University of North Carolina Asheville
Journal of Undergraduate Research
Asheville, North Carolina
Fall 2025

Academia, Access, and Assembly: Disabled STEM Students at UNC Asheville

Kit Crabtree

Sociology
The University of North Carolina Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, North Carolina 28804 USA

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Caitlin Meagher

Abstract

How do Disabled Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) students experience their disabilities in the context of their fields? In what ways do those experiences affect their performance, relationship to their classmates, and relationship to their professors? What steps can be taken to strengthen accommodations, community, and understanding? In this paper, these questions are assessed through an online survey of twenty-eight Disabled and non-Disabled undergraduate STEM majors. Many notable complaints were revealed, most dealing with hard-access physical issues or lack of resources. By their nature, many accessibility issues around UNCA were structural, as opposed to social. However, social barriers still played an important role in the experiences of respondents, with difficulties with social events the most common criticism.

Introduction

Much of the existing literature on the topic of ableism in academia is non-discipline specific, and this project acts as an extension of existing knowledge to the fields of STEM. This research could help guide the policy, culture and accessibility surrounding the STEM departments of UNCA to increase inclusivity and equity for students in those disciplines.

Understanding the STEM departments' shortcomings with regards to accessibility and biases could allow for more inclusive policy and physical spaces to be designed, directly involving Disabled people in the consultation process of accessibility. This would allow Disabled UNCA STEM students to thrive in the same way that our nonDisabled peers do, and give us the opportunity to take an active role in building a better community for Disabled people on campus that centers the needs and experiences of Disabled people. The findings in this research are relevant to comparably sized and funded institutions, which could also benefit from taking its findings into account- as well as to the UNC System's other member institutions.

Methods

Over the course of three months, twenty-eight students across eleven STEM departments at UNC Asheville filled out a twenty-three question survey on their experiences with disability, accessibility, and belonging. The departments represented in this survey were Astronomy, Atmospheric Sciences, Biology (Including Pre-Health students), Biochemistry, Chemistry, Environmental Sciences, Health Sciences/Public Health, Masters of Public Health, Neuroscience and Data, Physics, and Psychology. The department with the highest response rate was Environmental Science, with a total of fourteen students indicating involvement with the major. Questions utilized a combination of a seven-point Likert scale and short answers, as well as multiple choice demographic options.

The demographics collected were whether or not the participant identified as Disabled, their class standing, and their associated departments. Other demographics such as race, gender, and economic background were not collected- if the researcher were to conduct this study again, these three demographics would be factored in due to their potential bearing on the academic performance of Disabled individuals *(Chiu et. al. 2019)* and their interactions with peers and professors. Respondents were sourced by working with department administrators to send out the survey to the relevant email

lists. The polished final iteration of the survey was only open to Disabled UNC Asheville STEM students who had graduated within the past five years, but was later opened to all UNC Asheville STEM students who had graduated within the past five years, regardless of disability status.

In total, twenty-one of the twenty-eight students surveyed identified as Disabled in some form. This high distribution was likely due to the survey opening to non-Disabled students later in the process, as well as a likely higher interest from the main group being focused on in the study. The research includes both self-identified Disabled and non-Disabled respondents for several reasons. By including non-Disabled students, a baseline can be established in the differences in perception of departmental cultures and prevailing attitudes. Non-Disabled students may also be impacted by accessibility issues, or were impacted by accessibility issues in the past in some way. One non-Disabled respondent specifically noted concerns with a lack of gender-neutral and private bathrooms, to give one example. This phenomenon is referred to by researcher Angela Glover Blackwell as the “Curb Cut Effect,” coined to describe the way that social programs designed for marginalized groups often benefit all people, not just their original target population *(2017)*. The name references curb cuts, slopes on a curb to allow access for wheelchair users- also allowing better access for people with strollers and anyone who could benefit from a gentler slope to a road crossing. This is yet another reason that this research is so crucial- accessibility initiatives and infrastructure improvements made with Disabled students in mind could also benefit the general campus population.

Undergraduate and graduate students were both included in this survey, as well as STEM minors. While graduate programs often have vastly different structures in their courses, the same key points found in this survey to impact access, such as accessibility issues caused by physical infrastructure and department-relevant accommodations, are still highly relevant. STEM minors, similarly, may not have the same rigorous level of coursework, but those who responded were found to experience the same relevant issues as their peers within the major. Thirty students initially responded, but two were excluded due to ineligibility.

Responses were compiled in a Google Spreadsheet to allow for easy sorting to facilitate analyzing and interpreting the data. Responses were coded using an open, hybridized inductive and deductive framework to allow the themes to emerge naturally as they arose. The researcher’s chosen approach utilized elements from Grounded Theory (GT), a qualitative research method developed by Glaser and Strauss, especially as research progressed. The flexible nature of this method was distinctly

well-suited due to the limited body of qualitative research on STEM students' experiences with accessibility (Chun, Birks, & Francis, 2019).

In particular, application of Robert Thornberg's method of Informed Grounded Theory allowed for a combination of inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning to construct an approach with literature support throughout (Thornberg, 2012). The idea of "sensitizing concepts"- research population-derived ideas that guide the researcher toward a possible path without restricting them in the way that purely deductive reasoning could- were a key pillar in understanding where to start in terms of finding meaning within the research participants' responses (Van den Hoonaard, Becker, & Blumer, 2008).

Neurodivergency & Resources

Neurodivergent students and their access needs will act as the group to begin this exploration of the accessibility of UNCA's STEM departments. While students reported a majority of positive experiences with professors' accommodations, a number of students indicated difficulties with lack of clear structure in the way that lab courses in particular are taught. As one student said,

> "Chemistry as a course is difficult because they expect you to teach yourself the content in the lecture and lab, which means you only have people telling you what you're doing wrong and not how to understand/solve the problem correctly. It's a difficult set-up without ADHD and depression, but it's certainly not very accessible for me."

Professors are not being given the tools they need to learn how to engage with neurodivergent students and make their courses more accessible for them. UNC Asheville's Center for Teaching and Learning, a professional development program for UNCA faculty, has had some workshops for working with Neurodivergent and Disabled students, including ones designed for STEM departments (UNC Asheville, 2025). However, the actual number of these programs is still quite low compared to the amount of programs offered on topics such as AI usage. Center for Teaching and Learning programs are often organized by faculty and staff volunteers and are opt-in events. While these programs are important, this is not a replacement for actual infrastructure to support the implementation of the tools and concepts these workshops provide. The Office of Accessibility puts the responsibility of executing accessibility needs onto students and professors (UNC Asheville, 2025). Both are overworked groups who do not have the same kind of training or knowledge as Accessibility Office professionals, as

well as having to draw from their own resources and schedules instead of getting structured support.

Another important factor worth bringing to the table is the unpaid labor of advocacy work that Disabled students, staff and faculty have to participate in to simply exist on a college campus (Inckle 2018). Similar to the experiences of other marginalized groups, Disabled students refusing to accept things as they are and fighting for change is often a key piece of our experiences on college campuses for many (Inckle 2018). For multiply marginalized Disabled people, they face a unique combination of barriers stemming from multifaceted, intersecting experiences of bigotry. This interaction between forms of oppression has a documented impact on academic performance (Chiu et. Al., 2019) and health outcomes (Yee et. Al., 2018), just to name a few.

Disabled students fall under what is considered a marked category- a linguistic term referring to a group or identity that is considered the non-default. Coined by Trubetskoy and Jakobson, the marked status shows what is considered out of the ordinary or against the social grain in a society or group (Zerubavel & Eviatar, 2018). The approach to accessibility at UNC Asheville marks this- an equitable experience is not guaranteed for Disabled students like it is for its “default,” nonDisabled students who do not have to go through the processes of requesting accommodations and offering themselves up to the Office of Accessibility for judgement.

Policies & Documentation

The lack of structure is not the only struggle students have found within the Chemistry courses that are a required part of many STEM majors’ curricula. The starting point for these struggles are the American Chemical Society guidelines for chemistry courses offered at UNCA, and the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry’s implementation of them. These guidelines provide a framework for chemistry labs and their grading and structure. The policy allows for three unexcused absences, each one bringing a students’ total grade down by ten percent. If a student has more than three absences, they automatically fail the course. The accepted excuses for absences are the death of an immediate family member, illness that has been documented by a medical professional, attendance of school-sponsored events, or major religious holidays.

The vague phrasing of the policy regarding illness in particular provides a possible gray area where Disabled students could find themselves in limbo. Long-term, chronic health issues may be included by some professors, while others may choose to

interpret this policy as only accounting for acute illness or injury. This reflects the recurring theme across types of disability on UNCA's campus: lack of any tangible way to ensure equity in the way that access is implemented.

The priorities of the university are also made clear in the way these policies are constructed. School-sponsored events, usually referring to sports, are for the most part a choice to participate in. They are also something that makes the university money. The reputation and finances of the university are important for them to continue operations, but that does not make it ethical or justified to apply different standards to groups of students based on what is profitable for the school.

Chemistry is a rigorous field, and lab work requires students to be physically present. Standards like these are created for a reason; to create a baseline for making sure students are actually absorbing the material and participating in their labs. While the foundation of these standards are not directly subject to change by UNCA itself, the ways that the university applies them are. The inaccessibility of lab classes directly affects the ability of Disabled students to follow these standards. Basic things like using a fume hood or sitting at a comfortable table are more difficult due to the design of UNCA's chemistry labs. A fume hood is a ventilated enclosure that provides vital protection in the lab when working with chemicals. Even a vital safety protection like this isn't guaranteed to Disabled students working in labs.

Rigor and the Iron Cage

The definition of rigor is another troubling question. Academic and intellectual rigor challenges students and their knowledge as it relates specifically to their field of study- a well-established part of upper-level college classes and higher education as a whole. It is worth questioning whether the school is prioritizing actual academic rigor, or if logistical rigor is being conflated with good pedagogy and intellectual challenges.

Logistical rigor refers to a manner of challenging students that is not based around exploration of academic inquiry, research methods, or other educational principles. Instead, logistical rigor manifests itself through heavy workloads that don't necessarily test a student's capability to understand the course, busy work, and strict deadlines (Supiano, 2022). The question that seems to lie at the heart of academic versus logistical rigor is when difficulty stops being a matter of learning deep thinking and critical analysis, and becomes suffering for suffering's sake.

Max Weber's theory of Protestant Ethic and the valorization of suffering provides an interesting framework with which to analyze the relationship that higher education has to success and logistical rigor. Weber's concept of the "iron cage" is particularly useful. This metaphor was used to describe the way that the endless quest for efficiency in a capitalist society has led to systems based off of control, hyper-bureaucratization, and dehumanization (Weber, 1930).

> "The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment". But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage (Weber, 1930)."

In understanding the relationship of STEM departments with logistical rigor, one must not only consider our own place within a capitalist society, but the construction of higher education's very own iron cage. Equating logistical rigor with academic rigor is one of the key building blocks of this construction.

Actual academic rigor and critical thinking skills are not as relevant to the architects of this system as the volume of work students are doing. Similar to capitalism's tendency to focus on mass production and quantity over quality, placing a focus on logistical rigor over academic rigor may actually compromise those standards of academic rigor that are the very foundations of higher education. It does this by utilizing methods that are not necessarily based in empirical evidence but come from a focus on rigid structure and control, as opposed to compassion, inquiry, and curiosity. These types of standards give professors and administrators an immense amount of power over their students- something that, in the wrong hands, can be incredibly dangerous, particularly when it is being exerted over marginalized groups. By equating unnecessary stress and suffering with a nebulous idea of "hard work," universities have an easy excuse to maintain the status quo and avoid accountability for the disadvantages that marginalized students face under systems of structural inequality.

The impact that lack of access considerations has is directly correlated with Disabled students' academic performance (Chiu et. al. 2019) and demonstrates a valuable question- who is being considered when the school's performance is being addressed? Are Disabled people part of the equation? How might UNCA do better in keeping tabs on the struggles of its Disabled students and the access issues they face?

Currently, UNCA does not collect statistics on its students' disability status at all *(Konz, 2025)*. The closest metric that the Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning (IREP) department at UNCA assesses is the percentage of students that utilize the Office of Academic Accessibility, which was 13.65% of students in Fall 2024 *(Konz, 2025)*. By contrast, UNC Chapel Hill asks about both disability and accessibility on their Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) surveys. This survey replaced the National Survey of Student Engagement, which was last conducted in 2010. Since its adoption in 2011, Chapel Hill has conducted this survey every two years. In addition to determining its number of Disabled students, the survey includes questions about their experiences with ableism and community on campus. While the SERU survey is specifically designed for high research activity universities, questions like these are universally applicable and can be helpful in structuring further support initiatives for Disabled students.

Surveillance is an inherent part of disability in the college experience- with Disabled students expected to provide medical history and documentation in order to have an experience equivalent to their nonDisabled peers. To once again refer to the concept of marked categories, the experience of being considered part of a non-default population can often be one of hypervisibility in ways that are unwanted or invasive (Zerubavel & Eviatar, 2018). Obtaining the medical documentation required to qualify for institutional accommodations is another challenge, and an obstacle for many Disabled students. While UNCA's student health provides free services to all students regardless of insurance coverage, it cannot provide the assessment paperwork required by the OAA. Obtaining medical documentation for longer-term issues such as chronic illness may be difficult and cost-prohibitive for many students.

All sixteen counties in Western North Carolina are primary healthcare shortage areas, with Buncombe County specifically also recognized as experiencing mental health professional shortages (Mountain Area Health Education Center, 2025). Guaranteeing that an already at-risk population is receiving proper accommodations is important in student equity.

These healthcare shortages are not only impacting physically Disabled students. In addition to the restrictions that the heavy documentation requirements place on physically Disabled students, UNC Asheville only accepts diagnostic paperwork issued after age seventeen for the prescribing of ADHD medication at the health center (UNC Asheville, 2025). ADHD medication is recognized as one of the most effective ways to manage the condition, and has been subject to shortages already within the past years (Johnson et. Al., 2019). Putting yet another barrier in place at the Health and Counseling Center for Disabled students' ability to receive not only accommodations, but care as well, only further calls the equity of students' experiences into question.

Physical Accessibility & Infrastructure

The responses from students indicate a deeper structural problem running under the surface at UNC Asheville. For the most part, respondents indicated that individual STEM faculty make a genuine effort to provide physical accessibility for their Disabled students. As one student said, "I love my department and I think they're understanding." Another stated, "I do really enjoy this teacher/school's approach more than other labs I've taken in the past elsewhere." Despite the efforts of UNCA's STEM faculty, respondents indicated a number of significant accessibility complaints.

While these facts may seem contradictory, there were a number of problems indicated by students that are not under direct professorial control. A few examples of these structurally-based issues are labs with only one table that can accommodate a wheelchair user, fume hoods too high for wheelchair users to be able to properly use, elevators out of service for months, and ramps too steep for practical use. One student noted the very small number of private and single stall bathrooms around campus.

In particular, the elevators on campus were a key concern identified by multiple students. Of the sixteen students who provided written descriptions of the accessibility issues they faced on campus, ten of them mentioned issues with broken or slow elevators, with "little to no transparency about if or when elevators will be repaired." This is particularly concerning as an issue of accessibility- many types of disabilities come along with mobility issues, and keeping students in the dark on repair times can cause significant issues with their ability to attend classes on time or at all.

While some students indicated issues with field work not being designed in accessible ways and standing for long periods- things that can be more easily addressed by professors- many of these complaints are about the way the campus itself was actually built.

For non-Disabled students, some of these things might seem like everyday inconveniences, minor gripes that add a few minutes to your commute to class but not much else. For Disabled students, however, these issues can be the difference between getting to class or not being able to go at all. Lack of accessibility and disability services have a proven correlation with poorer academic outcomes, with a direct demonstration of GPA decline in students before they begin receiving accommodations *(Chiu et. al., 2019)*. Disabled students are already a documented at-risk population for academic performance difficulties *(Wasielewski, 2016)*, another factor to consider when prioritizing accessibility initiatives and future research. The demonstrable risks of not being accommodated in higher education show the tangible ways that these structural concerns make it harder for students to get the most out of their time here at UNCA.

Implementation & Conclusions

The way that accessibility is currently being implemented at UNC Asheville cannot stand, especially in the STEM departments where insights into Disabled experience have conveyed a sense of urgency amongst respondents. As one student stated, “It feels like my peers can keep up with classes, it feels like I’m a million miles away.” If UNCA wants their Disabled students to thrive like their non-Disabled ones do, the status quo has to be challenged.

According to student responses indicated in this survey, more direct support could provide something quite key- a better guarantee for equity. By not leaving both students and professors to their own devices, outcomes can be improved for both. The benefits of having a disability community are numerous. One possibility is the development of a more school-supported Disability Student Union as opposed to having club status, or the creation of a center specifically for Disabled students. By providing Disabled students with an established space for peer-to-peer connection, they can better organize around issues of accessibility and ableism on campus. Access to a disability community allows for increased rates of connection between physically Disabled students who may experience social isolation otherwise, and improves mental health outcomes *(Minotti et. al., 2021)*.

Without adequate staffing and programming, the amount of support the office of accessibility can actually provide is minimal. The Office of Accessibility currently only has one staff member, its director, and relies on student employment to provide note-takers. Having more than one person working there, as well as having more funding for a wider variety of disability services, would free up a great deal of

possibilities for what they can actually accomplish. If the office provided its own resources and accommodations for students instead of relying on individual professors to implement them, students would have better support and a more stable experience with accessibility at UNCA.

This is a far cry from the current state of accommodations at UNCA. With accommodations left up to individual professors, the experiences of Disabled students at UNCA can be extremely variable, with potential for huge inequities and discrepancies between individuals.

Physical changes to the campus, even small ones, could also be part of the equation. For one, it would be materially and symbolically impactful for the Office of Accessibility to be located more centrally on campus. Similarly, the Disability Student Union was located in the basement of the library- a location choice with accessibility issues due to reliance on a working elevator. The DSU struggled to run due to lack of a current advisor and the difficulty for many busy Disabled students of taking on yet another responsibility. Professors- especially Disabled and marginalized professors- are already doing difficult, long work. As Kay Inckle describes in “Unreasonable Adjustments,” the invisible unpaid labor of Disabled academics is a constant spectre on top of their already difficult jobs. It is very valuable to consider what it could look like if the school provided more direct support to disability resources on campus instead of relying entirely on overworked professors and students.

In particular, opening up more open lines of communication from Disabled students, faculty, and researchers to the Office of Accessibility and to UNC Asheville’s administration would allow for an underappreciated resource to be utilized: the expertise and resourcefulness of its disabled students. Being Disabled is an experience often characterized by discursive creativity and adaptive ingenuity that is often not recognized by non-Disabled individuals (Miller, Nyegenye, & Mostafa-Shoukry, 2022) and comes from having to survive in a world that is quite literally not built for us. Having more direct feedback from Disabled people, who are the most familiar with their own needs, is a wellspring of valuable resources for universities to draw from.

With more staffing and direct support for students, the dream of equity and access at UNC Asheville for Disabled students could be a reality. As it stands, the current approach to accessibility and support at UNC Asheville leaves Disabled STEM students in limbo, caught between a bar raised high and a lack of access to support to get there. As one respondent stated when asked what they wished their professors would consider about accessibility in their field, “Every student wants to succeed, and if they

are asking about accessibility it shows an even greater drive." Disabled students deserve the chance to succeed too, and follow that drive wherever it may take them. It is the responsibility of institutions like UNC Asheville to help make this possible wherever they can.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my participants - I couldn't have done this without you all. I would like to thank Dr. Meagher for supporting me as my advisor and professor throughout this process, and my classmates for always supporting me. I would like to thank my partner for putting up with my many harried phone calls and ecstatic ramblings. Finally, I would also like to dedicate this paper to Alice Wong, a visionary Disabled activist whose contributions to the field of Disability Studies cannot be overstated.

References

American Chemical Society. n.d. "ACS Guidelines for Bachelor's Degree Programs." American Chemical Society. Retrieved November 6, 2025 (https://www.acs.org/education/policies/acs-approval-program/guidelines.html).

Batty, Lesley and Katie Reilly. 2022. "Understanding Barriers to Participation within Undergraduate Stem Laboratories: Towards Development of an Inclusive Curriculum." *Journal of Biological Education* 57(5):1147–69.

Blackwell, Angela Glover. 2017. "The Curb-Cut Effect (SSIR)." The Curb-Cut Effect. Retrieved November 6, 2025 (https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_curb_cut_effect).

Brown, Nicole and Jennifer Leigh. 2018. "Ableism in Academia: Where Are the Disabled and Ill Academics?" *Disability & Society* 33(6):985–89.

Brown, Sophie Eleanor. 2023. "Missed Opportunities? Accessibility in 'Post-Pandemic' Academia." *Disability & Society* 38(7):1271–75.

Chiu, Jen Yung-Chen et al. 2019. "Impact of Disability Services on Academic Achievement among College Students with Disabilities." *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* 32:227–45. Retrieved December 9, 2025 (https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1236854).

Chun Tie, Ylona, Melanie Birks, and Karen Francis. 2019. "Grounded Theory Research: A Design Framework for Novice Researchers." *SAGE Open Medicine* 7.

van den Hoonaard, Will C., Howard S. Becker, and Herbert G. Blumer. 2008. "Sensitizing Concepts." *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*.

Inckle, Kay. 2018. “Unreasonable Adjustments: The Additional Unpaid Labour of Academics with Disabilities.” Disability & Society 33(8):1372–76.

Johnson, Benjamin, Daniel Stjepanovic, Janni Leung, and Gary C. Chan. 2024. “‘Everything’s a Challenge’: An Interview Study of ADHD Individuals in the Midst of the Prescription Stimulant Shortage.” *Journal of Attention Disorders* 29(2):120–27.

Kim, Won Ho and Juyoung Lee. 2016. “The Effect of Accommodation on Academic Performance of College Students with Disabilities.” Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin 60(1):40–50.

Mountain Area Health Education Center. 2025. “Rural Health in WNC.” *Mountain Area Health Education Center*. Retrieved December 10, 2025 (https://mahec.net/rhi/wnc-rural-health).

Madikizela-Madiya, Nomanesi and S. T. Mkhwanazi. 2024. “Academic Identities and Socio-Spatial Exclusions of Academics with Disabilities: A Capabilities Approach.” *Disability & Society* 1–17.

Miller, Amanda, Sylvia Nyegenye, and Rose Mostafa-Shoukry. 2022. “Disrupting Dominant Modes of Expression: Illuminating the Strengths and Gifts of Two Disabled Girls of Color.” Pp. 45–61 in *Discrit expanded: Reverberations, ruptures, and inquiries*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

Minotti, Bradley J., Katherine M. Ingram, Anjali J. Forber-Pratt, and Dorothy L. Espelage. 2021. “Disability Community and Mental Health among College Students with Physical Disabilities.” *Rehabilitation Psychology* 66(2):192–201.

Sanchez, Karina A. et al. 2023. “Grit Matters to Biology Doctoral Students’ Perception of Barriers to Degree Completion.” *Journal of Biological Education* 1–24.

Supiano, Beckie. 2022. “The Redefinition of Rigor.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved December 9, 2025 (https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-redefinition-of-rigor).

Thornberg, Robert. 2012. “Informed Grounded Theory.” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 56(3):243–59.

UNC Asheville. 2023. “Chemistry Curriculum - Programs: UNC Asheville.” Programs | UNC Asheville. Retrieved November 6, 2025 (https://www.unca.edu/programs/chemistry/curriculum/).

UNC Asheville. 2025. “Instructor FAQ.” UNC Asheville Office of Accessibility. Retrieved November 6, 2025 (https://go.unca.edu/iia/accessibility/instructor-faq/).

UNC Asheville. 2025. “Mission, History, and Annual Report.” Center for Teaching & Learning. Retrieved November 6, 2025 (https://ctl.unca.edu/meet-us/mission-and-history/).

Wasielewski, Laura M. 2016. “Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education: Insights from a Study of One Catholic College.” *Journal of Catholic Education* 20(1).

Weber, Max. 1930. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Allen and Unwin.

Westander, Mette, Jo Copson, Stephanie Worton, Felicity McKee, and Patricia Verdecia. 2023. “Going Back Is Not a Choice (Report) • Disabled Students UK.” *Disabled Students UK*. Retrieved March 21, 2024 (https://Disabledstudents.co.uk/research/not-a-choice/).

Yee, Silvia et al. 2018. “Compounded Disparities: Health Equity at the Intersection of Disability, Race, and Ethnicity.” *Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund*. Retrieved December 11, 2025 (https://dredf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Compounded-Disparities-Intersection-of-Disabilities-Race-and-Ethnicity.pdf).

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2018. “The Marked and the Unmarked.” in Taken for granted: The remarkable power of the unremarkable. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.