

Partnerships

The capacity building aspect of Project Empowerment will be based on strong partnerships with the following:

- ▶ Virginia State University
- ▶ Norfolk State University
- ▶ Virginia Union University
- ▶ Penn State University
- ▶ University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign
- ▶ Kent State University
- ▶ The American Association of People with Disabilities
- ▶ The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Project



Improving Minority Disability Research Capacity



Department of
Rehabilitation
Counseling,
School of Allied
Health Professions,
Virginia
Commonwealth
University

Empowerment

Project Empowerment's Mission

The project's twofold mission is to:

1. improve current knowledge of the experiences of minorities with disabilities AND advance the current science on the conduct of minority disability research, AS WELL AS
2. develop more persons (i.e., increased capacity) who are ready, passionate and interested in devoting careers to this work.

Allen Lewis, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Juan Carlos Aranga-Lasprilla,
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Paul Wehman, Ph.D.
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Research

This project will identify and evaluate current rehabilitation practice and methods in the conduct of minority disability research. It will offer research findings, and recommendations to advance both the current state of knowledge on the minority disability experience and system capacity to conduct and disseminate culturally competent minority disability research. This project will benefit two target populations:

1. Underrepresented individuals with disabilities (i.e., racial/ethnic minority groups) where the goal is, through a participatory action research approach, to add meaningful and relevant research findings to the current body of minority disability literature, and
2. Minority university faculty and students in disability related disciplines with the goal of enhancing their capacity to conduct minority disability research through active participation and learning to ultimately offer:
 - a. improved understanding of best practices in the conduct and dissemination of this type of research, and
 - b. increased capacity, interest, and motivation to conduct such research in the future.

Three primary studies will be conducted:

1. A national survey examining the experiences of Americans with disabilities from racial and ethnic minority groups to illuminate the current capacity of the rehabilitation and disability system, and to learn what research methods and dissemination practices are needed to advance the field in culturally competent research.
2. A longitudinal study of post-injury unemployment for minority persons with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, and
3. Prevalence and trends in employment discrimination due to disability for different racial and/or ethnic groups.

Trainings and Dissemination

Project Empowerment will provide the following training and dissemination tools to promote knowledge translation:

- ▶ newsletter,
- ▶ website (www.vcu-projectempowerment.org),
- ▶ minority disability research training module in Blackboard,
- ▶ grant writing training module in Blackboard,
- ▶ annual webcasts on minority disability topics,
- ▶ fact sheets on minority disability topics,
- ▶ minority disability research database,
- ▶ conference presentations,
- ▶ published manuscripts,
- ▶ state of the science conference,
- ▶ handbook of minority research best practice,
- ▶ listserv, and
- ▶ research to action notes.