Universally Accessible

An Investigation of College Accommodations for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the United States and Netherlands

Presented by: Mikayla “Mak” Pennington
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Miranda Kucera
Roadmap

1. Overview About the Issue
2. Dutch and U.S. Laws and Organizations
3. Dutch and U.S. Students’ Experiences
4. Recommendations
5. Conclusion

How do people get lost with a map? Easy, they don’t read it.
More students entering postsecondary education have autism.

Without proper supports, students with ASD struggle more than their peers.

The incidence and prevalence rate for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is increasing.

2% of college students meet the criteria for ASD.
**Laws and Organizations**

**United States**
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- The Rehabilitation Act (Section 504)
- Office of Civil Rights

**Netherlands**
- Equal Treatment of Disabled and Chronically Ill People Act
- Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR)

**Autistic Self-Advocacy Network**
- American Autism Association
- Autism Society of America

**Dutch Association of Autism From the Autism Perspective**
- Personen uit het Autisme Spectrum (PAS)
Student Experiences

United States
- Accessing resources
- Be given proper accommodations
- Stigma and discrimination
- Paper work to receive accommodations

Similarities
- Burden of proof
- Burnout
- Social struggles
- Mental health

Netherlands
- Maintain similar GPA scores as fellow students
- Neuroinclusive environment
- Students are able to control their curriculum more
Now What?

While the Netherlands provides a better inclusive environment, autistic students still face challenges in the U.S. and the Netherlands.
Universal Design of Learning

1. Provide inclusive teaching environments
2. Informs faculty about autism and other disabilities
3. Supports autistic students’ interests in the classroom
4. Encourages different ways to express knowledge
UW Tacoma has a UDL training for faculty called Passport. Not only that, but a training for UDL was offered last week. Neither of these are required.

The Netherlands has a handbook about UDL that faculty can use and is encouraged to take from different organizations.

Current UDL Practices

Note: Some department faculty are more likely to take UDL trainings than others.
Orientation Program

Transition programs have been offered in both the US and Netherlands, but it is often for children in mind, not for autistic adults going into postsecondary education.

Resources on Campus

How to Self-Advocate

What is Their Rights as Students
Future Research Areas

1. Cultural differences
2. Gender differences in diagnosis rate
3. Differences in quality of insurance
4. Analyze the roles of the university, faculty, staff and peers
5. Recognizing neurodiversity as DEI

Never be satisfied knowing only part of the issue!
Conclusions

Creating inclusive environments benefits those who are or not diagnosed with a disability, and to ensure students’ success, colleges should encourage inclusive teaching.
References
Thank you for your time!