makes available to its students. Each of its 10 schools of study seeks to continually integrate the latest best practices, advancements, and tools from across their respective fields. Examples include acquiring the latest production and prop equipment for theater productions, leveraging the latest research for experiments in the science department, and sourcing traditional and mixed media supplies for the visual arts school. Supporting lead professors and guest lecturers are also brought on to supplement and/or extend existing staff expertise. In support of the enhanced offerings, CAA will enhance its workforce development program through partnerships and internally capacity building to ensure a viable pipeline for student employment. To accommodate increased demand on its systems, CAA will also ensure consistent upgrades and enhancements to its electronic infrastructure and licenses. Once the core classes in a single school are completed, students receive a completion certificate. Completion of all 10 certificates qualifies the student for diploma conferment, ensuring a well-rounded course of liberal arts study has been obtained for undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate diplomas.





"I like learning new things and feel comfortable there"

- Giorgina Brackett
Student

"My mind is my most powerful tool. I need to be able to use it and use it to the best of my ability... My goal is to become a professor at CAA and teach classes but of course there's a long way to go."

- Sam Headley
Student, CAA Apprentice and Associate Professor



"(My disability) does not hold me back as much now that I find acceptance. What I would do (is) to find acceptance with people that know how to help you...I would like to be the one main teacher that makes a difference."

- Alison Kennedy
Student, CAA Apprentice

Develop fully accessible student portal

To provide students (and their caregivers in some instances) the ability to manage the students educational and career journeys on par with more traditional educational institutions, CAA will enhance its current online student portal. This will enable students to download and upload materials for each class in which they are registered, to review resources shared during the semester, and to stay connected with classmates and professors during learning weeks. Students will also be able to access their transcripts, class requirements, and diploma goals and requirements, as well as share them with chosen community contacts and potential employers. To support this effort, CAA will bring on a Technical Support 0.5 FTE.

Standardize CAA Higher Education Model - \$125,000 annually

In collaboration with its host campus West Valley College, CAA seeks to codify the operation of its model as a replicable prototype for other locations across California, other states across America, and other countries across the world. CAA seeks to offer every lifetime learner the ability to explore their interests and passions.

Develop training modules

CAA will codify its model and offer interested individuals and institutions the ability to purchase an 'out of the box' solution to replicate the CAA model for their own communities and students. The holistic training models will range from establishing, administering, and growing a community institution to establishing curriculum tailored by subject matter and student ability. Utilizing the Moodle online training platform, modules will be tailored to each of the partner populations required to replicate the model such as funders, administrators, professors, office staff and student interns.

Expand Geographically - \$200,000 annually

CAA seeks to extend the reach of its programming to all deserving lifetime learners, and will begin by establishing a second physical location at an existing institution of higher learning - CAA is currently in talks with several California community colleges.



Students in proximity to the new location will have full access to CAA's catalog of virtual classes occurring at West Valley College, but their registration and student administration will be local to them in-person, ensuring a sense of community and belonging can be built. Once a core student population is developed, CAA will

rent available space on the new campus and begin holding workshops. Key CAA administrative staff will work from the satellite campus at least once a week until it is fully operational and can support its own full time administrative team. Outfitting the satellite location will require building a new registration system which integrates into the host institution's structure, as well as West Valley's.

Expand Awareness

Making lifelong learning available to every student regardless of intellectual ability requires a concerted effort to spread awareness of the benefits and impact it can have not only on the students, but on their families and communities as well. CAA will increase local visibility for its programs through community outreach and collaborations, media coverage and targeted communication channels within the surrounding communities of West Valley College and the new satellite location. CAA graduates and workers will have the opportunity to be awareness ambassadors in their local communities and places of employment. As local awareness is increased, momentum will be leveraged to extend awareness campaigns regionally, nationally and internationally.

Champion Legislative Reforms

Unlike physical disabilities in sports like the Special Olympics, there is no designated state or federal funding code for persons with intellectual disabilities. CAA will work with California legislators to establish a code for higher education for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities which then can be utilized as a model for legislative partnerships, as CAA expands to other states.



Future Opportunities

The pursuit of higher education brings personal growth, an expanded worldview, and is often the catalyst to igniting a passion for lifelong learning. College of Adaptive Arts is committed to making sure the opportunity is available to every potential student, regardless of their intellectual ability.

Will you join us?!



Financials

2025

2026

2027

Total

Enhance Programming

Implementation of Industry Advancements	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$3,300,000
Bolster Workforce Development	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$2,100,000
Incorporate Lead Professors and guest speakers	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000
Upgrade electronic infrastructure	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
Develop student portal	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000
Technical Assistant 1/2 FTE	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
	\$2,175,000	\$2,175,000	\$2,175,000	\$6,525,000

Standardize Higher Education Model

Develop training modules	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000
Formulate Moodle support framework	\$50,000	\$25,000	-	\$75,000
Develop and Implement CAA Training Platform	-	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000
	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$375,000

Expand Geographically

Establish satellite California campus	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$375,000
Implement Awareness and Marketing Campaigns	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000
	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$600,000
	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$7,500,000





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PROSPECTUS

Empowering Students to
Creatively Transform
Perceptions of Ability