

# The Institute for Innovative Transition: A Golisano Foundation and University of Rochester Collaboration

U N I V E R S I T Y O F R O C H E S T E R

## About the Institute

The Institute for Innovative Transition was launched in June 2008. A partnership of the Golisano Foundation and the University of Rochester's Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities and the Warner School of Education, the new Institute aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families as they transition from school age to adulthood. The Institute is housed at the Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, a division of Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong.

## Who We Serve

The Institute provides a robust and comprehensive set of initiatives to all constituencies, including 14-25 year olds with developmental disabilities—mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and other neurological impairments constituting a lifelong or physical impairment that become apparent prior to age 22—and their families, schools, and adult service providers throughout Monroe County.

## Services Offered

The Institute coordinates and provides the following services:

- Systematic and high-quality dissemination of information to families and young adults in transition, including an information and referral center; self-determination clearing house; disability film series; transition DVD; and regional transition Web site.
- Technical assistance to support the development of transition programs and activities, including site evaluation of current programs; young adult leadership council and speakers bureau; and outreach and technical assistance to area schools, colleges, and universities to facilitate campus-based opportunities for students with developmental disabilities.
- Innovative education and job training programs for 18-25 year olds, including a regional pilot project on collaborative community transition services; Project SEARCH, a one-year high school transition program which provides training and education leading to employment for individuals with significant disabilities; and a campus-based pilot college experience.
- Training and professional development for all constituencies involved in the transition process, including pre-service assistantships; Medicaid service coordinator training; a summer conference; and champion funding.
- Policy initiatives focused on systemic change to improve transition and data reporting efforts, including the revival and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NYS Department of Education and the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

## Funding

The new Institute is funded by a \$600,000 grant from the Golisano Foundation and \$85,000 from local and state agencies, including the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Services Office, NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, and in-kind support from the Warner School of Education.

## Leadership

The Institute is under the leadership of Dr. Martha Mock, director, and Susan Hetherington, co-director. Mock and Hetherington hold joint appointments as assistant professors at the University of Rochester Warner School and in the Department of Pediatrics in the Medical School.

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Find out more at [www.golisanoofoundation.org/Initiatives.html](http://www.golisanoofoundation.org/Initiatives.html).

## Report to the Community:

### In the Balance: Successfully Transitioning to a Meaningful Adult Life (2006)

- "I have a transition plan on my IEP but it is what school folks wanted. They never had a meeting with us."- a student
- "For kids with developmental disabilities, systems struggle to meet day to day challenges. Planning for transition to adulthood is rarely done well."- a teacher
- "The students I have worked with- I have not seen one person transition smoothly."- an adult service provider

### The effect of the transition crisis:

- employment rate of working age people with disabilities in NY only 21.5 percent\*
- poverty rate of working age people with disabilities in NY is 26.7 percent\*

*\*Numbers are based on all people with disabilities in 2005- the rates are far more disturbing for developmental disabilities.*

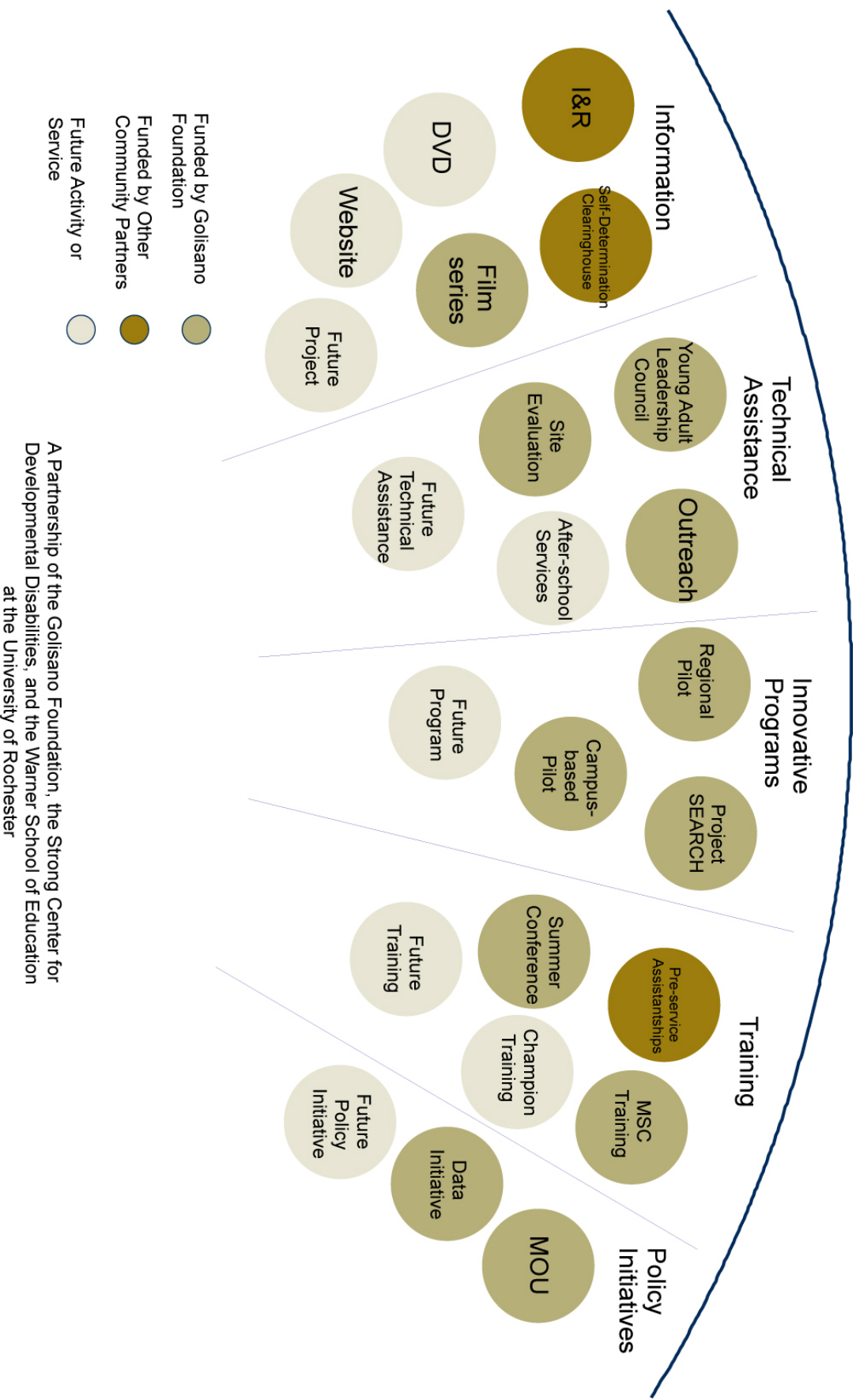
Data Source:  
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics, 2005 Disability Status Reports.  
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University

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